

OUTREACH 2015



BUILDING PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ISSUE VIII

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF FRESHWATER

The International Year of Freshwater was recognised by the CSD at a 2 hour session on Wednesday morning. The forum provided an opportunity for delegates to be reminded of the pressing global freshwater situation. A series of presentations by recognised dignitaries offered an overview of efforts undertaken by the international community on this issue so far this year. The session is all the more timely in consideration of the CSD's likely focus on Water over the next 2 years.

The sessions chairman set the theme of the session as linking people with international goals, particularly those link to water and sanitation. Going further, he drew attention to the impending Water Resource Management Goal for 2005, requiring national strategies to be in place.

His Royal Highness, the Prince of Orange, a long standing champion of the water cause led the debate by welcoming progress that has been achieved to date, particularly in the field of raising awareness. He particularly applauded the Millennium Development Goal on Drinking Water as well as that on Sanitation later agreed in Johannesburg, as setting a clear targets under the over-arching banner of poverty eradication.

Nevertheless, the Prince put was clear about the challenge still to be faced and urged governments to increasingly look at new ways of meeting targets. He called for a new revolution in food security, with the use of new crops and practices that make less demand on scarce water resources. Mirroring the integration watchword of CSD 11, the Prince linked Oceans and Coasts, recognising the need to consider the entire water cycle.

Professor Albert Right, following, presented on the Status of the Millennium Project as well as updating on the Task Force on the Millennium Development Goals. He led with the sobering thought that in the time allocated to the session (3 hours) approximately 1000 people, mostly children, would die due to unsafe water or inadequate sanitation. Heartening then that so much effort is being spent getting the wording right on how the international community intends to respond. The Professor went further into the scale of the problem, identifying that annual investments in water must double globally, from \$15bn to \$30bn per year in order to achieve the goals to which the international community has committed itself. For those of you

without a calculator to hand, that's approximately \$3.5m/hour, in response.

The Task Force, the professor explained is mandated to help identify ways of achieving these kinds of agreements. This includes building capacity, identifying resources and assisting in developing effective strategies. Considering the numbers involved, a tough challenge indeed.

300 Deaths/Hour

Just Another Statistic?

The recent Third World Water Forum (III WWF), in Japan, was perhaps the freshest example of government resolve to lock horns with such demanding

issues.

William Cosgrove of the World Water Council presented on some of the outcomes of the Japanese Forum. Despite showing growth in the number of commitments governments had made since the 2nd WWF 2 years ago (from 13 to 100), Cosgrove expressed disappointment that more fresh action was not announced at the III WWF. He particularly noted especially poor input by developing countries on this front.

Richard Jolly presented a slightly more upbeat tone, taking opportunity of the event to highlight the many substantive achievements of the UN at a time when it's relevance was being called into question. Citing the 1980's as the decade of Drinking Water, he pointed out that access had double during that time, hinting at hopes that such progress can be maintained and replicated.

Jolly went on to focus on 6 fundamental conclusions of the III WWF, which he saw as key to achieving real change: Action at the community level; low cost approaches; Hygiene and Sanitation management must be at the household level; Reallocating finance to focus directly on the poor; Ensure the participation of women at all levels, and; Adopt a people centred approach.

Echoing Jolly's penultimate point, Jennifer Francis of the Gender & Water Alliance pointed out the very real advantages of securing women's participation in the water debate. Citing examples of increased domestic income generation and up to 150 hours saved by women being freed from water collecting responsibilities.

Nitin Desai ended the formal presentations, reiterating calls by previous speakers to start doing more, differently. Governments have set themselves on a path to address water at the CSD for the next 2 years. The meeting has given them plenty of food for thought.

Working Group 1

Wednesday Morning Session

This was the day that the CSD got to grips with Para 147 (e) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. At time of writing the wrestling match is still going on.

