

# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## CSD HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 19 APRIL 1995

### PRESENTATIONS OF NATIONAL EXPERIENCES IN INTEGRATED LAND MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

The CSD heard national presentations on integrated land management and rural development and agriculture. Before the presentations, **Sweden** announced that 220 Swedish municipalities are preparing Local Agenda 21 plans. A national consultative process has had a tremendous impact and Agenda 21 has become the best known UN document in Sweden. Some people know Chapter 28 "almost by heart."

**AUSTRALIA:** Geoff Gorrie, First Assistant Secretary, Land Resources Division, Department of Primary Industries and Energy, described Australia's community and government partnership called the Landcare Programme. Planning approaches are developed according to local needs and with the involvement of interest groups. European settlement introduced inappropriate farming practices leading to erosion, loss of soil and biodiversity, and poor water quality. Special aboriginal coordinators are now involved in some Landcare programmes. The concept of Landcare originated with farming communities in the mid-1980's and focuses on soil conservation. Landcare groups have provided a mechanism for local communities to identify and address the causes of soil, water and vegetation management problems. Socio-economic issues are also addressed. An example is the West Hume Landcare Group in New South Wales, involving 160 farms over an area of 69,000 hectares.

In 1989, the National Farmers' Federation and the Australian Conservation Foundation proposed that the 1990's should be the Decade for Landcare. A range of Government funding and assistance programmes is available. National Landcare Programme campaigns are under way throughout the nation. Achievements of the first three years of the Decade for Landcare include: increased community awareness; the formation of 2,200 Landcare groups; increasing corporate support; and a new research and development focus on sustainable management of natural resources. Outstanding objectives are: encouraging sustainable practices on a voluntary basis; greater emphasis on implementation on the ground; and integration of production and conservation objectives. Farmers participating in structural adjustment take account of sustainable regional development. Some have decided to move out of farming.

The **Australian Conservation Foundation**, which initiated the Landcare Programme, highlighted the insufficient political support and the impacts of land clearance.

**CHILE:** Dr. Manuel Lladser Prado, Expert from INTEC (Technology Institute of Chile), gave a presentation on the influence of environmental measures on Chilean vegetable and fruit exports. Prado noted that the primary problems for developing countries include lack of technical know-how, excessive regulation, and restrictive trade practices and barriers. He highlighted some of Chile's environmental problems, including landfills, litter, depletion of the ozone layer, marine pollution, and exhaustion of non-renewable resources. He referred to the recently established Environmental Commission and the first Eco Fair that was held in early 1995. In 1994, Chile enacted a framework environmental law. Prado described in detail the state of fruit and vegetable production in Chile and the extensive work being undertaken to promote clean packaging, including the use of environmentally-friendly materials, eco-labeling and recycling.

**Brazil** asked about why there had been a reduction in the volume of agricultural exports. Prado said that the declining value of the dollar had been the primary reason.

**HUNGARY:** Mrs. Gabriella Mohacsy-Toth, Ministerial Senior Adviser, Hungarian Ministry for Agriculture, presented an historical overview of agriculture in Hungary. Between 1948 and 1989 there was intense collectivization, involving 62% of all farms. This was accompanied by increased use of agrochemicals, mechanization and monoculture focusing on maize production. Small-scale private farms also played an important role. Environmental regulation enforcement has been inefficient. Since 1989, political, social and economic changes have included a transformation of the land tenure regime and production patterns, a transition to a market economy, and harmonization with EU regulations. A partial compensation process has been implemented for confiscated lands. New types of cooperative farms now account for 65% of all farms, with partnerships and private farms each accounting for 15%. New concepts in environmentally sound land use policies have been introduced, including: soil information systems; agrarian regional development, including provision for backward regions; a programme to reduce pesticides risk; legislation on land ownership and soil conservation; and financial facilities, including State funds for wildlife, forests and land protection. Outstanding problems include: fragmentation of land units; inappropriate financial provisions; and low regional level activity due to the historical dominance of central planning mechanisms. Responding to questions, Mrs. Mohacsy added that a reduction in the use of pesticides by two-thirds has been accompanied by a decrease in production levels.

**INDONESIA:** Minister of Agriculture, Syarifudin Baharsjah, presented Indonesia's experience with sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD). The goals of Indonesia's first 25-year plan were self-sufficiency in rice, the alleviation of poverty and

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prosperity and well-being for all. The plan, which began in 1969, focused on agriculture and rice self-sufficiency and was implemented in stages to improve nutrition, living standards and economic growth. The government encouraged farmers to form village cooperatives and to take greater individual responsibility. Credit was made available to farmers, and subsidized fertilizer was produced and distributed in greater quantities. The government also purchased surplus rice. Despite widespread problems with pests and disease, Indonesia became self-sufficient in rice.

By 1986, pesticides were being uniformly and frequently applied, irrespective of real need and local conditions. A group of Indonesian crop protection experts concluded that over-fertilization had killed natural predators, resulting in an explosion of crop pests. By using resistant rice varieties and applying pesticides only when needed, natural predators could be preserved. The Government prioritized the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programme, which: restricted pesticide use; demanded that the choice of pesticides take account of the predator population; and banned many types of pesticides. Indonesia has once again achieved self-sufficiency in rice, and pesticide use has decreased 60%.

