



## SUMMARY OF THE CSD INTERSESSIONAL *AD HOC* WORKING GROUP ON INTEGRATED PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND RESOURCES & SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: 28 FEBRUARY - 3 MARCH 2000

The Commission on Sustainable Development's (CSD) Intersessional *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources & Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development, serving as a preparatory meeting for CSD-8, met from 28 February to 3 March 2000 at UN Headquarters in New York. The Working Group produced Co-Chairs' summaries of discussions on the two clusters of issues, land resources and sustainable agriculture, and two documents outlining possible elements for action-oriented decisions at CSD-8. The Co-Chairs' summaries and elements papers were attached to their Report of the Meeting of the Working Group.

There was a consensus at the Working Group that delegates had taken the advice of CSD-8 Chair Juan Mayr (Colombia) and held back from embarking on full negotiations on some of the difficult issues surrounding the linkages between land resources, agriculture and trade. Nevertheless, a number of "hot spots" emerged, including: the multi-functional character of agriculture and land, women and equal access to land tenure rights, application of the precautionary principle in the context of biotechnology, good governance, responses to trade liberalization, and financing Agenda 21 implementation.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CSD

The CSD emerged from 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. 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 Implemen-

tation 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 Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and discussed the cross-sectoral themes of technology transfer, capacity building, education, science and awareness raising.

The seventh session of the CSD met at UN Headquarters in New York from 19-30 April 1999. Participants considered the economic theme of tourism, the sectoral theme of oceans and seas and the cross-sectoral theme of consumption and production patterns. They also prepared for the UN General Assembly's Special Session to review the Barbados Programme of Action.

**THE CSD ON LAND RESOURCES AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE:** In 1997, UNGASS agreed in its multi-year programme of work that CSD-8 should consider the topic of integrated planning and management of land resources as its sectoral theme. Chapters 10-15 of Agenda 21 deal with land resources. The multi-year programme of work identifies agriculture as the economic sector to be taken up at CSD-8. While a particular focus for the review work is Chapter 14 of Agenda 21, on promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD), UNGASS called on the Commission to undertake an integrated discussion from the broad perspective of sustainable development.

### IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the CSD .....	1
Report of the Intersessional <i>Ad Hoc</i> Working Group .....	2
Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources .....	2
Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development .....	3
Closing Plenary .....	5
A Brief Analysis of the Meeting .....	5
Things to Look For: Land Resources and SARD .....	7

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Peter Doran <pdforan@hotmail.com>, Jan-Stefan Fritz <j.fritz@lse.ac.uk> and Jonathon Hanks <jon.hanks@iiee.lu.se>. The Editor is Pamela Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Managing Editor is Langston James "Kimo" Goree <kimo@iisd.org>. Digital editing by Leila Mead <leila@interport.net>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the United States (through USAID), the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and the European Commission (DG-XI.) General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2000 is provided by the German Federal Ministry of Environment (BMU) and the German Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation (BMZ), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Environment of Austria, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Environment of Finland, the Government of Sweden, the Government of Australia, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and BP Amoco. The *Bulletin* can be contacted by e-mail at <enb@iisd.org> and at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted by e-mail at <info@iisd.ca> and at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada. The opinions expressed in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications only and only with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Managing Editor. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists and can be found on the Linkages WWW server at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/>. The satellite image was taken above New York ©2000 The Living Earth, Inc. <http://livingearth.com>. For information on the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, send e-mail to <enb@iisd.org>.



## REPORT OF THE INTERSESSIONAL *AD HOC* WORKING GROUP

The CSD Intersessional *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources & Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development was opened by Choi Seok-young (Republic of Korea), on behalf of CSD-8 Chair Juan Mayr on Monday, 28 February. The Working Group elected two Co-Chairs by acclamation: Patrick McDonnell (Ireland) and Modesto Francisco Fernandez Diaz-Silveira (Cuba).

Delegates were informed that the CSD Bureau had decided to invite the Working Group to prepare two papers for the Land Resources & Agriculture clusters: a Co-Chairs' Summary of the Discussion and an action-oriented Co-Chairs' paper setting possible elements for a decision by CSD-8. Documents before the Working Group on land resources, included a Report of the Secretary-General on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources (E/CN.17/2000/6), and an addendum on Conservation of Biological Diversity (E/CN.17/2000/6/Add.4). On sustainable agriculture, delegates had before them the Report of the Secretary-General on SARD (E/CN.17/2000/7) and addenda on Urbanization and Sustainable Agricultural Development (E/CN.17/2000/7/Add.1), and Biotechnology for Sustainable Agriculture (E/CN.17/2000/7/Add.2). An addendum on water was not ready for distribution at the Working Group and will be taken up for discussion at CSD-8, at the request of Egypt. A number of background documents, on land tenure and cadastral infrastructures, organic agriculture and information for rural women, were also distributed.

