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CSD-7 HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 19 APRIL 1999

The seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-7) met in an opening Plenary to hear introductory remarks and adopt its agenda. The Tourism Segment met during the afternoon to conduct a dialogue on "Industry Initiatives for Sustainable Tourism."

OPENING PLENARY

CSD-7 Chair Simon Upton (New Zealand) noted that CSD-7 Bureau members elected at the conclusion of CSD-6 were Simon Upton, Tibor Farago (Hungary) and George Talbot (Guyana). Addition Bureau members elected on 27 July 1998 are Largaton Ouattara (Cote D'Ivoire) and Navid Hanif (Pakistan). Sandor Mozes (Hungary) has since taken Farago's place. Ouattara will serve as Rapporteur.

Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, noted that CSD-7 would undertake the UN system's first look at tourism from the sustainability point of view. He highlighted the need for an appropriate framework. He noted the expectation that this session would contribute to more sustainable use of oceans and highlighted the importance of CSD preparations for the Special Session on SIDS.

Chair Upton introduced the agenda (E/CN.17/1999/1) and noted that three drafting groups would be established. Navid Hanif will chair consideration of production and consumption and tourism. Sandor Mozes will chair consideration of oceans and SIDS. George Talbot will chair consideration of procedural issues and energy. During the High-Level Segment, statements should be limited to five minutes, comments during the dialogue should not exceed two minutes, and extra time will be added to accommodate all speakers. Delegates agreed to invite three intergovernmental organizations to attend CSD-7 with observer status (E/CN.17/1999/L.2).

Navid Hanif, Co-Chair of the Intersessional *Ad Hoc* Working Group (ISWG) on consumption and production patterns and tourism, presented the ISWG's report (E/CN.17/1999/16). He outlined priority areas for the work programme on consumption and production patterns: effective policy development and implementation; natural resource management and cleaner production; and the impacts of globalization and urbanization. Alan Simcock, Co-Chair of the ISWG on oceans and seas and SIDS, presented the report of the ISWG (E/CN.17/1999/17). He noted the four major challenges identified by the ISWG in relation to oceans and seas: living marine resources; prevention of pollution and marine degradation from land-based and other

activities; scientific understanding of marine environmental protection; and international coordination and cooperation. ISWG Co-Chair John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) called attention to the upcoming review of implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and noted that CSD-7 will produce a text to serve as a basis for negotiation during the review. He reported that the ISWG worked on a draft text, further informal consultations took place prior to CSD-7, and further discussions will be held prior to the High-Level Segment.

CANADA presented the results of an intersessional, multi-stakeholder workshop on voluntary initiatives held in Toronto from 10-12 March 1999. She said the workshop resulted from CSD-6 dialogues on industry and sustainable development, and noted that Canada has found that voluntary, non-regulatory initiatives can be used as tools to complement regulations. SWITZERLAND presented a brochure on sustainable consumption and production. Chair Upton said fellow ministers have indicated that the CSD risks losing their interest if it does not produce something substantive. He said the CSD's job is not to negotiate but to illuminate and called for practical, achievable and modest outcomes.

TOURISM SEGMENT

Chair Upton asked participants to provide clear direction on what is to be done, by whom, and with what resources.

OPENING STATEMENTS: Geoffrey Lipman, President of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), on behalf of Industry, emphasized that with proper policy, management and operational frameworks, the travel and tourism industry can be the positive change agent for sustainable development. He underscored the economic, social and ecological contributions and potential of tourism, tourism's growing relevance to all nations, particularly developing countries, the changing culture of travel, and the positive contributions and strength of Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism.

Leroy Trotman, President of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), on behalf of Trade Unions, highlighted the possibilities of "Worker-Tourist Interface," through which workers in the tourist industry can help shape visitors' perceptions and practice more sustainable tourism themselves. He said training and guidance of workers is needed and recommended joint worker-employer focus programmes with representative trade unions coordinating efforts, setting workplace targets and monitoring progress. He said this could serve as a model for non-unionized workplaces and small- and medium-sized enterprises.

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Beate Weber, Mayor of Heidelberg, on behalf of Local Authorities, stressed that environmental impacts must be assessed prior to decisions for all major activities, and eco-auditing is a useful instrument for individual enterprises. She noted the role that local authorities can play as facilitators between different interests affected by tourism. She emphasized the need for tourism plans to be integrated into local and regional development planning.

Velda Dhanoolal, Network of NGOs of Trinidad and Tobago for the Advancement of Women and Pan-African Movement, on behalf of NGOs, stressed that sustainable tourism must support development at the local level. She said tourism planning should enable local communities to assess the feasibility of tourism and national councils comprised of multiple stakeholders should work to adopt National Sustainable Tourism Plans based on Agenda 21. She said Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism could be a useful policy framework and called for a multi-stakeholder advisory group to examine its improvement and practical implementation.

