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CSD HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 17 APRIL 1995

EDUCATION, SCIENCE, TRANSFER OF TECHNOLOGY, COOPERATION AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Before beginning consideration of Agenda Item 5, "Education, science, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity building," the Chair announced the coordinators of the three working groups, which will commence work on Thursday: Magnús Jóhannesson (Iceland)— finance; poverty; consumption; trade, environment and sustainable development; and demographics; Takao Shibata (Japan) — transfer of technology; science; decision making structures; and major groups; and Henry Aryamanya-Mugisha (Uganda) — sectoral issues and biotechnology.

Dr. Gisbert Glaser, UNESCO, introduced E/CN.17/1995/16 (Science for sustainable development) and identified four strategic priorities: science, education and capacity building in developing countries; the strategic importance of better international co-operation in scientific research; improved communication between scientists and policy makers; and links between research institutions and the economic sector to enhance the application of new science. **Lowell Flanders**, DPCSD, introduced E/CN.17/1995/17 (Transfer of environmentally sound technology) and identified three priorities: transfer of environmentally sound technology (EST); access to and dissemination of information; and financial arrangements. Introducing a UNEP report, "Survey of Information Systems Related to Environmentally Sound Technologies," he noted emerging trends in ESTs, including a shift from end-of-pipe to cleaner production technologies and a gradual shift from environmental regulation to the use of economic and voluntary instruments. **Fritz Schlingerman**, UNEP, noted the lack of access to information on available ESTs as an important barrier to their transfer to developing countries and countries with economies in transition. He said the UNEP survey should be regularly updated, with evaluations of information systems.

Virginia Campbell, UNIDO, introduced E/CN.17/1995/20 (Environmentally sound management of biotechnology). The key recommendations for CSD action include: enhancing the contribution of the private sector; integrating biotechnology concerns into national-level policy-making; calling on governments to identify and exchange information on best practices and environmentally sound applications of biotechnology; encouraging the environmentally sound application of biotechnology; and

considering the steps required for a possible strategy for meeting sustainable development objectives, including a periodic review of biotechnology trends.

The **Republic of Korea** presented the results of the workshop on the promotion of access to and dissemination of information on environmentally sound technologies held in November 1994, in Seoul. The workshop concluded that one of the problems in developing and transferring environmentally sound technology is the difficulty in identifying the key sources of information. It was suggested that a framework for the development and use of environmentally sound technologies be established and that a consultative mechanism be established to enhance cooperation and the exchange of information.

The **International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU)** highlighted ICSU's three global observing systems that are monitoring the state of the atmosphere, the oceans and land resources. ICSU further noted that: the partnership between science and the UN system is evolving positively; the knowledge gap is a real obstacle to sustainable development; and continued governmental support for the major earth systems research systems is essential. **Iran** supported CSD recommendations on the transfer of ESTs and underlined the important role of technology centers in developing countries.

Switzerland supported future partnerships involving the private sector, venture capital funds for ESTs, and the promotion of applications for private sector technologies outside the countries of origin. The **EU** noted the importance of addressing the scope and legal status of biotechnology agreements and the need for voluntary guidelines and capacity building. The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Biodiversity Convention should be fully involved in developing international voluntary technical guidelines.

Canada noted the importance of mobilizing women, non-traditional actors and civil society. In November 1995, Canada will host an OAS meeting on ESTs and the related issues of finance, capacity building and case studies. **Pakistan** said that the multiple channels for information dissemination highlight the need for an integrated eco-information superhighway. He also highlighted the importance of national needs assessments in light of the institutional and capacity building requirements of developing countries. The concept of EST centers needs further clarification. He highlighted the need for greater enhancement of privately-owned technologies.

The **Czech Republic** called for more efforts to be directed towards comprehensive education. The general public awareness about the CSD is rather low and should be enhanced through use of all available media facilities. **Hungary** said that the problems of

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developing countries are shared by countries with economies in transition. The research and development costs in the biotechnology field are extremely high and increased international cooperation is needed to share information. He also raised concerns about the hazards of biotechnology development.

Martin Khor, Third World Network, expressed disappointment and concern about the CSD's "pro-industry" approach to biotechnology and the "serious scientific flaws and misrepresentations" in the promotion of bio-engineering. He called on delegates to request the CSD Secretariat to revise its report on biotechnology and to note the need for a biosafety protocol.

India said that developing countries need support to access ESTs that are appropriate to local conditions and that a clearing-house mechanism is needed. He supported the formation of EST centers, capacity building for assessment of ESTs and preferential terms of access. **Brazil** said the transfer of ESTs involves social, economic and environmental considerations that go beyond the market. He supported a biosafety protocol in view of the "exponential growth" of biotechnology development.