The Working Group adjourned at midday on Monday, met throughout the day on Tuesday, and met only in the afternoon on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The G-77/China made a number of requests for time to prepare responses to the documentation. On Monday, representatives from major groups preparing for the CSD-8 Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Sustainable Agriculture made a series of presentations. The Co-Chairs introduced their first draft Summaries and Elements papers on land resources for discussion on Wednesday. The Co-Chairs' first drafts on sustainable agriculture were available for discussion on Thursday. The revised Co-Chairs' papers on land resources were distributed Thursday. The revised Co-Chairs' papers on sustainable agriculture were made available on Friday and discussed, together with the revised papers on land resources, on Friday afternoon at the final Plenary.

### ***CO-CHAIRS' REVISED SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION ON INTEGRATED PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND RESOURCES***

**INTRODUCTION:** The Co-Chairs' Summary notes the importance of an integrated approach to planning and managing land resources, taking into account economic, social, environmental and cultural aspects of land use.

**LAND DEGRADATION:** This section notes that threatened ecosystems and land productivity cannot be effectively addressed without eradicating poverty and hunger. Soil protection measures are cited as important for increased food production, food security, and protecting biodiversity. Land degradation is attributed to a lack of adequate technologies, information, training, and financial resources. The section also notes that identifying areas of land degradation can be important in determining conservation priorities.

**LAND MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS:** This section highlights that integrated planning and management requires interactive, transparent and participatory decision-making frameworks. In developing countries these require increased international and national support. The need to improve security of tenure and access to land for vulnerable groups is highlighted. The section also notes that land tenure has

social, economic and environmental aspects and responsibilities, and is governed by culture, tradition and law. The need for an integrated approach to the management of fragile mountain environments is noted. The section also highlights: integrated and accessible information systems; sustainable urban planning to address the needs of people living in poverty; the particular challenges facing economies in transition (EIT); and participation.

### **REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION:**

This section highlights the importance of regional efforts to address transboundary impacts of land degradation. It notes the role of UN and international organizations in strengthening and supporting national and regional efforts, including work on information and monitoring systems. The section notes that trade liberalization can have positive and negative impacts on land resources, and that, in conjunction with national economic and agricultural policies, it can contribute to land protection. Also highlighted is the need for: increased resources and investment; further exchange of knowledge and best practices; and the transfer of new technologies. On international institutions, the section highlights: the role of international instruments in supporting cooperation; the importance of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) and an adequately financed Global Mechanism; the need to strengthen the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) and related arrangements; and the implementation of the Habitat agenda. Finally, the section cites the views of many delegations on declining official development assistance (ODA).

### ***CO-CHAIRS' REVISED POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT DECISION ON INTEGRATED PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND RESOURCES***

**INTRODUCTION:** This section identifies key relationships between land management and sustainable development, and calls for activities on integrated planning and land management in accordance with Agenda 21. It calls on countries to promote sustainable land management within national sustainable development strategies.

**PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE WORK:** This section identifies five priority areas for future work. During discussions of the first draft, the US and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION requested more explicit prioritization of "access to land and security of tenure." The EU suggested reference to ecosystems, urban and rural interactions, and access to information. MEXICO recommended an additional area on institutional frameworks and the G-77/CHINA suggested a new priority on financial resources. The revised document identifies the following priorities:

- prevention and/or mitigation of land degradation;
- access to land and security of tenure;
- critical sectors and issues;
- stakeholder participation; and
- international cooperation.

The following critical sectors and issues are identified: biodiversity, forests, arid land, mountain areas, wetlands and coastal zones, natural disasters and rural-urban interactions.

**PREVENTION AND/OR MITIGATION OF LAND DEGRADATION:** This section specifies actions for governments on land degradation, desertification, deforestation, and destruction of biodiversity. During discussion of the first draft, the G-77/CHINA emphasized the responsibility of developed countries and international organizations. The EU proposed that the CCD be addressed separately, and suggested reference to prevention of natural disasters and monitoring systems. The revised document urges governments to:

- promote soil conservation and enhancement and protection of vegetation;
- strengthen institutional frameworks;
- promote the development of land-use indicators and monitoring; and



- support international efforts to alleviate poverty.

**ACCESS TO LAND AND SECURITY OF TENURE:** In this section governments are encouraged to implement laws guaranteeing property rights and improved access to land and security of tenure, particularly for disadvantaged groups. During discussion, the G-77/CHINA highlighted the role of culture and traditions in developing land tenure policies. The revised document includes a new paragraph highlighting the role of traditional landowners, land users and landless people as participants in land tenure reform and in developing land cadastrals.