The meeting started at 10.30 with a pep talk from the Chairman, Vallee Moosa. The Chairman reminded Working Group 1 that his flight was at 3.40 p.m. on Friday afternoon and that he would be leaving at 1.00 p.m. He made it clear that the CSD could not continue in his absence and that there was no question of carrying on next week. As it was essential that a clear Future Work Programme for the CSD had been agreed before the close of CSD-11, he explained that if no agreement had been reached by Thursday afternoon (giving the Secretariat time for the preparation and translation of the final document) then a solution would be imposed. One might say “well, he would say that wouldn’t he” nevertheless this provided a stark backdrop for the session.

Spurred by the Chairman’s words of encouragement, delegates soon despatched Para 8 to a contact group involving the EU and G-77 to agree wording along the lines of Para 8 that could be included in the Preamble. Para 9, introducing the Annex was of academic interest, with the EU only having a problem with it if they did not agree with the Annex. Section 10 started with some expressions of support for Education in the Cross-cutting issues column and the EU identifying “Overarching focus” as an oxymoron, suggesting “Focus areas” in its place. Then the clouds started to darken.

At this point, Morocco, speaking for G-77 and China, dug in its heels. Don’t let’s waste time the spokesman said. There needs to be a parallel implementation of all issues. There should be no cherry picking. G-77 were not prepared to negotiate on the basis of the current draft Annex and would take no further part in the debate.

In the face of this onslaught, one supporter after another spoke up in favour of the current Annex approach of showing clear “focus” for each of the first two cycles. Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Australia, Canada, Japan, the EU, Korea and the US – all spoke up in favour of the proposed draft. G-77 were forced to point out that they did represent 134 countries. There was a clear stand-off.

It was Australia that first mentioned the crucial number 147 and the little letter “e”.

Section 147(e) of the JPOI states that “The Commission should limit the number of themes addressed in each session”.

Interestingly this clause was used by both sides to support their case. The supporters of the current draft pointed out that the clause advocated “limiting the number”. The opponents (G77 and China) pointed out that the clause does not say “limit the number of themes to one” but simply “limit the number of themes in each session.” The G-77 and China proposal, they argued, did just that.

It was at this point that the mediators entered that debate. China, whilst supporting G-77, floated the concept of having a “thematic cluster” each year and sought to bridge the gap. Australia agreed that all JPOI issues do need to be addressed. Canada confirmed that they would be implementing all aspects of the JPOI but questioned whether every aspect needed to be debated. The EU suggested that the third column (the cluster column) could be the means of bridging the difference – and said that they would be happy to participate in a working group. The US, whilst strongly supporting the focus argument, agreed the need for a pragmatic approach and expressed interest in China’s idea of a “thematic cluster”.

The issue was resolved for the time being with the appointment of a contact group. Time is short – and 147(e) joins the line of clauses that seemed acceptable at the time, but were really a mere postponement of the debate.

Robert Whitfield, Stakeholder Forum

Working Group 1

Wednesday Afternoon Session

Following a morning of frustrations, the afternoon opened with the Chair once again requesting delegations to act in the spirit of cooperation and compromise, to be fair to all and to accommodate the views of others in a final push towards a conclusion on the Decision. The final has to be prepared by Friday 1pm. A compromise text, drafted by the co-chairs over night, was offered for discussion. The text attempted to capture the main concerns expressed by delegations over the past two days.

From the outset it was clear that we were in for a long afternoon of deliberations, in which all countries, acting with the utmost respect for the kind representatives of other delegations, and in the spirit of constructiveness and compromise wholeheartedly disagreed with one another. I fear we may have hit the Wednesday slump before we, ‘pardon my phrase, but role up our sleeves and get down to real action’.

The first hurdle of the afternoon came at discussions over the duration and the timing of the review session. Should it be February, March, April, May or June? Should it be for one week or two? And where should it happen, in New York or normally in New York. It is a concern that we are getting down to the relative minutia, before we actually know how the sessions will be working, and what they will be discussing. It was interesting to note that G77 requested to have the meetings in New York during May/June, which clashes with UNFCCC meetings, clear concern for Japan. The co-chair was in no mood for such discussion on

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such issues, and requested the adoption of the most flexible language possible. The suggestion was met with agreement.

