

CSD-16 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 12 MAY 2008

On Monday, CSD-16 participants convened in parallel sessions for SIDS Day and to review CSD-13 decisions on water and sanitation.

SIDS DAY

CSD-16 Chair Nhema said the SIDS Day session would address the special concerns of SIDS relating to issues under the review for the further implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Under-Secretary-General Sha Zukang underlined major concerns of SIDS and called for building resilience in SIDS through adaptation and capacity building, which require multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder efforts. Cheick Sidi Diarra (Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser for Africa) committed that his office will make efforts to put the issues of SIDS high on the international agenda for the effective implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Officer-in-Charge Abdalla introduced the Secretary-General's report (E/CN.17/2008/9) and stressed the need for stronger intersectoral linkages.

G-77/CHINA and several others lamented the concurrent scheduling of SIDS Day with other sessions and, with NEW ZEALAND, urged strengthening the SIDS Unit in DESA. AOSIS urged replacing the current consumer culture with a culture of citizenship, and introduced a draft decision committing to hold future SIDS Days without parallel events. The draft decision was welcomed by BAHAMAS, PAPUA NEW GUINEA, CAPE VERDE, JAMAICA and the SOLOMON ISLANDS.

The EU underscored the need to support SIDS in designing and implementing resilience-building strategies. PSIDS highlighted the need for early warning systems, risk management and measures to enhance resilience and reduce vulnerability. AUSTRALIA committed to support SIDS in addressing climate change. ICELAND pledged a contribution of at least US\$1.7 million for SIDS for 2008. MALDIVES called for the full support and cooperation of the international community. CUBA highlighted vulnerability to climate change and its impact on food production and human livelihood.

MAURITIUS called for establishing a special SIDS Fund under the Global Environment Facility (GEF), said the GEF Resource Allocation Framework "causes injustice" to SIDS, and supported establishing a UN Environment Organization. INDIA reported that it had contributed US\$70 million to SIDS, in addition to a US\$350 million concessional credit line. BARBADOS lamented growing insensitivity to the concerns of SIDS. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC said increasingly frequent

extreme weather events jeopardize its development agenda. MARSHALL ISLANDS said the organization of the CSD was a "burning symbol" of the daily barriers faced by SIDS, and stated that SIDS benefit more from activities in the margins of such sessions. PAPUA NEW GUINEA explained it had developed a national aid policy to address the quality of aid and eight development partners had agreed to adhere to the policy.

Panelist Rolph Payet (Small Islands Voice) discussed the impact of invasive species, drought and land degradation on SIDS and highlighted the need to empower communities. Panelist Jacqueline Dacosta (Consultant, Jamaica) stressed the need for SIDS to help themselves, as opposed to waiting for external assistance. CHINA underscored the need to fulfill commitments for finance and technology to SIDS. INDONESIA said the situation of SIDS is exacerbated by the dismantling of trade preferences and decreasing ODA.

Panelist Ena Harvey (Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture) noted the linkage between agriculture and tourism, and highlighted that tourism can play an important role in promoting sustainable rural development of SIDS. Panelist Peter Holmgren (FAO) outlined FAO's activities on food security and sustainable development of SIDS, and said FAO is committed to the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. Rex Horoi (Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific) said global policy must be rooted in the lives and systems of poor and vulnerable people.

SOLOMON ISLANDS said most of the land in his country is traditionally and customarily owned, and efforts initiated to document the land require international support. AUSTRIA highlighted the need for sustainable agriculture as well as agro and eco-tourism. ITALY underscored that those least responsible for climate change were the most affected by its impacts.

NORWAY, SWITZERLAND, the US and NEW ZEALAND committed to support SIDS in implementing sustainable development strategies, and to address the impacts of climate change by: providing financial support through GEF and other funds; monitoring climate change; implementing projects; exchanging information; and forecasting flood and drought. CHILDREN AND YOUTH emphasized the ethical responsibility of developed countries to safeguard the wellbeing of those most affected by climate change. SAMOA said SIDS and the international community must engage in better and more effective partnerships. FRANCE and BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY called on the international community to work together to address climate change and its impacts on SIDS. FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA stressed the need for support from development partners and the UN. MAURITIUS explained his country was using crop diversification to respond

to climate change and highlighted the need for access to new markets. In the ensuing discussion, panelist Harvey noted the potential of organic farming in SIDS. She also stressed the need for increased consumption of whole and organic foods in the Caribbean, where 4% of GDP is spent on the dietary-related diabetes and hypertension. Panelist Holmgren noted organic agriculture was one of 12 action areas proposed by FAO to increase food security.

REVIEW OF CSD-13 DECISIONS ON WATER AND SANITATION

In his opening remarks, CSD-16 Chair Nhema noted that the current trends suggest that Africa would meet the MDG targets on sanitation in year 2076. Under-Secretary-General Sha Zukang said this discussion at CSD-16 was the first occasion CSD would review its own decisions. He identified the challenges of declining private sector financial flows, slow policy reform, policy coordination and adoption of integrated water resources management (IWRM) in water plans. UN-Water Chair Pasquale Steduto presented UN-Water's work and noted challenges arising from emerging issues. The Secretariat introduced the Secretary-General's Report (E/CN.17/2008/11) and highlighted the lag in implementing CSD decisions on institutional fragmentation, capacity building and resources.