**CRITICAL SECTORS AND ISSUES:** This section outlines specific actions for governments to address critical sectors and issues of concern. During discussion of the Co-Chairs' first draft, the G-77/CHINA suggested urging governments and the international community to implement the IFF proposals, and, with the EU, proposed reference to the Biosafety Protocol. MEXICO focused on biological resources in zones of poverty, high biodiversity and indigenous people. The EU proposed a subsection on arid land. The US suggested the inclusion of coastal areas, and EGYPT raised irrigated agricultural lands. The revised section urges governments to:

- implement the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Biosafety Protocol;
- adequately plan and manage land resources in mountainous areas and associated lowlands, recognizing small-scale production systems and ensuring local reinvestment of derived benefits;
- provide for conserving wetlands and coastal zones in sustainable development strategies; and
- provide for land use interdependencies between rural and urban areas, taking into account the strategic role of local authorities.

With the international community, governments are urged to: implement the IFF proposals for action; address the depletion of water resources in arid areas; and implement preventive strategies to deal with natural disasters.

**STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION:** This section highlights effective stakeholder participation. During discussions, the EU suggested a reference to "access to information," while the US emphasized reference to "stakeholders." VENEZUELA and the EU preferred to reference indigenous "communities." The revised document urges governments to strengthen institutional frameworks for effective access to information and stakeholder participation, including women, people in poverty and indigenous and local communities.

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION:** This section outlines the responsibilities of governments and the international community for ensuring international coordination of land management. During discussion of the first draft, the G-77/CHINA emphasized the role of the international community and developed countries in providing financial assistance and technology transfer. He called for the participation of international and regional financial institutions at CSD-8. The EU underlined the primacy of domestic resources, and suggested introducing a call for the international community to support implementation of the Global Mechanism of the CCD and ratification of the Kyoto Protocol. The revised document urges governments to: strengthen regional and international cooperation; promote the transfer of appropriate technologies, research, awareness and training; and ratify and implement relevant international agreements. With the international community, governments are urged to fulfill relevant financial commitments and to render technological assistance.

#### **CO-CHAIRS' REVISED SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION ON SARD**

**INTRODUCTION:** The Co-Chairs' Summary highlights the importance of agriculture for attaining the objectives of SARD and the World Food Summit (WFS) Plan of Action. It notes that reforms in the

agriculture sector are intended to provide, *inter alia*, stable legislative frameworks. The section acknowledges a lack of consensus on the multi-functional aspects of agriculture.

**FOOD SECURITY AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION:** This section identifies food security as a global priority. The need for continued food aid is also cited. To ensure food security, food-importing countries are urged to introduce measures to enhance domestic food production and improve food storage. Slow progress on SARD is linked to increasing poverty in developing countries.

**AGRICULTURAL TRADE:** This section highlights the positive and negative effects of trade liberalization on agriculture and rural development, and states that environmentally harmful subsidies and other trade distorting policies should be eliminated. It also notes that trade liberalization can improve resource use and reduce poverty using mutually supportive social and environmental measures.

**SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION SYSTEMS:** This section highlights the links between: ecosystems, productivity and poverty; rural and urban areas; and biodiversity and agriculture. It notes that some countries have adopted an ecosystem approach to SARD. The need to eliminate unsustainable inputs into agricultural production and the importance of water are also stressed. On organic farming, the section notes possible limits and risks, and adds that the international community should assist developing countries to take advantage of it.

**BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOSAFETY:** This section highlights: the possible contribution of biotechnology to food security; the precautionary principle; respect for traditional farming practices and the rights of indigenous people and local communities; investment to develop affordable technology; the importance of research and genetic approaches to agricultural productivity; and implementation of the Biosafety Protocol.

**PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT:** This section highlights the importance of: empowerment, participation and partnerships; community-based approaches; and security of tenure.

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION:** This section notes that many countries felt that the CCD should receive adequate support, and others felt that financial flows should come through CBD and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) related mechanisms. The need to complement foreign direct investment (FDI) with domestic resources and ODA is also noted. With regard to international institutions, the section urges that: financial institutions support technology transfer; UN agencies support Agenda 21 implementation and the WFS target; and, with the private sector and others, international agencies assist in developing early warning and environmental monitoring systems. The section also highlights: donor coordination; environmentally sound technologies (ESTs); research, training and knowledge transfer; and information technology.

#### **CO-CHAIRS' REVISED POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT DECISION BY CSD-8 ON SARD**

**INTRODUCTION:** This section identifies the major objective of SARD as increased food production and enhanced food security, pursued in a sustainable manner.

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION:** This section outlines the priority issues for future action. Extensive revisions were introduced during discussions on the first draft, including the introduction of four new priority areas. The week's discussion and the resulting priorities for action are outlined below.