Discussions for a vast remainder of the session focused around Para 2 a, in particular on 2 (a) i. The information on which the Secretary General's State of Implementation Report is drafted was of clear concern. G77 + China remained steadfast in their approach to the involvement of major groups and other stakeholders, stipulating that the Report should be based on national reporting, and that the Review Session should be predominated by inter-governmental processes. The EU, whilst acknowledging the need to emphasise the use of country reports held their position on the full involvement of major groups and other stakeholders. It remains clear that G77 + China remain unduly concerned over acknowledging and involving stakeholders in reviewing progress, due to the perceived decentralisation of the review process and the dilution of the intergovernmental session. It became evident that this was a conversation more about the opportunity to recognise partnerships, than about the formal review process. Despite G77 + China being challenged by their need to consult with their group, and despite Morocco having to be constantly called back to attention by the co-chair to enable their participation in the discussions, agreement was eventually reached on the substantives of the text.

Discussions that followed in the rest of Para 2 (a) revisited the problems associated with enumerating stakeholder groupings, and on organisations to be involved in reporting. The signs of tiredness are shining through in true form, with delegations trying to negotiate reference to the WTO within the context of the UN system.

Discussions drew to a close on the issue of the purpose of the Secretary General's State of Implementation Report. A difficult discussion to have when we remain unclear as to how the review cycle will be organised. G77 + China requested that a comprehensive report outlining challenges and obstacles to implementation be produced, whilst other delegations suggested that a Chairman's Summary would be sufficient. The number of issues being dealt with during each cycle will have a clear influence on structure and length of the text. If you're only dealing with the one issue, then presumably a summary will suffice; a much longer and more comprehensive report would be required to address a larger number of topics.

Finally negotiations entered a slightly farcical phases, where we were negotiating on the need for negotiations. Despite a plea for the Review Session not to involve negotiations, the co-chair astutely pointed out that we are creatures of habit, and no matter what the outcomes of this discussion are, we will still want to continue in our deliberations, our discussions and inevitably our negotiations – that is after all what we are here for. Without resolution, the discussions were passed across to a working group.

Policy Team – Stakeholder Forum

Working Group II

Wednesday Morning Session

Working Group II reconvened this morning to continue to address the text of the Draft Decision. The meeting was kicked off

by Chairman Valli Moosa's short speech urging the delegates to speed up the process so that a resolution could be achieved by early Friday afternoon. The chair expressed anxiety of the message it would send to ministers if no agreement could be met by the deadline to which they'd committed. The moments of optimism that ensued throughout Chairman Valli Moosa's pep-talk quickly became grounded once the actual deliberation began.

Bearing in mind that elections will be held this coming Friday, the Co-chair first moved to address Bureau issues. This was done as a means of finalizing the text that would be pertinent to the election of Bureau of the Commission officers. This discussion was quickly cut short by Australia, EU, US, and G77 due to a lack of preparation on the matter. It was decided that any Bureau discussion would take place during the afternoon session, giving the delegations more time to look over the text.

The next item on the agenda pertained to the agreement on proposals for the CSD to act as the focal point for partnerships that promote sustainable development. The perceived meaning of partnership in relation to an intergovernmental agreement or a commitment proved to be a sticking place as a result of differences between the G77 and the U.S., Canada, Australia, and Japan. The G77 stated that it did not believe a partnership to be a commitment, and stressed that type II agreements should not substitute for type I agreements. While conceding that partnerships are not treaties, the latter mentioned delegates indicated that partnerships are a form of a commitment, and should be viewed thus. There was much deliberation on how to resolve the issue but no middle ground could be reached. A twelve minute pause in comments within the forum elapsed while a fifteen person assemblage developed to discuss the issue on the side. The co-chair indicated they would never finish at the pace the group was progressing, and recommended that this may need to be discussed outside the room. Followed by a move to continue with text.

