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SEVENTH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 19-30 APRIL 1999

The seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-7) opens today at UN Headquarters in New York and will meet until 30 April 1999. Participants are scheduled to consider the economic theme of tourism, the sectoral theme of oceans and seas, and the cross-sectoral theme of consumption and production patterns. They also will prepare for the UN General Assembly's comprehensive review of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Deliberations will begin with a four-session "Tourism Segment," from 19-21 April, during which representatives from local authorities, NGOs, workers and business and industry will engage in dialogue with government representatives on selected topics related to sustainable tourism. A High-Level Segment will take place from 21-23 April. Two drafting groups will be established during the second week to prepare decisions on the CSD-7 agenda items. Numerous side events are also scheduled throughout the two-week session.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CSD

The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) 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. The Commission, which was formally established in 1992 by UN General Assembly Resolution 47/191, held its first substantive session in June 1993 and has met annually since then.

In June 1997, five years after UNCED, the General Assembly (GA) held a Special Session (UNGASS) to review implementation of Agenda 21. Negotiations 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 (CSD-6) 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 Barbados Programme of Action (POA) for the Sustainable Development of 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, *inter alia*: recalls ECOSOC resolution 1997/53; invites governments to consult appropriate stakeholder groups and submit views to the Secretariat; invites the CSD Bureau to organize, within existing resources, open-ended consultations among States and to report to the intersessional working groups; and requests the CSD to report to ECOSOC in 1999.

Regarding the review of the Barbados POA implementation, CSD-6 noted the importance of the two-day Special Session to be held in 1999 (now scheduled for 27-28 September 1999). The Commission urged the international community to actively engage in preparations for the Special Session and encouraged all SIDS to establish national development strategies. The CSD 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 Framework Convention on Climate Change (developed countries) to become Parties to the Kyoto Protocol as soon as possible. On freshwater, 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 efforts to promote sound water resource assessment, management and policy frameworks, including the transfer of technologies. The CSD 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.

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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 and the CSD Intersessional meetings are summarized below.

INTER-REGIONAL EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON CONSUMER PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABLE

CONSUMPTION: The Department of Economic and Social Affairs (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. 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 focused on identifying the issues related 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.

CONSUMPTION IN A SUSTAINABLE WORLD: This workshop, which was organized and hosted by the Norwegian Ministry of the Environment, in cooperation with DESA, OECD and IIED, met in Kabelvåg, Norway from 2-4 June 1998. The workshop sought 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 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 which they committed themselves to undertake. The outcome of the workshop was a workbook that incorporates these initiatives and recommendations as well as the conclusions from the discussions on the above topics. 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, hosted by the Republic of Korea in cooperation with DESA and jointly sponsored by the Norwegian and Swedish Governments, was convened 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 to avoid repeating the consumption patterns of developed countries, and the sustainability of consumption patterns tends to deteriorate rapidly after a certain threshold as incomes rise. 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 strengthen existing mechanisms to make trade liberalization compatible with sustainable consumption. Participants recommended identi-

fying and recording 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.

CSD-7 INTERSESSIONALS: The CSD's Intersessional *Ad Hoc* Working Groups (ISWGs) met from 22 February-5 March 1999 at UN Headquarters in New York. The ISWG on sustainable consumption and production patterns and tourism met during the first week and the ISWG on oceans and seas and the sustainable development of SIDS met during the second week. The ISWGs drafted Co-Chairs' summaries of discussion and elements for draft CSD decisions on sustainable consumption and production patterns, tourism, and oceans and seas. The development of two documents represented a departure from previous ISWG outputs and CSD-7 Chair Simon Upton and the CSD Bureau's effort to encourage an early focus on key issues and proposals for action. The ISWG also developed draft proposals on the CSD's contribution to the upcoming Special Session of the General Assembly on SIDS.

The elements for a draft CSD decision on consumption and production patterns identifies priorities for future work and actions required for effective policy development and implementation. It also proposes actions related to natural resource management and cleaner production and calls for assessment of the impacts of globalization and urbanization on consumption and production. The possible elements for a draft CSD decision on tourism specifies objectives and partnerships that governments should pursue, encourages the tourism industry to develop and use voluntary initiatives in support of sustainable tourism, and identifies action that the international community could take.

The elements for a draft CSD decision on oceans and seas identifies major challenges at the national, regional and global levels and highlights areas of particular concern, including the sustainable management of fisheries and other living marine resources, land-based activities, and marine science and marine pollution. It also suggests actions to promote international coordination and cooperation on these issues. On SIDS, the ISWG agreed that the Co-Chairs would hold further informal consultations prior to CSD-7 on the basis of the ISWG's work. A revised text was to be produced based on these consultations and will be used as a basis for CSD-7 negotiations. The ISWG discussed, among others, capacity-building, finance, globalization and trade liberalization, technology transfer, a vulnerability index, information management, and several sectoral issues. Delegates also received a briefing on preparations for the CSD-9 discussion of energy. CSD-7 will begin preparations for CSD-9. Delegates considered establishing an Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development to be held in conjunction with the ISWGs in 2000 and 2001.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

OPENING PLENARY: Delegates will meet in Conference Room 1 during the morning to hear introductory statements and reports on intersessional activities and to adopt the agenda.

TOURISM SEGMENT: Representatives from government delegations, local authorities, NGOs, workers and business and industry will meet in Conference Room 1 during the afternoon to discuss "Industry Initiatives for Sustainable Tourism."

SIDE EVENTS: A UNEP briefing on the Regional Seas Programme will take place in Conference Room 1 from 1:15-2:45 pm. Check *CSD Today* for other side events.

LEARNING CENTER: The 1999 Sustainable Development Learning Center will be in Conference Room B for the duration of CSD-7.