**Implementation of SARD Goals:** The EU suggested including additional paragraphs urging governments to: formulate sustainable development strategies by 2002; integrate agriculture into rural development frameworks; consider the health impacts of agriculture; and support the CBD and the FAO. On environmentally-sound farming, the G-77/CHINA suggested reference to the CBD and the Global



Mechanism of the CCD. CANADA proposed a paragraph urging governments to develop participatory rural development policies. The revised document urges governments to:

- complete national strategies for sustainable development;
- reaffirm commitments to ensuring food security and the WFS target;
- integrate agriculture into rural development frameworks, using a cross-sectoral approach;
- promote sustainable natural resource management approaches to agriculture;
- develop a national policy and legal framework for sustainable rural development;
- consider the possible multi-functional character of agriculture in promoting SARD;
- pursue an ecosystem approach to SARD; and
- provide for the human health effects of agricultural production and consumption.

**Access to Resources:** This section urges governments to implement laws guaranteeing equitable ownership, access to land and security of tenure, through well-defined, enforceable land property rights, particularly for disadvantaged communities. It also notes the value of micro-credit schemes.

**Poverty Eradication:** There was some debate on the level of priority to be given to this issue. The G-77/CHINA, with EGYPT, suggested shifting this subsection to the end of the Priorities section, while the EC gave prominence to the issue. The revised document urges governments and the international community to implement their commitments on poverty eradication.

**Financing for SARD:** The EC added a paragraph on domestic resources, while the US included reference to rural financial mechanisms, and urged greater use of existing financial mechanisms. The revised document notes that domestic resources will continue to be the main source for financing SARD, and urges governments to provide an enabling environment for mobilizing domestic resources and FDI. The international community is urged to fulfill Agenda 21 commitments for provision of financial assistance and to provide support for institutional reform in developing countries and EITs.

**Technology Transfer and Capacity Building:** The G-77/CHINA emphasized the role of international financial institutions, while the US highlighted the private sector and farmer participation. The EC proposed dissemination of ESTs held by international organizations. JAPAN called for specific reference to the multi-functional aspects of agriculture. The revised document urges governments, relevant international organizations and the private sector to: increase cooperative research in sustainable agriculture and rural development; and increase their contribution for capacity building and technology transfer, noting the need to disseminate ESTs held by international organizations.

**Biotechnology:** The G-77/CHINA, with the EC and AUSTRALIA, emphasized the role of the precautionary principle, with AUSTRALIA noting Principle 15 of the Rio Declaration. The EC urged ratification of the Biosafety Protocol. The US proposed the removal of specific reference to the precautionary principle. The revised document encourages governments to:

- cautiously explore the potential of appropriate and safe biotechnology for enhancing SARD, based on the precautionary principle;
- ratify the Biosafety Protocol;
- develop appropriate legal frameworks and strategies to protect biodiversity and the assessment of living modified organisms for deliberate release into the environment; and
- promote applications of biotechnology that are “ethically and environmentally acceptable” and do not have adverse health effects.

**Genetic Resources:** POLAND proposed replacing “protection” with “sustainable use” of genetic resources. The revised document urges governments to strengthen efforts for the sustainable use and conservation of genetic resources, finalize negotiations on the International Undertaking on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and to implement the Leipzig Plan of Action on Plant Genetic Resources and the Global Strategy on the Management of Farm Animal Genetic Resources.

**Integrated Pest Management and Sustainable Plant Nutrition:** The US emphasized the potential of alternatives to unsustainable chemical use, and the EC urged governments to finalize negotiations on a treaty on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). The revised document urges governments to eliminate unsustainable use of plant protection products and fertilizers, and to finalize negotiations of a binding treaty on POPs.

**Desertification and Drought:** This section urges governments and relevant international organizations to promote integration of national action plans to combat desertification under the CCD, within national sustainable development strategies.

**Access to Land and Security of Tenure:** In this section, governments are encouraged to adopt policies and laws guaranteeing enforceable property rights and enforceable access to land and security of tenure, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

**Emergency Preparedness:** This section calls on international agencies and relevant organizations to assist governments in capacity building for early warning and environmental monitoring.

**INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: Agricultural Trade:** The G-77/CHINA suggested deleting references to social and environmental concerns and environmentally harmful subsidies. On LDCs, the EC, with NORWAY, added paragraphs on improved market access and implementation of specific international agreements. The revised document urges governments to:

- work towards further liberalization of trade in agriculture products, taking into account non-trade concerns such as food security and the environment;
- promote market access for agricultural products from LDCs, giving consideration to developed countries’ commitment to grant duty-free and quota-free market access for essentially all products originating in LDCs; and
- implement the Marrakesh Ministerial Decision, the WTO Plan of Action for LDCs, and the Joint Commitment of the IMF, World Bank and WTO.

**Information Exchange and Dissemination:** During discussions, the G-77/CHINA added reference to information technology. The US suggested encouraging the private sector to promote access to information. The revised draft urges governments and relevant international organizations to: disseminate information and promote farmers’ access to information on sustainable agriculture practices.