The G77 indicated that they would like to add five sub-headings to para. 20 which were, in a way, setting guidelines for future partnerships to follow. Following the new sub-headings, a second paragraph also was proposed (20ter) by G77. There was no chance for comment as the co-chair asked the G77 to continue with the rest of its proposals. The G77 stated that it had said enough but was asked once more to continue. They said that they could not give its proposals on paragraphs 21 and 22 until after they had deliberated amongst themselves, asking the rest of the delegations to "please bear with us, we are made up of 133 countries".

G77 began to propose more new text but was quickly met with U.S. intervention. The U.S. delegate pointed out that these new additions were way too much text to be proposed so late in the process. In which, the G77 made the argument that everyone else submitted their proposals the night before, and "what difference does 12 hours make?" The U.S. wanted to remind everyone that Bali guidelines should keep being used since they have worked for the past year and if necessary will continue to work. There was a then a pause in the meeting where the notion was brought up to send a representative fraction of delegates to solve the problematic partnership subject. Once the group left, it appeared as though most delegations found it difficult to make a firm stance on the rest of the issues, proving to be more of a hindrance than a benefit.

Once the new co-chair took over, the U.S. made a recommendation to the working group to speed up the negotiations. A switch of topics was made to the Reporting section

and the proposal of discussion over wording of titles introduced. The U.S. proposed to strike out all of the subheadings and titles from the draft so that there would be no time wasted in arguing over specific wording. This was welcomed by all, unfortunately this seemed to be the only real agreement and progress made for the entire session.

Paragraph 11 was addressed with more distinct and individual positions coming into view. Australia questioned the importance of the inclusion of “monitoring” into para. 11. Norway followed this up by saying that they have developed indicators for monitoring and reporting but were also flexible on the inclusion. The G77 responded to this by firmly stating that they could not include “indicators” and “monitoring”. It seemed as if the G77 was not allowing guidelines to monitoring but on the flip side was the advocate for proposing guidelines on partnerships. How could there be concessions made to place guidelines in one area if they flat out reject guidelines in other areas. The E.U. interjected asking “what’s the point of reporting?” since indicators were being thrown out. The G77 agreed to review any proposals over lunch showing a softening of their earlier stance. The E.U. indicated its desire to return to the topic later, further stressing that “monitoring makes reports relevant!”

Given the most recent discussion, Mexico was optimistic in tabling two more sub-paragraphs to para. 11 due to concern over the timing of such a proposal realizing that new text would be hard to digest. Mexico proposed to add more indicators for countries, in addition to a report by the Secretary General on the progress of such indicators. Discussion ensued about the relevance of para. 132 of the JPOI. G77 read para. 132 aloud trying to prove the irrelevance of the additions. Mexico reacted by saying that indicators have a great deal to do with data collection. Australia chimed in stating that both points were well made but in its opinion indicators are a natural part of reporting and it is not sure if two new additions were necessary.

In the final twenty minutes of the meeting the chair wanted to begin the process of negotiating the work group section. G77 did not like this and asked if it were possible for the rest of the delegates to comment on its proposals in para 12 (alt) and 13 (ter). The E.U. wanted to know why reports would only go to the review session and not policy making as well and what specific reports the G77 was talking about. This was followed by the U.S. and Australia agreeing that the substitution para. 12 (alt) was not comprehensive enough to completely replace the original para 12. It was suggested that para 12 (alt) be integrated into the original para 12. Para 13 was still up in the air because G77 needed more time to review proposed changes.

Nick Constantinou & Ryan Troiani. Stakeholder Forum

Working Group II

Wednesday Afternoon Session

Following a delayed start to the day, Working Group II resumed with problems over discussions on Paragraph 11. Despite the co-chair encouraging delegations to adopt language of the JPOI, it seemed that this was not acceptable to all, despite all having only just agreed the JPOI eight months previously. The EU expressed

concerns over the text being out of order, and suggested that we were ‘putting the cart before the horse’ in trying to review progress before monitoring it. Out of character, the EU’s position on this became stationary, with the statement that they would not express any more flexibility as they felt it was watering down the message. The order of monitoring, evaluation and review implementation relates to the organisation of work. Through the discussions on Para 11, it is speculated that the EU will not be supporting the removal of Regional Implementation Forums from the Review Year, as these are a natural forum for enabling monitoring and evaluation prior to review of implementation and progress.