Panelist Jaehyang So (World Bank) said rapid urbanization and the lack of public-private partnerships presents challenges for attaining the MDG targets on water, and said there is scarce monitoring of sanitation trends among the poor. Piers Cross (Water and Sanitation Program Africa) reported that: sector-based reform works; there is evidence from mass behavioral change programmes that rapid uptake is possible; and the lowest service levels are in fragile states. Antonio Miranda (UN Secretary-General Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation, UNSGAB) said achieving the MDGs on water and sanitation requires improving public utility performance, including through not-for-profit utility partnerships and new financing approaches. Roberto Lenton (Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council) discussed challenges related to monitoring water supply and sanitation services, and highlighted the need for indicators for both ends and means. Bert Diphorn (UN-HABITAT) said: water and sanitation coverage is lower than currently estimated in urban centers; small towns receive little funding; pre-investment capacity building and new financing instruments need support; and creative solutions are necessary for dense urban areas.

The G-77/CHINA said financial resources have been limited, international conditions need to be conducive for technology transfer on favorable terms, and partnerships do not substitute for multilateral financial assistance. The EU recommended developing a monitoring and follow-up system for the MDG targets on water and sanitation. Jan Lundquist (Stockholm International Water Institute) reported recommendations from the last three World Water Week events. JAPAN said it will propose considering, at the TICAD IV and G-8 meetings, *inter alia*, how to: use cyclical water resource management; share its advanced technologies; and facilitate central and local governments cooperation. ZAMBIA suggested global action in capacity building and irrigated agriculture targeting women. INDONESIA called for a short-, medium- and long-term plan to mobilize financial resources and a global system to monitor availability of safe water. MONACO stressed the centrality of IWRM. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY called attention to sustainable resources for utilities and river basin management.

The US suggested strengthening legal and regulatory environments, building capacity and sharing lessons learned. INDIA highlighted the importance of bilateral cooperation on transboundary water issues. MALAYSIA noted the importance

of capacity building. CANADA emphasized IWRM, effective mechanisms for governance of water and the selection and application of appropriate tools to the specific situation. IRAN suggested more attention to sewerage networks, waste recycling and dumping. FARMERS said rainwater "cannot make populations secure," and supported more investment in irrigation, along with diversification of agricultural production. AUSTRALIA offered to help make the CSD matrix more user-friendly. ZIMBABWE stressed attention to rural areas and women.

SUDAN underscored a regional approach to water management. ARGENTINA urged viewing access to water and sanitation as human rights. CHILDREN AND YOUTH stressed involving diverse groups in decision-making. MEXICO reported on the 2006 fourth World Water Forum held in Mexico and offered to share its database containing 40 variables on water and sanitation. SAUDI ARABIA said IWRM is attainable, if water efficiency is a policy target. LESOTHO said it could realize its commitments given increased and sustained development assistance. SWITZERLAND proposed, *inter alia*, focusing on the rural areas and making this a regular review conducted by UN-Water.

MOROCCO highlighted national experiences, including the adoption of a water code law. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY said access to water and sanitation need to be accelerated and ambitious, and water should be allocated equitably among all users. CHINA suggested ensuring that water users are informed and have the right to participate. REPUBLIC OF KOREA said it will continue to promote technology transfer to developing countries. GERMANY said: UN-Water needs to become a powerful voice for water; there should be close links to regional organizations and activities; cooperation between the UNSGAB and UN-Water activities should be improved; and climate change cannot serve as an excuse for poor water management. ISRAEL said it has incorporated climate change preparedness into its water plan. WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS stressed the indispensability of public policy tools. FAO said the diversity of livelihoods calls for context-specific and targeted interventions. ITALY recalled its proposal to acknowledge a fundamental right to water.

The NETHERLANDS offered its expertise on coastal zone and water management in the context of climate change. FINLAND called attention to innovative approaches to rural sanitation facilities. EGYPT highlighted lessons learned in water and sanitation management, including an integrated approach and the benefits of partnerships.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While CSD-16 took up SIDS and water and sanitation in the conference rooms, the corridors buzzed with discussion on international environmental governance. Delegates, it seemed, were anticipating the meeting to be hosted by Costa Rica on Tuesday, 13 May, outside UN headquarters. This is meant as a continuation of the dialogue held at the Ministerial Conference on Environment and Development Challenges for International Environmental Governance, held in Rio de Janeiro in September 2007, and at UNEP's tenth Special Session of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in Monaco in February 2008. Tuesday's meeting is expected to generate inputs to the draft resolution developed through the Informal Consultative Process on the Institutional Framework for the UN's environmental activities, led by Mexico and Switzerland. Some wondered if this might explain why a few delegations worked positions on their preferred institutional framework into their statements on Monday, and if the meeting's timing – a day before the CSD-16 High-level Segment – was significant.