**UN and Other International Activities:** The revised draft calls upon: the FAO and relevant international organizations to assist in developing policies, regulations, and data collection methodologies; the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to strengthen its assistance to rural communities in developing countries; and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) to increase research on integrated natural resources.

**Participation:** The US, with the EC, suggested reference to partnership with the private sector. The EC proposed the creation of an *ad hoc* informal, open-ended working group on SARD. NEW ZEALAND highlighted the importance of women, empowerment and participation. The revised section urges governments and relevant international organizations to “further develop” innovative institutional mecha-



nisms to ensure effective stakeholder participation; and invites the UN Secretariat and the FAO to jointly facilitate the establishment of an *ad hoc*, informal, open-ended working group on SARD.

### CLOSING PLENARY

Co-Chair McDonnell opened the final Plenary meeting and invited general comments on the draft Summary and Possible Elements for a CSD-8 Decision on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources.

**INTEGRATED PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT OF LAND RESOURCES:** The G-77/CHINA, with EGYPT, suggested changing references to arid lands to “desertification and drought.” In the section on arid lands, he proposed reference to effective implementation of the CCD. He objected that good governance and labor standards should not be addressed in the section

The EU announced a number of issues he intended to raise at CSD-8, including: the need to emphasize an enabling environment; accountable decision making; dispute resolution; good governance; the importance of domestic resources; access to information; right of appeal against planning decisions; indicators and monitoring systems; cross-border strategies; human settlements; and the need for clear language on desertification. On access to land and security of tenure, the EU, with the US and CANADA, asked that reference to “respective culture and tradition” be deleted.

The US suggested several changes, including: replacing “unsustainable forest practices” with “promote sustainable forest management;” “arid lands” to be changed to “drylands;” and the section on international cooperation to be renamed “International Cooperation for Capacity Building, Information Sharing and Technology Transfer.” AUSTRALIA expressed difficulty with a reference to health and suggested adding reference to “objective and transparent, scientifically-based risk assessment.” He cautioned that text on mountain areas was coded language for a reference to the multi-functional character of agriculture. The G-77/CHINA cautioned against using terms such as “scientifically objective,” and good governance.

**CO-CHAIRS’ SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION ON SARD:** SWITZERLAND, supported by NORWAY, expressed regret that the role of consumers in SARD had not been addressed and emphasized the value of transparent markets for sustainable consumption and production. The US suggested replacing “precautionary principle” with “precautionary approach.”

**POSSIBLE ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT DECISION ON SARD: General Comments:** The US recommended greater consistency in references to SARD and food security. NEW ZEALAND expressed concern at the length of the Co-Chairs’ text and the implications for work at the CSD-8.

**Implementation of SARD Goals:** The EC, with the REPUBLIC OF KOREA and JAPAN, welcomed the reference to encouraging governments to consider the possible role of the multi-functional character of agriculture in promoting SARD, in order to reach a broader and deeper consensus about its definition and value, and on a policy approach to enhance it. AUSTRALIA, with ARGENTINA, BRAZIL, CANADA, CHILE, INDONESIA, NEW ZEALAND and the US, asked that all references to the multi-functional character of agriculture be deleted, noting that no consensus on the concept had been achieved at the WTO or FAO, and arguing that the CSD should focus on SARD. ARGENTINA objected to the manner in which the item had been introduced.

**Access to Resources:** The EC and US expressed concern and suggested using language agreed at Habitat II. On this basis, the EC suggested that the priority action relating to “access to land and security of tenure” should be deleted.

**Technology Transfer and Capacity Building:** The G-77/CHINA suggested deleting reference to “appropriate” transfer, and added references to EST and rapid dissemination.

**Biotechnology:** The US proposed deleting the word “cautiously” in a reference to the exploration of the potential of biotechnology for enhancing food security, and, with CANADA, suggested replacing “precautionary principle” with “precautionary approach.” NORWAY preferred a specific reference to the precautionary principle. On the requirement to develop strategies to assess living modified organisms for deliberate release into the environment, the G-77/CHINA requested deleting reference to “deliberate release,” while the US replaced the phrase with “intentional introduction.” CANADA expressed concern at the “ambiguous” text referring to “ethically and environmentally acceptable” applications. He emphasized the use of “objective, transparent science-based risk assessment techniques.”

**Integrated Pest Management and Sustainable Plant Nutrition:** The US and CANADA recommended a more positive framing of the text. He supported SWITZERLAND’s proposal to address the role of consumer groups.

**Agricultural Trade:** The G-77/CHINA deleted reference to the requirement that “non-trade concerns, including food security and the need to protect the environment” should be taken into account when liberalizing trade. The EC highlighted the need for continued study of this issue, arguing that it should be a key element of the CSD-8 discussions. The US proposed new text, urging governments to note non-trade concerns.