Confusion ensued, with some delegation arguing that monitoring, review, evaluation was the natural order of things, some referred back to the JPOI, and others seemed to have an unclear idea as to which order events should take. Despite their declared flexibility, the EU became a major sticking point on Paragraph 11, arguing that the language was moving discussions towards an enhanced role for effective systems. On a slight transient deliberations began over the nature of the word ‘system’ – are we beginning to see the first of the stalling tactics? The answer to this question came when discussions moved on to the meaning of effective! The co-chair finally put a halt to negotiations, requesting that they be moved out into the corridors.

Discussions on the end of paragraph 11 moved more rapidly, with G77 + China requesting the inclusion of obstacles and constraints into the text. Once again, this is taken as the G77 + China using the CSD as a means of highlighting the financial constraints to implementation experienced by developing countries, and the need for solutions during the review cycle to be found to these. Without opposition the text was agreed. The deletion of 11 bis was also agreed upon.

In a positive drive, the co-chair requested the group to revisit the beginning of paragraph 11. The EU once again expressed their flexibility, whilst stating that ‘systems’ must remain within the text. The text was agreed.

Moving onto paragraph 12. alt, the US volunteered a new sub-para 12.ter, detailing the involvement of stakeholders and partnerships. They are relentless in their pursuit to involve partnerships wherever possible as what could be interpreted as a distraction to reporting on and taking action at the governmental level. Further to this, the formal mandate of the CSD to discuss the Secretary Generals report was questioned.

The on going request of the G77 + China for support in implementation once again came to light during discussion on paragraph 13, with their request for the provision of ‘technical support’. The US interpreted this as a request for financial support, leading to ‘technical’ becoming a highly contentious inclusion. An innovative, and bold proposal by G77 + China read; ‘Provide, as appropriate technical and financial support to countries, upon their request, in national reporting through inter-alia, the UN Development Group, subject to existing resources or through voluntary contributions’. The US clearly want to join the G77 + China on being ‘out to lunch on this one’, requesting to have a piece of what they were eating.

With the issue of financial resources having been tabled, resolve was not likely to come easily, and with thoughts turning to lunch the negotiations finished without agreement.

Stakeholder Forum Policy Team

Globally Harmonised System for Chemical Classification & Labelling

Introduction

The recently completed *Globally Harmonised System for Chemical Classification and Labelling* (GHS) represents a unique opportunity to protect the environment and human health from the harmful effects of chemicals. The system provides a comprehensive approach to chemical hazard communication (communicating the risks of chemical substances through the use of labels and Safety Data Sheets) and provides guidance for classifying chemicals according to agreed characteristics (e.g. flammability, different types of toxicity, carcinogenicity, etc.).

The GHS is a basic “building block” of sound chemicals management: it can help ensure that chemicals in use are properly labelled with hazard symbols and statements that all users can recognize and understand. With this tool in-hand, those who use chemicals can make appropriate decisions to protect human health and the environment.

Both the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety (IFCS) have set a GHS implementation goal of 2008. Developing countries and countries with economies in transition have indicated that capacity building and training to assist with national implementation of the system is necessary, according to their own identified priorities and needs.

Chemical Hazard Communication: A Priority in Developing and Transition Countries

In developing countries and countries with economies in transition, chemical hazard communication has emerged as a top priority for sound chemicals management. In a recent survey undertaken by UNITAR:

- seventy percent of countries reported that labelling difficulties, mislabelling, or lack of comprehension of hazard communication elements had caused human or environmental health problems;
- about half of the countries stated that hazardous chemicals were not adequately labelled or that safety data sheets were not available, as appropriate;
- only forty percent of countries reported that *existing* labels or safety data sheets for hazardous chemicals were easily comprehensible;
- about two-thirds of countries indicated that awareness of the GHS was low or non-existent in their country; and
- two-thirds of the countries indicated that undertaking capacity building activities on chemical hazard communication was a high priority.

