



CSD-7 AD HOC INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUPS

22 FEBRUARY - 5 MARCH 1999

The *Ad Hoc* Working Groups (AHWG) for the seventh session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-7) will meet from 22 February - 5 March 1999 at UN Headquarters in New York. The AHWG that will address matters related to Tourism and Consumption and Production Patterns, including recommendations on sustainable consumption for inclusion in the UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection (ECOSOC resolution 1997/53), will meet from 22-26 February 1999. The AHWG Working Group addressing matters related to Oceans and Seas and the Comprehensive Review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States will meet from 1-5 March 1999.

The two intersessional meetings will send several documents regarding their discussions to the CSD, which will meet in April 1999. Co-Chairs' summaries will reflect the overall thrust of the discussion, the main positions stated by delegations and will record, when necessary, alternative views. These summaries will be the subject of a round of discussions in the AHWG. They will not be negotiated and will be included in the report of the CSD as reference material outlining the state of international debate on the issue. Additional documents will identify elements for a draft decision to be negotiated at the CSD. These papers are intended to be concise and to be studied by delegations/groups in the period between the AHWG and the CSD with a view to formulating positions for negotiations in the drafting groups in April. The Chairman of the Commission, Simon Upton (New Zealand), will invite Ministers attending the High-Level Segment of the CSD to focus their statements on the proposals contained in these papers. On the comprehensive review of progress achieved in the Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (POA) for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS), the seventh session of the CSD and its *Ad Hoc* Working Group will act as preparatory bodies for the special session of the UN General Assembly and should result in a draft document for consideration and adoption by the Assembly. Accordingly, the format of the outcome of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on the issue of SIDS will be different from the outcomes of other agenda items.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CSD

The Commission on Sustainable Development was envisioned in Agenda 21, the programme of action adopted by the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Agenda 21 called for the creation of the CSD to: ensure effective follow-up of UNCED enhance international cooperation and rationalize intergovernmental decision-making capacity; and examine progress in Agenda 21 implementation at the local, national, regional and international levels. In 1992, the 47th session of the UN General Assembly set out, in Resolution 47/191, the terms of reference for the Commission, its composition, guidelines for the participation of NGOs, the organization of work, the CSD's relationship with other UN bodies, and Secretariat arrangements. The CSD held its first substantive session in June 1993 and has met annually since then.

In June 1997, five years after UNCED, the General Assembly held a special session (UNGASS) to review implementation of Agenda 21 Negotiations held in a Committee of the Whole, as well as several ministerial groups, produced a Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. Among the decisions adopted at UNGASS was the CSD work programme, which identifies sectoral, cross-sectoral and economic sector/major group themes for the subsequent four sessions of the Commission. Overriding issues for each year were to be poverty and consumption and production patterns.

The sixth session of the CSD met from 20 April to 1 May 1998. Participants considered the economic theme of industry and the sectoral theme of strategic approaches to freshwater management. They also reviewed implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and discussed the cross-sectoral themes of technology transfer capacity building, education, science and awareness raising. Three Drafting Groups negotiated seven CSD-6 decisions.

Regarding consumption and production patterns, informal consultations resulted in a CSD-6 decision recommending that ECOSOC adopt a draft that: recalls ECOSOC resolution 1997/53; notes the São Paulo Inter-regional Expert Group Meeting and its recommendations notes the UN Secretary-General's report; invites governments to consult appropriate stakeholder groups and submit views to the Secretariat, which should be made available to governments; invites the CSD Bureau to organize, within existing resources, open-ended consultations among States and to report to the ISWG, having regard for the Secretary-General's report; and requests the CSD to report to ECOSOC in 1999.

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Regarding the review of implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, CSD-6 noted the importance of the two-day special session to review the POA, which will be held immediately prior to the 54th General Assembly. The Commission urged the international community and other actors to actively engage in the preparations for the special session, and encouraged all SIDS to establish national development strategies. The Commission urged the international donor community to engage actively with SIDS to achieve realistic and positive outcomes and concrete assistance, including information on current donor activities. On climate change, the CSD urged the international community to commit adequate financial and technical resources to SIDS to build effective response measures and urged Annex I Parties of the FCCC (developed countries) to become Parties to the Kyoto Protocol as soon as possible. On freshwater resources, the Commission encouraged SIDS to develop an effective integrated approach to freshwater management and called on the international community to continue to provide support for regional and national efforts to promote sound water resource assessment and monitoring procedures, and demand management and policy frameworks, including the transfer of technologies. The CSD expressed concern at current trends in the levels of external resources available to SIDS for human resource development and strongly urged the international community to provide assistance at a level necessary to implement the POA. The Commission also noted that the development of a vulnerability index would assist in identifying the challenges to SIDS. UNCTAD, UNEP, DESA and others were called on to accord priority to analytical work on the vulnerability of SIDS.