**Participation:** The US, NEW ZEALAND, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION, INDONESIA and CHILE, expressed reservations about the proposed establishment of an *ad hoc* informal open-ended working group on SARD, and noted the work undertaken by the FAO.

**CONCLUSION:** Co-Chair Fernandez Diaz-Silveira invited delegates to adopt the Report of the Working Group (E/CN.17/ISWG.1/2000/L.1) to which the Summaries and Elements for Draft Decisions would be added. The Working Group adopted the Report. In closing remarks, the EU expressed concern that the outcome from CSD-8 may be endangered by the session’s overloaded agenda. He called on delegates to use the time available at CSD-8 in the most efficient way, and noted that the Working Group had not completed a second substantive consideration of the Co-Chairs’ texts. He supported G-77/CHINA concerns about the late distribution of translated documentation. The G-77/CHINA joined the EU in encouraging the Secretariat to produce documentation in time to get reactions from capitals, adding that work could be completed more quickly if new concepts were not introduced for deliberation.

Co-Chair Fernandez Diaz-Silveira conceded that the Co-Chairs had not always found a balance on the very complicated and sensitive subjects before the Working Group and he offered a personal commitment to help find a consensus at CSD-8. Co-Chair McDonnell supported his Co-Chair’s comments and added that consensus was not always possible at the Working Group stage in the process. He declared the Working Group closed shortly after 5:30 pm.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE MEETING

### CREATING MORE LIGHT AND LESS HEAT AT THE CSD

There was broad consensus at the Intersessional Working Group that delegates had taken the advice of CSD-8 Chair Juan Mayr and chose to avoid head-on confrontation over the most difficult issues of the meeting. The controversial issues included the policy implications of the multi-functional character of agriculture, responses to trade liberalization, and land tenure, notably the tension between “traditional” property rights and the exclusion of women. This brief analysis will identify some of the likely “hot spots” that have been flagged for



the forthcoming deliberations on land resources and agriculture at CSD-8. The analysis will go on to make some observations about the prospects for dealing with controversial topics in a way that generates more light than heat. This is essentially the task Juan Mayr has set for himself at CSD-8, with the backing of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

**HOT SPOTS:** A G-77/China delegate confirmed that delegations at the Working Group had limited their interventions on controversial issues. Nevertheless, he was in no doubt, together with a US counterpart, that more vigorous exchanges would follow at CSD-8. Delegates' restraint at the Working Group was influenced, in part, by a desire to avoid pre-judging issues and tying the hands of their ministers, who are being pressed, by Chair Mayr, to play a stronger role in the CSD.

Participants identified a number of reasons for the restrained debate on trade issues. These include Chair Mayr's appeal to delegations to hold back and use the Working Group to identify their agenda for CSD-8. Some felt that the Seattle sting had been taken out of the European Union's debate with the G-77/China over duty-free access for essentially all products from the Least Developed Countries, thanks to clarifications offered at UNCTAD X. The EU has clarified that it intends to offer quota-free access alongside duty-free access to the LDCs.

One of the "hot spots" at CSD-8 will be the debate on the multi-functional character of agriculture. This concept is highly contested, and mirrors the fate of sustainable development itself. Like sustainable development, the idea of multiple functions derived from agricultural activity can be presented as self evident when treated as a simple observation. In the context of trade-related deliberations, however, the concept comes to be viewed as a normative or prescriptive statement on the importance of the environmental and social functions of agriculture, with implications for trade policy. Agricultural activity can be viewed as the agent of soil conservation, landscape protection, the preserver of rural communities and the cradle of local knowledge and cultural networks. A European observer suggested that the debate on the multiple functions of agriculture demonstrated the CSD's weakness when it comes to discussions on policy. He argued that debate on the policy implications of an issue demands the discipline of a very different kind of forum, such as the World Trade Organization, where a thorough examination of trade distorting potentials (and measures to counter these) can be negotiated and given legal authority. At the CSD, the absence of such authority encourages limited responses to challenging proposals: "yes" or "no." The CSD must, therefore, avoid para-negotiations and encourage only exploratory discussion that reflects its modest mandate.

Another hot spot at CSD-8 will be the debate on strengthening land tenure rights. The European Union is expected to play an even stronger hand at the CSD, introducing Habitat II language on "equal access" to tenure. This position will be pitched against the G-77/China's argument that the design of land tenure systems is best left to local cultures and traditional practices. Skeptical opponents read the G-77/China language on culture and tradition as a continuing defense of women's exclusion from the right to own and inherit property. As one delegate commented, the message from some developing countries is: "Women get back in your box."

In a similar vein, the Europeans and the G-77/China are expected to go to the wire on the issue of "good governance," a demanding concept that helps to make the necessary links between political process (democracy, transparency, accountability and societal learning) and objective (sustainable and equitable development).

