



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Vol. 5 No. 46

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Thursday, 18 April 1996

FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 18 APRIL - 3 MAY 1996

The fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), meeting from 18 April - 3 May 1996 at UN Headquarters in New York, is scheduled to consider the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the CSD's *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Working Groups on sectoral issues (oceans and atmosphere) and finance and production and consumption patterns. Delegates will also discuss: cross-sectoral issues not dealt with by the *ad hoc* working groups (technology transfer, education, capacity building, trade, poverty, population, decision-making, major groups and national reporting); implementation of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Programme of Action; and national experiences on coastal zone management and sustainable development strategies. A High-Level Segment will take place from 1-3 May.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CSD

Agenda 21 called for creation of the CSD to: ensure effective follow-up of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); enhance international cooperation and rationalize the intergovernmental decision-making capacity; and examine progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the 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, its composition, guidelines for the participation of NGOs, the organization of work, the CSD's relationship with other UN bodies and Secretariat arrangements.

1993 SESSION

The CSD held its first substantive session at UN Headquarters in New York from 14-25 June 1993. Amb. Razali Ismail (Malaysia) was elected the first Chair of the CSD. Delegates to the first session addressed the following: adoption of a multi-year thematic programme of work; the future work of the Commission; exchange of information on the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national level; progress in the incorporation of recommendations of UNCED in the activities of international organizations and within the UN system; progress in promoting the transfer of technology, cooperation and capacity-building; and initial financial commitments, financial flows and arrangements to give effect to UNCED decisions.

1994 SESSION

The second session of the CSD met in New York from 16-27 May 1994. The Commission, chaired by Klaus Töpfer (Germany), discussed the following cross-sectoral chapters of Agenda 21: trade, environment and sustainable development; consumption patterns (4); major groups (23-32); financial resources and mechanisms (33); transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building (34); institutions (38); and legal instruments (39). On the sectoral side, delegates examined progress in implementing the following chapters of Agenda 21: health (Chapter 6); human settlements (7); freshwater resources (18); toxic chemicals (19); hazardous wastes (20); solid wastes (21); and radioactive wastes (22).

The Commission called for the establishment of an *ad hoc* open-ended intersessional working group to examine the sectoral issues to be addressed by the CSD at its 1995 session. Delegates noted that, until there is an increase in ODA and an improvement in the international economic climate, it will be difficult to translate the Rio commitments into action. Many participants also agreed that unless the CSD's format is changed, it will be impossible to shift from rhetoric and speech-making to dialogue and action.

1995 SESSION

The CSD held its third session from 11-28 April 1995 in New York. The revised format of the Commission, which included numerous panel discussions, enabled the participants to enter into a dialogue. The two days dedicated to the sharing of national experiences in implementing Agenda 21 were a departure from the CSD's previously UN-centered focus. The Day of Local Authorities, combined with the NGO and government-sponsored panels and workshops throughout the session, enabled the CSD to examine the local aspects of implementing Agenda 21.

The Commission, chaired by Henrique Cavalcanti (Brazil), examined the second cluster of issues according to its multi-year thematic programme of work, including the recommendations of the 27 February - 9 March 1995 *Ad Hoc* Working Groups on Sectoral Issues, chaired by Sir Martin Holdgate (UK), and Finance, chaired by Dr. Lin See-Yan (Malaysia). Delegates discussed: trade, environment and sustainable development (Chapter 2); combating poverty (3); consumption patterns (4); demographic dynamics and sustainability (5); integrating environment and development in decision-making (8); major groups (23-32); financial resources and mechanisms (33); transfer of environmentally sound technologies, cooperation and capacity-building (34); science for sustainable development (35); and information for decision-making (40).

The sectoral cluster for 1995 included: an integrated approach to the planning and management of land resources (Chapter 10);

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*© <enb@econet.apc.org> is written and edited by Chad Carpenter, LL.M. <ccarpenter@econet.apc.org>, Peter Doran <pdf@ukc.ac.uk>, Daniel Putterman, Ph.D. <dputterman@igc.apc.org> and Lynn Wagner <grund@chaph.usc.edu>. The Managing Editor is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@dti.net>. The sustaining donors of the *Bulletin* are the International Institute for Sustainable Development <iisd@web.apc.org>, the Dutch Ministry for Development Cooperation and the Pew Charitable Trusts. General support for the *Bulletin* for 1996 is provided by the Overseas Development Agency (ODA) of the United Kingdom, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the Swedish Ministry of Environment, the Swiss Federal Office of the Environment, the Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Environment of Iceland, the European Commission (DG-XI) and the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety. French version by Mongi Gadhouch <gad@Tunisia.EU.net> with funding from ACCT. The authors can be contacted at their electronic mail addresses or at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada; tel: +1-204-958-7700; fax: +1-204-958-7710. The opinions expressed in *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 other publications with appropriate citation. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are automatically sent to e-mail distribution lists (ASCII and PDF format) and can be found on the gopher at <gopher.igc.apc.org> and in hypertext through the *Linkages* WWW-server at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/> on the Internet.

combating deforestation (11); combating desertification and drought (12); sustainable mountain development (13); promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development (14); conservation of biological diversity (15); and environmentally sound management of biotechnology (16). The Commission also established the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests.