MEETINGS RELATED TO CSD-7

The issues on the CSD-7 agenda have been discussed in a number of meetings over the past year. Three meetings related to consumption and production are summarized below.

INTER-REGIONAL EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION: DESA, in cooperation with the Environment Secretariat of the State Government of São Paulo, convened an Inter-Regional Expert Group meeting in São Paulo, Brazil from 28-30 January 1998. Approximately fifty people participated, including representatives of governments, consumer organizations, business and industry, the academic community, NGOs and international organizations. The meeting focused on the UN Guidelines on Consumer Protection and new guidelines proposed by Consumers International on the basis of regional consultations. The Expert Group Meeting did not attempt to reach consensus on precise wording for new guidelines, but focused on identifying the issues relating to sustainable consumption that should be incorporated into consumer protection policy and making recommendations as to how they might be effectively addressed. They did not review or revise the existing text of the UN Guidelines or consider other areas in which the Guidelines might be extended. Some believed that sustainable consumption could best be integrated into the Guidelines by introducing additional words into existing paragraphs, without otherwise changing the existing text.

CONSUMPTION IN A SUSTAINABLE WORLD: This workshop, which was organized and hosted by the Ministry of the Environment, Norway, in cooperation with UN DESA, OECD, and IIED, met in Kabelvaag, Norway from 2-4 June 1998. The workshop was attended by more than 50 individuals from 28 countries, including government officials and representatives of international and non-governmental organizations, industry, labor and the scientific community, participating in their personal capacities. Joke Waller Hunter, OECD Director for Environment, chaired the workshop.

The aims of the workshop were to: generate a shared understanding of sustainable consumption priorities; identify examples of good practice; lay the foundations for new international partnerships; and generate specific proposals to move the process forward. Workshop participants engaged in discussions in Plenary sessions and four discussion groups on sustainable consumption priorities, lessons from current sustainable consumption initiatives, key factors for the success of initiatives as well as elements that are missing, and international action on sustainable consumption. They formulated a number of new initiatives and recommendations for action that they committed themselves to undertake. The outcome of the workshop will be a workbook that incorporates these initiatives and recommendations as well as the conclusions from the discussions on the above topics. The workbook will be presented to CSD-7. The participants also agreed to form a Kabelvåg Task Force to take further steps to implement their recommendations.

EXPERT MEETING ON CONSUMPTION PATTERNS IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA: This meeting was hosted by the Republic of Korea in cooperation with UN/DESA and was jointly sponsored by the Norwegian and Swedish Governments. Cielito Habito, Chairman of CSD-6, chaired the meeting, which met on Cheju Island, Republic of Korea, from 27-29 January 1999.

The Expert Meeting considered three themes: the environmental impact of rising income levels in East Asia; the impacts of globalization; and the role of traditional lifestyles and cultural values in promoting sustainable consumption patterns. General conclusions noted that, since sustainable consumption is concerned with the quality of consumption (not only its quantity), it is relevant to all countries even before they are fully developed. Participants also noted that consideration of sustainable consumption issues is important to developing countries in order to avoid repeating the consumption patterns of developed countries, which are unsustainable. Furthermore, the sustainability of consumption patterns tends to deteriorate rapidly after a certain threshold as incomes rise. There seems to be no saturation point and policy intervention is necessary to reverse the trend. Finally, participants agreed there are ecologically sound traditional practices/lifestyles in East Asia that have the potential to make current consumption patterns more sustainable.

Recommendations included calls for government policies to involve a mix of instruments, particularly environmental education at all levels and economic instruments, and to find new mechanisms or to strengthen existing mechanisms to make trade liberalization compatible with sustainable consumption. Participants recommended identifying and recording those traditional practices that have the potential to contribute to sustainable consumption. Participants also agreed that further efforts should be undertaken to analyze in detail the links between sustainable consumption and rising income levels and globalization and traditional values in East Asia.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

OPENING SESSION AND GENERAL DISCUSSION: The *Ad Hoc* Working Group is expected to begin at 10:00 am in Conference Room 4. Initial agenda items include the election of officers, opening statements by the Co-Chairs, the introduction of the report of the Secretary-General and other documentation on consumption and production patterns, and reports from relevant intersessional meetings. Delegates are expected to discuss the issue of consumption and production patterns following these introductory items and to conclude their discussion during an afternoon meeting.