**LINKING HOT SPOTS AND PROCESS:** Inevitably, the most difficult issues that emerged involved the complex and sensitive linkages between agriculture and trade liberalization. Such issues helped to underline the value of Chair Mayr's calls for a more informal and

low-key exploratory approach to issues at the CSD. Some NGOs have reached similar conclusions about improving the CSD's performance by avoiding an unnecessary rehearsal of negotiating positions on difficult issues such as trade. For example, commenting on the UN Secretary-General's observation that severe distortions in the trade system favor developed countries, the Third World Network developed an argument that the CSD should be a forum "free from the pressures of negotiations of legally binding agreements" in order to discuss issues such as subsidies. The CSD could then feed the results of thoughtful deliberations on hotly contested issues on sustainable agriculture into the reconvened WTO negotiations. The CSD could make thoughtful contributions to WTO deliberations on other issues too, such as the application of the precautionary principle.

As the institutional custodian of Agenda 21 and the Rio Declaration, the CSD could, and perhaps has a responsibility to, make a useful contribution to the WTO on possible interpretations and applications of the precautionary principle in the context of biotechnology. Some believe such a creative contribution will be forthcoming, paradoxically, only when the CSD concedes that its authority is undermined and not enhanced by conducting para-negotiations in parallel with or as a poor substitute for other processes.

A representative from an international organization described trade as a "nexus" issue: one that links local and regional realities to the global system. The overall global trade system is embedded within an unavoidable historical and political context of contemporary rule-making that is tainted by a suspicion that those who managed to get to the top table first, now get to write the rules. Those who arrive late to participate in the rule-making game are always faced with the prospect, initially, of choosing to accept a *fait accompli*. It would be difficult to comprehend the heated responses to proposals on the multi-functional character of agriculture without an appreciation of the political context that informs those responses. Once this apparently self-evident concept is used, and "abused," by those who continue to take advantage of "trade distortions" in the global trading system, the concept becomes a lightning rod for the disaffected who wield a powerful veto. The EU and Japan, for example, stand accused of misusing the "multi-functional character of agriculture" as a defense for export subsidies and dumping. It follows that the non-trade aspects of agriculture are not accepted at face value and are perceived as potential opportunities for the developed world to invite the developing world to jump through some new hoops in the trading game.

**JUAN MAYR'S CREDENTIALS:** Juan Mayr's background in conflict resolution and environmental activism in Colombia provides an excellent CV for his job as CSD-8 Chair. The CSD's potential and most valuable contribution to trade and other issues can be compared to the groundwork that must be done before the parties to a conflict begin serious negotiations. Some of the basic elements of pre-negotiation work include: creating safe and non-threatening forums to explore unexpected insights about opponents and their positions, actively listening to opposing parties and thus conveying a recognition of their legitimacy, and generating multiple new perspectives so as to avoid "zero-sum" or "yes-no" responses. Above all, as Juan Mayr has observed at the Working Groups, there is a need to restore more confidence and trust if a constructive and modest dialogue is to begin. If the CSD is committed to generating more light and less heat on "hot topics," Mayr's facilitation skills could contribute significantly to a change in the style of the process and the quality of the output.



## THINGS TO LOOK FOR: LAND RESOURCES & SARD

**LAUNCHING OF TPN3 (RANGELAND MANAGEMENT AND FIXATION OF SAND DUNES):** This meeting of Thematic Programme Network 3 is scheduled for March 2000 in Tehran, Iran. For more information, contact: CCD Secretariat, Haus Carstanjen, Martin-Luther-King-Strasse 8, D-53175 Bonn, Germany; tel: +49-228-815-2802; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: [secretariat@unccd.de](mailto:secretariat@unccd.de); Internet: <http://www.unccd.de>

**SECOND WORLD WATER FORUM AND MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE:** This meeting will be held from 17-22 March 2000 in The Hague, Netherlands. For more information, contact: Secretariat, World Water Forum, c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DML/PS), P.O. Box 20061, 2500 EB The Hague, The Netherlands; tel: +31-70-348-5402; fax: +31-70-348-6792; e-mail: [secretariat@worldwaterforum.org](mailto:secretariat@worldwaterforum.org); Internet: <http://www.worldwaterforum.org>

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN ARID REGIONS:** This conference will be held from 27-29 March 2000 in Kuwait. For more information, contact: Mohammad Al-Sarawi, Chairman, P.O. Box 24395, Safat, Kuwait 13104; tel: +965-565-0554; fax: +965-565-3328; e-mail: [muna@epa.org.kw](mailto:muna@epa.org.kw)

**THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIETY FOR SOIL CONSERVATION:** This meeting, which will address the issue of "Man and Soil at the Third Millennium," will be held in Valencia, Spain from 28 March-1 April 2000. For more information, contact: Centro de Investigaciones sobre Desertificación - CIDE Apartado Oficial; tel: +34-96-126-0126; e-mail: [sabina.asins@uv.es](mailto:sabina.asins@uv.es); Internet: <http://www.uv.es/cide>

**EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** CSD-8 will meet in New York from 24 April-5 May 2000 to consider integrated planning and management of land resources, agriculture, and financial resources/trade and investment/economic growth. For more information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev, Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-5949; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: [vasilyev@un.org](mailto:vasilyev@un.org); Internet: [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd8/csd8\\_2000.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd8/csd8_2000.htm)

**WATER RESOURCES IN EXTREME ENVIRONMENTS:** This meeting is sponsored by the American Water Resource Association (AWRA) and will be held 1-3 May 2000 in Anchorage, Alaska. For more information, contact: Douglas L. Kane, University of Alaska, Institute of Northern Engineering, Water Resources Center, Fairbanks, AK 99775-1760, USA; tel: +1-907-474-7808; fax: +1-907-474-7979; e-mail: [ffdlk@aurora.alaska.edu](mailto:ffdlk@aurora.alaska.edu); Internet: <http://www.awra.org/meetings/Alaska/Alaska.html>

**FIFTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY:** CBD COP-5 will be held from 15-26 May 2000 in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat, World Trade Center, 393 Jacques St., Suite 300, Montreal, Quebec, Canada, H2Y 1N9; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [chm@biodiv.org](mailto:chm@biodiv.org); Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org>

**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN THE NEXT MILLENNIUM - THE IMPACT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY ON DEVELOPING COUNTRIES:** This conference will be held from 29-31 May 2000 in Brussels. It is being organized by Friends of the Earth, Oxfam Solidarity Belgium and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, with support from the European Commission. Participants will examine the potential contribution modern biotechnology may offer developing countries and will compare it with other technologies and development approaches. For more information, contact: Olivier Christ, Friends of

the Earth Europe, 29, rue Blanche, B-1060 Brussels, Belgium; fax: +32-2-537-55-96; e-mail: [Olivier.Christ@foeeurope.org](mailto:Olivier.Christ@foeeurope.org); Internet: <http://www.foeeurope.org>

**OECD WORKSHOP ON ADOPTING TECHNOLOGIES FOR SUSTAINABLE FARMING SYSTEMS:** This meeting will be held from 4-7 July 2000 in Wageningen, Netherlands. It will explore the factors influencing the use of existing and new technologies in agriculture, the role of markets and policies, and the sharing of experiences across countries. For more information, contact: Ronald Steenblik or Outi Honkatukia, OECD, Agriculture Directorate, 2, rue André-Pascal, 75775 Paris Cedex 16, France; e-mail: [ronald.steenblik@oecd.org](mailto:ronald.steenblik@oecd.org) or [outi.honkatukia@oecd.org](mailto:outi.honkatukia@oecd.org); Internet: <http://www.oecd.org/agr/>

**FOURTH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC:** This conference will be held from 31 August-5 September 2000 in Kitakyushu, Japan. For more information, contact: Nirmal Andrews, Director, UNEP Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, UN Building, Rajadamnern Avenue, Bangkok 10200, Thailand; tel: +662-288-1870; fax: +662-280-3829; e-mail: [andrewsni@un.org](mailto:andrewsni@un.org); Internet: <http://www.unep.org/unep/regoffs/roap/home.htm>

**FOURTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION:** CCD COP-4 is tentatively scheduled to meet from 16-27 October 2000 in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact the CCD Secretariat (see above).

**THIRD AFRO-ASIAN FORUM ON INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD:** This meeting is tentatively scheduled for Autumn 2000. For more information, contact the CCD Secretariat (see above).

**FAO GOVERNING BODIES:** The 119th Session of the FAO Council is scheduled for 20-25 November 2000 in Rome, Italy. To see the provisional calendar of all FAO Governing Bodies' meetings, Regional Conferences and Committee Sessions for 2000-2001, visit: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/x3837e.htm>. For more information on specific meetings, visit: <http://www.fao.org/events/default.htm>

**ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (Announcement and call for papers):** This traveling event will be held 8-20 April 2002 in Cape Town, South Africa, various rural communities, and Gobabeb, Namibia. The aim of this combination international symposium, rural community interaction and workshop is to connect community action with science and common sense. For more information, contact: Mary Seely, Desert Research Foundation of Namibia, P.O. Box 20232, Windhoek, Namibia; tel: +264-61-229-855; fax: +264-61-230-172; e-mail: [mseely@drfn.org.na](mailto:mseely@drfn.org.na)

**ADDITIONAL MEETINGS:** For an extensive list of agriculture related meetings, visit: <http://www.agnic.org/mtg/>. For additional upcoming meetings on related conferences, visit IISD's *Linkages* World-Wide Web site: <http://www.iisd.ca/updates/upcoming.html>