Malaysia welcomed a proposal for centers of international excellence in developing countries and urged donor countries and multilateral agencies to lend support. He called for a clearing-house mechanism for the transfer of ESTs and supported a biosafety protocol. The **US** noted the key role of the private sector in EST transfers and urged governments to provide a stable regulatory and economic environment. He objected to the proposal for the establishment of an *ad hoc* expert group on biotechnology.

Algeria noted the establishment of an African Agency for Biotechnology and the need for a biosafety protocol. The African Agency is strengthening national capacities through training, research and the building of infrastructure and equipment, the dissemination of information at the regional and subregional levels, and the application of biotechnology for sustainable development. **China** said that developed countries should: prioritize capacity building in developing countries; provide resources to assist them in attaining sustainable development; and provide loans to allow them to obtain EST. He stressed that the key to capacity building is international cooperation in the transfer of technology.

Tunisia noted the need for: national environmentally sound biotechnology centers in developing countries; cooperation in regional projects; and financial and technological assistance from developed countries. **Australia** said that technology transfer should be culturally sensitive and needs driven. UNEP should report on its survey of EST transfer to the next session of the CSD. She expressed concern about the proposal for a technology transfer rights bank and requested more information. She supported the decision of the Biodiversity Convention COP on biosafety.

Bangladesh called for appropriate institutions and proper attention to human resources development to promote capacity building efforts. He supported the call for transnational corporations to facilitate the transfer of EST and endorsed India's proposal for a clearing-house mechanism. Environmentally sound management of biotechnology has immense potential, but there are a lot of uncertainties. **The Philippines** urged that the CSD harmonize efforts to maximize the use of information systems for sustainable development. Measures are needed to make ESTs more accessible and adaptable. Knowledge in the public domain should be updated and enhanced to meet environmental standards.

Morocco called for international cooperation to ensure that all countries have access to information networks. He supported the establishment of regional and subregional centers of excellence, but questioned the availability of resources. He noted the difficulty for the CSD to deal with the complicated issues of technology and biotechnology in a one-day debate and called for the establishment of an *ad hoc* working group. **Indonesia** referred to the need for the CSD to promote environmentally sound technology at the local and national levels. He also noted his country's 60 field projects, which

are supported by international agencies and institutions, and through which EST is being transferred. **Barbados** noted the importance of education, science and EST transfer to small island developing States, supported the G-77/China proposal on Agenda 21, and noted that lack of funding is the main obstacle to achieving the goals of Agenda 21.

Mexico urged the Commission to renew its efforts on biotechnology and biosafety, and stressed the need for the development of international laws and norms. He also noted the need to protect indigenous technology and knowledge. He described Mexico's cooperation with Colombia and Venezuela in the areas of biotechnology, human resources and other multi-disciplinary schemes. **Colombia** noted that environmental agreements, the protection of intellectual property, biosafety concerns and the Rio precautionary principle must be taken into account in the transfer of EST.

Japan said the key to the transfer of technology lies in the private sector. He stressed the importance of joint efforts between governments and the private sector to promote technology transfer and cooperation. Japan supports the concept of the technology triangle, which stresses private and public partnership. Actions taken on biotechnology and biosafety must be soundly based on scientific knowledge.

UNIDO, as biotechnology task manager, responded to some of the earlier interventions. He argued that the report does not have an industry bias and that biotechnology was examined not as an industry but as a tool for sustainable development. UNIDO maintains that the COP for the Biodiversity Convention cannot cover all issues related to biosafety. There is ample ground for UN specialized agencies to take up the same issues from their own perspectives and expertise. What is needed is the development of tools to assess the safe application of biotechnology.

The African Timber Organization stressed the importance of adequate transfer of technology and capacity building for forestry management in Africa. Africa's problems include: inadequate infrastructures; low production levels and limited productivity; the absence of good banking facilities at the local level; and the lack of effective training in the use of new technologies.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Some delegates have expressed frustration with the nature of the CSD thus far. Several have remarked that the first four days lacked focus and dynamism. Others suggested that two weeks would have been sufficient time to complete the Commission's work. The irony of these comments is that over the past two years delegates have complained about the insufficient amount of time for dialogue. In response to these complaints, the CSD decided to allocate more time to ensure dialogue and discussion. However, it is felt that while this may be a step in the right direction, more planning will be needed in the future to ensure more valuable exchanges.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary will hear country presentations and exchanges of national experiences in the elaboration of sustainable development plans and strategies and the establishment of national sustainable development councils. The morning session will open with a statement by UNDP Administrator James Gustave Speth, followed by presentations by Bolivia and India. In the afternoon, there will be presentations by Poland, Uganda and the UK.

DAY OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES: The Day of Local Authorities will begin at 5:00 pm with the release of local Agenda 21 Case Studies. This will be followed by a panel discussion on implementing Agenda 21 and local authorities. Panelists include local authorities from: Los Angeles, USA; Cajamarca, Peru; Hamilton-Wentworth, Canada; the UK; Tanzania; and Kanagawa, Japan.