Consistent with these results, 66 countries formally indicated to UNITAR their interest in capacity development support related to

GHS implementation, including support for national-level capacity building projects.

The UNITAR/ILO/OECD Partnership

In response to this interest, and building upon the existing UNITAR/ILO GHS Capacity Building Programme, UNITAR, ILO and OECD launched a WSSD Partnership on capacity building for GHS implementation. The main goal of the Partnership is to mobilize resources and catalyze partnerships for concrete activities at the global, regional and national levels to strengthen capacities in developing countries and countries in transition towards effective implementation of the GHS.

The Partnership, which was announced at the Johannesburg Summit in August, 2002 will focus on GHS capacity building activities related to chemicals used in the agriculture, consumers, industrial and transport sectors. The Partnership pursues concrete objectives and targets for implementing GHS capacity building activities at the global, regional and national levels and Partners work together to mobilize relevant resources to reach these targets.

Core partnership activities are technically reviewed by the Programme Advisory Group (PAG) of the UNITAR/ILO GHS Programme. However, not all core Partnership activities need necessarily to be executed by UNITAR/ILO. Countries and organizations may also execute core Partnership activities independently, if the activity contributes to one of the Partnership targets and is coordinated through the PAG.

Partnership Objectives

Specific objectives of the Partnership include:

- to implement GHS awareness raising activities at the regional and national levels, including development of train-the-trainer strategies;
- to assist preparation of regional and national GHS-related situation analyses and capacity needs assessments both at the regional and national levels;
- to develop capacity building guidance and training materials on important aspects of GHS strategy development and implementation; and
- to provide feedback to the ECOSOC Sub-committee of Experts on the GHS (SCEGHS), the CSD, the IOMC, and the IFCS on issues relevant to GHS capacity building and identify needs for additional guidance materials.

Resource mobilization

Significant resources are required to ensure that the Partnership will reach its stated goal and objectives, at least during early stages of Partnership activities. Given the tangible benefits to human health, the environment and international trade that implementation of the GHS can provide, the costs of GHS capacity building activities can be considered well worth the investment. Countries and organizations that are interested in contributing to the Partnership are encouraged to contact the following:

gpghs@unitar.org

Sustainability Through Partnerships

RMC & Birdlife International

RMC is one of the world's largest suppliers of building materials - we operate in 24 countries and have an annual turnover of over £4.5 billion. We are the largest producer of ready mixed concrete in the world, and the extraction of raw materials - quarrying, sand and gravel extraction - is a primary part of our business. With over 1,500 concrete plants worldwide, over 400 quarries and sand and gravel deposits and marine dredging operations, we are acutely aware of the impact of our businesses on the environment. We also know that our reputation and business success and ultimately our licences to operate depend to a large extent on the way we meet our health and safety, environmental and social responsibilities and address the concerns of all our customers, employees, neighbours, suppliers and shareholders.

For RMC, working in partnership with a wide range of organisations plays a key role in helping us achieve these aims. Among RMC's partners are Earthwatch Institute's Corporate Environmental Responsibility Group and the UK Environment Council. We also sponsor the UNEP Chevening Scholarship Biodiversity Programme.

At global level, perhaps our most significant partnership is developing with BirdLife International. At the end of 2002, RMC signed a Memorandum of Understanding with BirdLife International, an international partnership of 103 national and local organisations dedicated to the conservation of birds and their habitats.

For us these partnerships are essential tools – they help us to build a business which places sustainable development at the centre of our business strategy. The very nature of our business affords us a unique opportunity to contribute towards sustainability by helping to conserve existing habitats for flora and fauna and by creating new ones in the worked out quarries, sand and gravel pits that we restore. You can see the extent of our work in these areas by visiting the website (www.rmc-group.com/rmc/env/).