New programmes have been implemented to enable small farmers to achieve self-reliance, take advantage of opportunities, obtain credit and accumulate savings. The development of cash crops, the enhancement of economies of scale through cooperation, and partnerships between farmers' groups and agribusiness have also been encouraged.

**Ghana** asked about the factors contributing to the repayment of credit by farmer groups. Baharsjah said that before credit is extended to a group, it must present a project plan to a facilitator. Only after a discussion on the feasibility of the project is credit made available.

**Tunisia** asked how the 60% reduction of pesticides was achieved. Indonesia used two measures: the IPM programme, which bans pesticides that contribute to the resistance or resurgence of pests; and training farmers to determine the balance between pests and pest predators.

**MOROCCO:** Korachi Taleb Bensouda, Inspector-General in charge of the Environment, Ministry for Agriculture, reported on land management and sustainable development in Morocco. Agricultural production is largely affected by Morocco's climatic and ecosystem diversity. Only 12% of Morocco is suitable for agriculture. The rural population is ageing and declining in number. The Moroccan land management programme has four main focuses: food security; improving agricultural production; protection and conservation of natural resources; and better integration of agriculture into the economy. Morocco also has a number of national plans for managing irrigation and water use, reforestation, electrification, and preventing soil erosion and land degradation. The government is also trying to promote public awareness of sectoral-based projects and methods for sustainable agriculture and rural development. Conservation of agricultural land is vital. Twelve million hectares of land are subject to erosion. Morocco is applying reforestation and other techniques to prevent further erosion. Popular participation is fundamental to the success of such programmes.

**Tunisia** described its National Commission for Sustainable Development, which includes government officials, members of parliament and NGOs. Tunisia's national Agenda 21 will be completed soon. Tunisia recently convened the Med 21 Conference on sustainable development in the Mediterranean basin.

**China** described his country's experience with land management, including the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management and large scale afforestation. Every able-bodied Chinese citizen is obliged to plant three to five trees per year. The Chinese government is also working to control

forest fires and insects, and prevent the stealing of logs and poaching of animals. The objective is to improve the ecosystem while developing the forest industry.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

NGOs have been busy roaming the corridors and meeting rooms exchanging views on the Chair's draft decisions and lobbying delegates. On the financial resources and mechanisms draft, some NGOs believe that: more emphasis should be placed on the need for policy reforms, economic instruments and military spending reductions to generate additional resources for ODA; debt relief should not be linked to IMF-sponsored structural adjustment programmes; international financial institutions should realign their activities to support sustainable development; and the CSD should study the feasibility of economic instruments and develop consensus around the coordinated implementation of specific proposals.

On the draft decision on production and consumption patterns, some NGOs feel that the language is too general and does not place sufficient emphasis on the consumption side of the equation. Some NGOs have also called for greater emphasis on the need for national-level action in the North.

On the biotechnology draft decision, some NGOs are calling for: more information and proposals on the ecological, safety, health and socio-economic effects of genetic engineering; monitoring and assessing the viability of biotechnology experiments and projects; enhancement of the role of NGOs in the implementation of Chapter 16; "best practice" case studies; and discussions in the Biodiversity COP on intellectual property rights that balance the need to reward innovation, while recognizing farmers' rights and the knowledge of indigenous peoples and farming communities.

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**DRAFTING GROUPS:** The three drafting groups will begin their work today. Group A, under the Chairmanship of Magnús Jóhannesson (Iceland), will meet at 10:00 am and 3:00 pm in Conference Room 1 to negotiate decisions on: financial resources and mechanisms; combating poverty; demographic dynamics and sustainability; changing consumption patterns; and trade, environment and sustainable development.

Group B, under the chairmanship of Takao Shibata (Japan), will meet at 3:00 pm in Conference Room 2 to negotiate decisions on: transfer of technology, cooperation and capacity building; science for sustainable development; integrating environment and development for decision-making; information for decision-making; national information; and major groups.

Group C, under the chairmanship of Henry Aryamanya-Mugisha (Uganda), will meet at 10:00 am in Conference Room 2 to negotiate decisions on: the sectoral chapters of Agenda 21 under review in 1995; biotechnology; and the implementation of the decisions of the second session of the CSD.

Look for the draft mandate for the intergovernmental panel on forests to be circulated.

**WORKSHOP ON PESTICIDE USE REDUCTION:** The World Wildlife Fund and Earth Summit Watch will host this workshop at 1:15 pm in Conference Room 2.

**FORUM ON COMMUNITIES FIGHTING FOR ECOLOGICAL RIGHTS:** This Third World Network Forum will take place at 1:15 pm in Conference Room 1.

**SURVEY ON TIMBER CERTIFICATION:** Earth Summit Watch will be circulating a survey to government delegates today. The informal two-question survey is assessing government views on the issue of timber certification.