



CSD-11 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 28 APRIL 2003

The 11th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-11) began on Monday at UN headquarters in New York. During the opening plenary, delegates heard introductory statements and adopted the agenda and organization of work. CSD-11 then began its high-level segment, starting with ministerial statements on the future modalities and work programme of the CSD. In the afternoon, a ministerial round table took place, with participation of leaders from Major Groups, on the issues of poverty eradication and changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

CSD-11 Chair Mohammed Valli Moosa, South Africa's Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, opened the session on Monday morning, informing delegates that their task was to decide on modalities and a future work programme for the CSD. Drawing attention to pledges made during the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), he said problems such as global warming, hunger and disease must be tackled with the "same vigor recently displayed by some on the military front." In this regard, he underscored the multilateral approach as "the only real solution" for achieving sustainable development.

Nitin Desai, UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, said participants must consider how to support concrete implementation of commitments made at the WSSD. Noting the presence at CSD-11 of many ministers and other high-level representatives of governments and civil society, he indicated that this meeting offers an ideal opportunity to establish a clear path for implementing previously agreed goals and targets on sustainable development.

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer said a key issue for UNEP was how to coordinate its work with that of other UN bodies, and drew attention to decisions taken at the UNEP Governing Council session in February 2003 to integrate WSSD outcomes in UNEP's programme of work. Reflecting on CSD-11's agenda, he said discussions on priority issues for the proposed two-year programme of work would be crucial.

Following the opening speeches, delegates adopted the agenda and approved the organization of work for the session (E/CN.17/2003/1).

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS: Following the opening of the session, participants heard statements by ministers and other high-level government officials on the future modalities and work programme of the CSD. GREECE, on behalf of the EU, called for the structure of the two-year work cycle proposed in the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.17/2003/2) to be simplified. She urged a

flexible work programme that would allow emerging issues to be addressed, and noted the EU's preference for the third option presented in the Secretary-General's report. This option proposes that CSD-11 selects one or two broad areas for each of the next four or five two-year cycles, while another area for the next cycle could be determined at future sessions. A number of delegations also favored this option, stating that it provides both predictability and flexibility. MOROCCO, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, emphasized that the work programme should focus on implementation of the WSSD's outcomes, and that the two-year cycle should be structured in a simple, effective and efficient manner, and avoid the proliferation of meetings. He said the first year should review progress in implementation of commitments to identify implementation constraints and obstacles. AUSTRIA stressed the need for the Bureau to ensure continuity in the multi-year cycle of work, and proposed several options to support this objective, including: electing Bureau members for the whole two-year cycle; rotating members; or enlarging the Bureau to 10 members.

On selection of issues for consideration by the Commission, many delegates cautioned against overloading the future work programme with too many themes. AUSTRALIA and CANADA suggested focusing on one theme over a two-year cycle. Many delegates supported selecting themes that lack a clear institutional home within the UN system. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said the Commission might also consider themes not yet addressed in recent sessions. CROATIA, ITALY, and the EU supported water and energy as priorities for the future work programme. The NETHERLANDS also suggested focusing on Africa, while NORWAY supported sustainable consumption and production as another important theme. PORTUGAL proposed prioritizing water and sanitation, and oceans. MAURITIUS, on behalf of AOSIS, stressed that the special focus accorded to SIDS in Agenda 21, the Barbados Programme of Action, and the WSSD must be reflected in the future work programme. INDIA suggested that the 22 sectors addressed in Agenda 21 be clustered into five two-year cycles, and, with INDONESIA, said the final cycle should review overall implementation.

Regarding the CSD's future organizational arrangements, the CZECH REPUBLIC supported stronger involvement of UN regional commissions. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION stated that the regional review process should be uniform and have common criteria to ensure compatible and consistent outcomes. LITHUANIA said the work programme should prioritize sub-regional cooperation. The NETHERLANDS and FRANCE stressed the importance of national responsibility in achieving sustainable development. Several delegates also underscored the importance of continued high-level engagement and supported enhancing input from the scientific and educational communities to the CSD.

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The REPUBLIC OF KOREA and the UK underscored the CSD's role in monitoring partnerships and the implementation of the WSSD's outcomes. NORWAY emphasized the importance of using existing reporting procedures, and CROATIA stressed the need for a unified reporting mechanism. The G-77/CHINA urged the CSD to define parameters that would guide and govern partnerships. AUSTRALIA stressed the importance of private sector investment, cautioned against politicizing CSD negotiations, and highlighted the CSD's role in knowledge-sharing. ITALY supported public-private partnerships and stressed the role of the business community in sustainable development.

INTERACTIVE MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE: On Monday afternoon, delegates began the interactive ministerial round table segment of the meeting. Chair Moosa introduced the segment, noting that it was intended to allow ministers and leaders of Major Groups to engage in a dialogue on key issues relating to implementation of the WSSD's outcomes. He indicated that the issues to be discussed on Monday afternoon were those covered by the first two substantive chapters of the Johannesburg *Plan of Implementation*, namely poverty eradication and changing unsustainable patterns of sustainable consumption and production.