Our partnership with Birdlife International is particularly important for a number of specific reasons. The partnership process

began after stakeholder perception mapping which we carried out in 1999 indicated that our stakeholders felt that three issues in particular were of greatest significance at global level: climate change, energy use and biodiversity.

Considerable research was undertaken to identify a potential NGO partner to work with on one of these issues – namely, biodiversity.

BirdLife International had substantial attractions. Firstly, its decentralised organisational structure – small headquarters and large international network are similar to those of RMC. BirdLife's ability to work on a global, national and local basis also suited the RMC approach.

There is a near-perfect geographical fit between areas of operation and interest and a number of existing local activities in RMC countries and BirdLife Partners which can be built upon. As organisations we have a shared interest in ensuring a consistent approach by policy-makers in Europe and elsewhere to proposed developments (whether these are extractive sites or plants) that affect biodiversity. The growing devolution of power to regional or indeed local level can lead to inconsistency in the application of planning laws - something that may not always be helpful either to companies or NGOs.

RMC believes in serious engagement with sustainable development issues and with partners whose expertise are invaluable in enhancing our contribution to a more sustainable society.

Our partnership with BirdLife International offers us the opportunity to do this - we aim to harness the knowledge and capacity that the BirdLife International Partnership has to further develop and implement a Biodiversity Strategy for RMC Group worldwide.

The collaboration ensures that our aggregates operations are environmentally sound and enhances our licence to operate. Finally, the more that RMC, as a corporate entity, can understand the NGO viewpoint through our partnerships, the more we can use and reflect this in our own policy-making – at international, national and local level.

By Noel Morrin, International Environment Director, RMC Group plc

SIDE EVENTS

Network of Regional Government for Sustainable Development

This conference was to educate delegates on the NRG4SD which is a new and important organization in the sustainable development arena. The conference was chaired by Juan Mayr, former Colombian environment minister and UN Commission on SD chair (2000). Including many presentations from SD strategies

to developing bilateral relations, the event gave an introduction to the network, led by Sabin Intxaurreaga, the Basque Minister of Planning and the Environment.

The introduction explained that NRG4SD was launched on August 31st 2002 during the World Summit on SD in Johannesburg. Comprised of 23 regional governments and 4 associations of regions, the Network then met 8 months later this past March in San Sebastian growing to include representatives of 52 regional governments and 4 associations of regions. Mr. Intxaurreaga then listed the advantages of being a regional network; scope of powers, close to citizens, higher efficiency, democratic participation, and adequate scale for correct planning. Aims and

objectives of the NRG4SD are to promote SD at a regional level, to share information and experiences about SD policy making, to promote understanding, collaboration and partnerships, seek greater international recognition, and to be a voice for regional governments in the field of SD at the global level. Current activities include enlargement of the network, promotion of fluid communication, and identification of priorities. The structural make up of the Network consists of the secretariat, the commissions, the steering committee, and the plenary which meets every three years. Finally Mr. Intxaurraga explained the addition in San Sebastian of the Academic Forum that is made up of experts, scientists and teachers representing all facets of the SD field to be a base of knowledge the network can utilize for any and all challenges and solutions.

The next speaker was the Under Secretary General, Nitin Desai who gave the UN perspective on the NRG4SD. He made the very important point that SD policy implemented by either the U.N. or any nation for that matter has a great impact on local citizens. At the same time the general population does not have the same impact on policy therefore creating a significant role for the NRG4SD to provide a voice for these people on the global level. Secretary Desai went on to tell of the U.N. constraints in recognizing and fully embracing the NRG4SD at this time because of a rather large grey area facing many global organizations as to the level of significance that should be assigned to sub-national organizations. The executive branch of nations which ultimately has the power to sign treaties holds the highest level of precedence in the UN however through partnerships Secretary Desai believed there was a vital role for the NRG4SD at the UN.