Mark Hambley (US) recommended surveying the implementation and effectiveness of existing guidelines on sustainable tourism, and said the CSD should decide in 2002 whether international guidelines are needed. He recommended greater discussion and implementation of best practices. He stressed the need for increased dissemination and application of research that assesses environmental and economic impacts of tourism and called for further exploration of the potential of international tourism for developing countries and the social aspects of tourism. Libran Cabactuan (Philippines) stressed that developing countries are tourism exporters and consideration must be given to socio-cultural dimensions. He noted the need to ensure that planning respects cultural and social norms, recognize the need for human resource development, and increase opportunities for participation of women and youth.

DIALOGUE: Chair Upton welcomed the multi-stakeholder dialogue and called for focused interventions that emphasize industry initiatives and involvement. He underscored baseline information against which progress can be measured and noted its importance in assessing carrying capacity, especially for countries like SIDS. He underscored that information for benchmarking and indicators had to be generated by all stakeholders.

On indicators, baseline setting, benchmarking and carrying capacity, NGOs stressed that industry must employ them and put them into comprehensive programmes that ensure transparency. The US underscored that sectoral benchmarks should be created by governments. NGOs called for work on socio-cultural criteria and invited the CSD to finalize indicators for sustainable tourism with full stakeholder participation. NGOs appealed to industry to utilize information from non-market sources and develop criteria and indicators and best practice cases. NGOs urged consideration of initiatives that industry should undertake to use sustainable tourism to eradicate poverty and assessment of health impacts of tourism. Industry said that tourism opportunities and problems vary in different destinations, and information-gathering for benchmarks and baseline setting should take this into account. SAMOA indicated that setting international standards modifies behavior and said the issue would be best discussed at regional or sub-regional levels.

On auditing, industry informed participants about the Green Globe Initiative for independent auditing to promote sustainable tourism. NGOs commented on the need to discuss other initiatives as well. Trade Unions drew attention to the need for follow-up and external auditing for effective certification. Industry drew attention to the importance of continued CSD work on voluntary mechanisms, recognizing OECD's work in this area. CHINA and GHANA cautioned that when discussing tourism, the CSD should appreciate that in many developing countries, tourism is a luxury.

On regulatory reform and voluntary initiatives, Trade Unions called for further action. Local Authorities highlighted the need to balance voluntary and regulatory controls at the local level. NGOs emphasized that voluntary initiatives and regulations should be country-specific and highlighted the need to draw lessons from the negative effects of the globalization of tourism. Local Authorities requested that the CSD-7 decision on tourism reflect the consensus that multi-stakeholder collaboration should include local governments and refer to Local Agenda 21s as mechanisms to do this. Trade Unions suggested forging connections between the OECD's review of regulatory reform and the multi-stakeholder review of voluntary agreements. Trade Unions underlined the need for CSD support to implement existing agreements, such as those on sexual exploitation of children. NGOs highlighted a campaign against child sex tourism and emphasized that it can only be eliminated if women are offered alternative employment.

Chair Upton suggested that the major groups meet to develop advice regarding appropriate efforts on the regulatory side, additional efforts industry could undertake and necessary action by local and national governments. In summary, NGOs welcomed industry initiatives but said they must fit into a broader context, and stressed multi-stakeholder participation and transparency in these efforts. He noted strong agreement on the importance of indicators, whose elaboration the CSD could oversee. Local Authorities favored voluntary initiatives and self-regulation but said they are supplemental to regulation. He also stressed focusing on the local level when developing plans and setting standards. Trade Unions underscored the need for further consideration of benchmarking. Industry emphasized that, if the major groups were able to reach agreement on recommended actions, they would expect strong support from the CSD and governments to implement them.

IN THE CORRIDORS I

Trade Union, Local Authority, NGO and Industry representatives reconvened Monday evening to search for consensus on their contributions to the Tourism Segment. The dialogue was intended to focus on industry initiatives. A trade union representative compared the afternoon dialogue inputs to opening positions in a negotiation, confirming the need for a follow-up opportunity for parties to identify common priorities. The value of the session, according to a local authority representative, will depend on the willingness of ministers to take up recommendations from the dialogue.

IN THE CORRIDORS II

The CSD's role in providing a global platform and networking opportunity for stakeholders was demonstrated on Monday by the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the tourism industry body, the World Travel and Tourism Council, and the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives. The two organizations agreed, among other things, to explore how the principles of Agenda 21 for Travel and Tourism and Local Agenda 21 planning can be integrated into their respective work.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

TOURISM SEGMENT: The Tourism Segment will conduct dialogue sessions on "Changing Consumer Behavior" during the morning and "Promoting Broad-based Sustainable Development through Tourism while Safeguarding the Integrity of Local Cultures and Protecting the Environment" during the afternoon. Both meetings will be held in Conference Room 1.

SIDE EVENTS: The Swiss Delegation will host an event on Tourism and Sustainable Mountain Development from 6:15-7:00 pm in Conference Room 1. See *CSD Today* for additional side events.