AD HOC OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUPS

The CSD's *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Working Group on Sectoral Issues met from 26 February - 2 March 1996 in New York, chaired by Svante Bodin (Sweden). Delegates discussed reports from the Secretary-General on Chapters 17 (oceans) and 9 (atmosphere) of Agenda 21 and considered a UNEP draft proposal regarding implementation of the Global Programme of Action (GPA) for the protection of the marine environment from land-based activities, drafted at the November 1995 Washington Conference. Delegates were unable to complete consideration of the Chair's Report, which highlights the following issues: integrated coastal area management; marine environmental protection, including persistent organic pollutants; living marine resources; critical uncertainties; and international coordination. Regarding the atmosphere, the Report highlights: improving the scientific basis for decision making; promoting sustainable development; stratospheric ozone depletion; and transboundary air pollution.

The *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Working Group on Finance and Production and Consumption Patterns met from 4-8 March 1996 in New York, chaired by Dr. Lin See-Yan (Malaysia). Delegates discussed reports from the Secretary-General on Chapters 4 (changing consumption and production patterns) and 33 (financial resources and mechanisms) of Agenda 21. The Chair's Report, which was discussed but is not a negotiated text, highlights the following on changing consumption and production patterns: interlinkages with finance; policy implications of trends; impacts on developing countries; evaluating policy measures; progress in implementing voluntary national goals; and revision of the UN guidelines for consumer protection. Relevant to financial resources and mechanisms, the Report highlights: mobilizing external resources; mobilizing national resources; feasibility of innovative mechanisms; transfer of environmentally sound technology; and a matrix of policy options and financial instruments.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

THE CSD INTERGOVERNMENTAL PANEL ON FORESTS (IPF): The IPF held its second session from 11-22 March, 1996 in Geneva. Delegates conducted their first substantive discussions of six programme elements: underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation; fragile ecosystems affected by desertification and the impact of air pollution on forests; needs and requirements of countries with low forest cover; international cooperation in financial assistance and technology transfer; assessment of the multiple benefits of all types of forests; and methodologies for proper valuation of the multiple benefits of forests. Delegates also completed initial consideration of national forest and land use plans, traditional forest-related knowledge, criteria and indicators, trade and environment and international organizations and multilateral institutions. During the final two days of the meeting, delegates considered the Co-Chairs' summaries. They designated these transitional in nature to signify that the summaries did not represent negotiated text. Delegates agreed to begin negotiations at IPF-3 on items that had received substantive consideration at this session, although another substantive discussion is scheduled on the programme element on financial assistance and technology transfer. Further information can be found at the following internet addresses: <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/>; <http://www.un.org/DPCSD>; and <http://webonu.fastnet.ch>.

EXPERT MEETING ON THE ASSESSMENT OF TECHNOLOGY NEEDS FOR SUSTAINABILITY: This

meeting was hosted from 5-7 February 1996, in Scheveningen/The Hague, by the Netherlands and Switzerland. The meeting was convened to contribute to the ongoing discussions on technology transfer and capacity building, in particular in the framework of the CSD and the OECD/IEA Climate Technology Initiative. Roughly 40 experts from national governments, international organizations, industry and research institutes participated in the meeting, which produced conclusions and recommendations regarding National Needs Assessments (NNAs) for technological capacity building. The conclusions have been elaborated into a "Guidance Document on NNAs regarding Environmentally Sound Technologies," which aims to provide guidance on the use of NNAs to countries or organizations planning to initiate or strengthen their capacity building efforts. For a full report contact: Ms. Petra Loeff, Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment, PO Box 30945, 2500 GX, The Hague, The Netherlands. Tel: +31-70-3391291; Fax: +31-70-3394080

WORKSHOP ON METHODOLOGIES FOR INDICATORS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The Environmental Agency of Japan sponsored this workshop on 5-8 February 1996, in Glen Cove, NY, to discuss methodologies for indicators of sustainable development. This was the third in a series of meetings organized by governments and NGOs to further the indicator work of the CSD. Attendees included delegates from 29 national governments, UN organizations and other NGOs. Six Working Groups reviewed various subsets of the methodology sheets and prepared detailed recommendations for the DPCSD. The workshop recommended that the CSD invite national governments, on a voluntary basis, to test and further develop the indicators in the context of sustainable development and provide feedback about their experience. For more information contact: Mr. Toshiro Hirase, Environment Agency of Japan; Tel: +81-3-3580-1704; Fax: +81-3-3581-5951; e-mail: QGB01573@niftyserve.or.jp.

AFRICAN REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON TECHNOLOGY NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN SUPPORT OF THE TRANSFER OF ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND TECHNOLOGIES AND INTERNATIONAL TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION: The African Regional Centre for Technology (ARCT), the DPCSD and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) co-organized this workshop, which was held in Dakar, Senegal, from 17-19 January 1996. The workshop was attended by 31 experts from 15 African countries and 6 representatives from international organizations. The discussion addressed areas such as: the linkages between technology needs assessment and technology assessment; specific cases in Africa where technology needs assessment was part of technology transfer or acquisition activities/arrangements; application of technology needs assessment; experiences in developing methodologies for technology needs assessment, in support of the transfer of ESTs, that have proven to be useful under the conditions and needs of countries in the African region; and experiences of public and private sector managers regarding the usefulness of technology needs assessment. For more information contact: Mr. Dirk Pilari, DPCSD. Tel: +212-963-6757; Fax: +212-963-1267; e-mail: pilari@un.org.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Outgoing CSD Chair Henrique Cavalcanti (Brazil) will open the fourth session of the CSD this morning and introduce the election of officers to the new Bureau. The Commission will proceed to: adopt the agenda and programme of work, contained in E/CN.17/1996/1; consider a progress report of the *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental Panel on Forests; and discuss progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, focusing on the cross-sectoral components and critical elements of sustainability.

PANEL: At 5:00 pm, a panel discussion on education and sustainable development will meet, organized by UNESCO.