Other items addressed at the conference consisted of best mapping practices in the way of matrix forms and tables identifying strengths and weaknesses of specific regions and prioritising SD initiatives. SD strategies were also addressed showing the importance for reporting and policy making for SD, efficiency, tailored policies addressing specificities of regions, and collaboration on the national level. Developing bilateral relations is yet another key aspect the NRG4SD is attempting to specialize in through sorting out problematic infrastructure in developing countries, creating stronger relations with the microeconomic sector to overcome exploitation, pollution, and competition over resources.

The conference ended with a question and comment session which brought up the most stimulating and important issue of the night as to where exactly the NRG4SD wants to belong in the international arena and within the U.N. This question could not and may not be answered for a long time to come as it is not clear how current international institutions support and recognize sub-national organizations. One thing is clear that the future is very bright for the NRG4SD and the nature of its infancy leaves a great deal of room for growth and strengthening.

Ryan Troiani, Stakeholder Forum

Training for a Sustainable Future - *The Institute@CSD*

Courses are free and based on first-come registration basis. You

can register adjacent to the Johannesburg exhibit near the Vienna Café. The location is on 45th Street.

Thursday 8th May

Principles of Environmental Enforcement and Compliance

Time: 1 day **10:15-1:15 and 3-6**

Administered by: Davis Jones and Don Gipe, US Environmental Protection Agency

This course provides a framework for designing effective environmental compliance strategies to promote more effective cooperation among ministries, and other public and private sector groups.

Organizing Grassroots Councils for Resource Conservation

Time: 10:15 -1:15

Administered by: Sharon Ruggi and a panel of local, state, regional and national Resource Conservation & Development leaders.

This course will focus on public/private partnerships in making the best use of limited resources and the value of grass-roots involvement in making decisions about local areas.

Partnerships with the Business Sector

Time: 10:15 – 1:15

Administered by: Casper Sonesson, UNDP

This course will provide participants with inter-active approaches that aim to touch upon some experiences, lessons and tools for working through cross-sector partnerships.

Microfinance and Sustainable Development

Time: 10:15 – 1:15

Administered by: Annette Krauss and Jo Woodfin, UNCDF

This course will provide participants key principles and current trends in the provision of financial services through examining case studies about donor practices to support sustainable financial systems for the poor.

Essential Elements of a National ICT Strategy and How to Prepare One

Time: 3-6

Administered by: Sarah McCue, UNDP

This course will provide participants with practical how-to approaches to preparing a national level ICT Strategy that promotes sustainable development.

Working Together towards the Practical Application of the Human Rights-Based Approach to Development

Time: 3 - 6

Administered by: Simon Munzu, UNDP

Participants will examine the elements of a human rights-based development framework and its practical application in various areas of sustainable development.

STAKEHOLDER FORUM

CHAIR

David Hales & Gwen Malangwu

HONORARY VICE PRESIDENTS

Henrique Cavalcanti, Jaun Mayr, Bedrich Moldan, Mustafa Toulba, Simon Upton

STAFF

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DIARY

10.00 - 1.00	Working Group I. Conference Room 4
10.00 - 1.00	Working Group II. Conference Room 6
10.00 - 10.40	Global Partnership for Capacity Building to Implement the Globally Harmonised System for Chemical Classification & Labelling. Conference Room B
10.45 - 11.25	Partnership for Clean Indoor Air. Conference Room B
11.30 - 12.10	Trans-frontier Conservation Development-Expanded OUZIT Project. Conference Room B
3.00 - 6.00	Working Group I. Conference Room 4
3.00 - 6.00	Working Group II. Conference Room 6
3.00 - 4.30	Global Alliance for Building Sustainability: A Sustainable Built Environment. DHL Auditorium

Event Announcement:

IUCN will host a discussion on the role of civil society in the United Nations with Juan Mayr (Stakeholder Forum Honorary Vice President).

**Thursday 8th May.
1.15 - 2.45
Conference Room 7**

Juan Mayr has recently been appointed to UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's Panel of Eminent Persons on the Role of Civil Society in the United Nations

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