Poverty eradication: In the dialogue on poverty eradication, many participants highlighted the UN Millennium Declaration goals of halving, by 2015, the proportion of the world's people earning less than one dollar a day, the proportion who suffer from hunger, and those without access to safe drinking water. Nitin Desai explained that meeting the poverty goal requires raising 100,000 people out of poverty every day from now until 2015. Stressing the need for a broad range of policies covering issues such as trade and natural resource management, he highlighted the CSD's role in supporting policy coherence across these areas.

Many speakers discussed the linkages between poverty and water, with several delegates calling for increased donor aid and investment in the water sector. MALI noted that, while the UN Millennium Declaration goal on safe drinking water is important, a broader approach focused on protecting water resources is crucial. A spokesman for the Third World Water Forum noted ministerial agreement at the Forum to "redouble collective efforts" to meet the internationally-agreed water-related goals. SWITZERLAND said water should be one of the first topics discussed under the CSD's future work programme, and NORWAY suggested developing a global programme of action on water. INDIGENOUS PEOPLE insisted on attaining water targets in a culturally-sensitive way, while SOUTH AFRICA and TRADE UNIONS expressed concerns about water privatization. AUSTRALIA linked access to water resources with good governance and suggested the use of a catchment approach in sharing water resources.

On the question of agricultural subsidies, FARMERS highlighted distortions within the private sector and the dominance of food sales by a small number of retail chains. SWEDEN referred to the EU's difficulties in achieving ongoing reforms, and suggested considering agriculture early on in the CSD process.

On gender issues, GREECE and BRAZIL stressed the need to improve the status of women in sustainable development.

Changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production: In the dialogue on changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, MOROCCO highlighted its plans to host an international expert meeting in June 2003 on a 10-year framework of programmes for sustainable production and consumption. SWEDEN noted that this issue has been on the sustainable development agenda for a long time, and stressed the need for implementation. VENEZUELA said that developed countries have a high degree of responsibility in changing their patterns of consumption and production, and stressed the importance of an ethical approach for achieving sustainable development. CANADA said patterns of consumption and production are universal, and are not a North-South issue. He stressed the need for full life-cycle product design, greater consumer information, and addressing the consumption attitudes of the affluent. JAPAN urged the international community to consider establishing a common

recycling target, and to engage in international research on this matter. INDONESIA underscored the need for investment in cleaner production. YOUTH noted the lack of their involvement and called for an increased focus on education for sustainable consumption and production.

KENYA stressed the need to address patterns of consumption and production in poverty reduction strategies, while NGOs suggested that these patterns be addressed in national sustainable development strategies, and INDONESIA proposed they be included in business plans. Highlighting the involvement of all Major Groups, SWEDEN underscored the role of women and the business community. FINLAND suggested that sustainable consumption and production should be considered in the first cycle of the CSD work programme.

Several speakers noted the importance of energy, with the NETHERLANDS stating that it should be considered in the work programme. BRAZIL highlighted its proposal for a global initiative for 10% renewable energy by 2010. NORWAY stressed the need for renewable energy targets and environmental considerations in the use of hydroelectricity. PAKISTAN underscored the need to increase the use of renewable energy and energy efficiency measures.

IRELAND stressed the need for adequate resources and financing, and called on developed countries to meet their ODA commitments. INDIGENOUS PEOPLE and the SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY addressed the recovery and application of traditional knowledge and practices. SENEGAL and UNEP emphasized the importance of technology transfer. SWITZERLAND and TRADE UNIONS called for the ratification and implementation of the POPs and PIC Conventions.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On a well-attended opening day, delegates started grappling with the question of the exact role the "new" CSD should play. The first ministerial round table, which in the words of one delegate was managed with an "iron fist" by the Chair, generally received a positive response. Though some felt the discussion was somewhat jumbled, they also acknowledged that it was remarkably free of rhetoric and point-scoring, and had generated a variety of useful ideas.

Speculating on the controversial subjects likely to crop up over the next two weeks, participants singled out several items, including the number of themes to be addressed at future sessions, the prospect of proliferating meetings in each work cycle, the question of how far ahead to set the work programme, the issue of regional implementation forums, and new and additional financial resources and technology transfer. Some observers also expressed disappointment at the small number of non-environment ministers attending this session, and were questioning how this could be resolved.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

INFORMAL MINISTERIAL MEETING: An informal meeting, where ministers will exchange views with the Chair, is taking place in Conference Room 6 from 8:30-10:00 am.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS: Delegates will continue to hear statements by ministers and other high-level representatives on "Visions for the Future CSD" from 10:00-11:30 am in Conference Room 4.

REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION FORUMS: Ministers and high-level officials will convene from 11:30 am - 1:00 pm to discuss initial steps taken in the ECE and ECLAC regions to implement the Johannesburg *Plan of Implementation*. The Forums will take place in Conference Rooms 1 and 4. Please check the Journal for venues.

MINISTERIAL ROUND TABLE: Ministerial round table discussions will take place in Conference Room 1 from 3:00-6:00 pm on "Protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development" and on "Health and sustainable development."