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CSD HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 23 APRIL 1996

Delegates to the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-4) discussed transport, atmosphere and oceans issues. In addition, a Drafting Group began considering draft decisions on cross-sectoral issues during an afternoon meeting.

PANEL ON ENERGY, TRANSPORTATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Delegates participated in a panel on transportation, following a presentation of the Report of the *Ad Hoc* Group on Sectoral Issues. Svante Bodin (Sweden) summarized the Report of the *Ad Hoc* Intersessional Working Group on Sectoral Issues (E/CN.17/1996/6) on chapters 9 (atmosphere) and 17(oceans) of Agenda 21. Consensus was reached on a number of recommendations, but further discussion will be required on fisheries, global governance and institutional follow-up.

Edward Saliah, Minister for Transport and Communications (Ghana), highlighted recent improvements to Ghana's energy and transportation policies, particularly those expanding private sector participation, encouraging competitiveness and promoting environmentally-friendly measures. Ghana also concentrates on solar technology pilot projects, land-use planning, railway policy, road-user charges and non-motorized transportation. He described efforts to open the telecommunications market to private sector participation.

B.W. Ang, National University (Singapore), emphasized the vehicle quota and road pricing systems used in Singapore. The vehicle quota system sets a fixed number for seven categories of vehicles. Potential vehicle owners must successfully bid for a certificate of entitlement prior to purchase. The road pricing system designates restricted zones on which, during certain time periods each day, cars must have a special license.

Douglas Durante, Executive Director of Clean Fuels Development Coalition (USA), described the utility of biomass-derived fuels such as ethanol and methanol, as gasoline additives for reducing airborne pollutants. He underlined the difficulty of replacing petroleum as a motor vehicle fuel, pointing out that, in the US, ethanol has captured only 1.5-2% of the market, even with subsidies.

Paolo Scolari, Vice President, Environment and Industrial Policies, FIAT (Italy), discussed trends and technology related to reductions in car fuel consumption and emissions. He suggested that countries with expanding levels of motorization should use strict legislation from the beginning and stated that direct injection

diesel and gasoline engines can significantly reduce fuel consumption.

Antonio Dias Leite, Professor of Economics and former Minister of Energy and Mines of Brazil, highlighted the "contradictions" of sustainable energy development in Brazil. He stated that air quality is very good in most of Brazil, pointing out that it is not yet cost-effective to invest in expensive air pollution mitigation technologies.

David McDonald, Director of Partnership Africa/Canada, described a recent conference held in Vancouver on sustainable transportation, highlighting nine principles: access; equity; individual and community responsibility; health and safety; education and public participation; integrated planning; land and resource use; pollution prevention; and economic well-being.

PLENARY

Adam Vai Delaney (Papua New Guinea) chaired a discussion on Item 6 (oceans and atmosphere) in the afternoon. Amb. Bo Kjellen (Sweden), Chair of the International Negotiating Committee on Desertification (INCD), reported on progress within the framework of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. In October, 115 countries had signed; there are now 29 ratifications. The Convention will enter into force before the end of the year followed by a first Conference of the Parties (COP) in the second half of 1997. Two sessions of INCD have considered COP preparations and elaboration of the Convention.

On the atmosphere, the EU emphasized: international agreements; the precautionary approach; and policy instruments, including reduced subsidies. Regarding oceans, he advocated: the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS); the Washington GPA; SIDS; and the Global Ocean Observing System (GOOS). The US called for reduced bycatch and regular review of progress. Regarding the atmosphere, he emphasized: monitoring, especially of POPs; the FCCC; urban air pollution; the Montreal Protocol; and transboundary air pollution. The EUROPEAN COMMISSION emphasized legal instruments and cooperation with regional fisheries management organizations. CANADA recognized the CSD's role in identifying critical areas, but emphasized that it does not have a direct role in implementation of international agreements. He highlighted the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy.

INDIA said developing countries require multilateral assistance, and adequate emphasis should be given to data on the high seas. MOROCCO described recommendations from the Marakkesh Symposium on electrification. BRAZIL stressed the impact of sewage on coasts. PAPUA NEW GUINEA, chair of the South Pacific Forum, expressed concern that the report of the *Ad Hoc*

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intersessional group tried to reopen and renegotiate some fisheries issues. IRAN said the report did not reflect the views of all participants in the deliberations. The PHILIPPINES recommended that the CSD encourage technology transfer to contribute to the mitigation of climate change.

SAUDI ARABIA expressed concern about selective interpretation of the IPCC, noting that there is still uncertainty over natural climate cycles. COLOMBIA highlighted strategies for integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) and pollution from transborder toxic waste shipping. Regarding atmosphere, he highlighted urban air pollution and reduced transportation demand, requiring technology transfer and financial support. VENEZUELA stated that: the CSD should not duplicate other fora; the report neglects some air pollution sources; and there is a need for more information on climate change.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA said the Washington GPA poses particular challenges for coastal activities in developing countries. SWITZERLAND noted that cost effective measures to mitigate climate change were available. AUSTRALIA noted difficulties with the report in the sections on fisheries and institutions. NEW ZEALAND urged all states to sign and ratify the UN Agreement on Straddling and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks (Fish Stocks Agreement). He cautioned against revisiting issues.

PORTUGAL identified the following priorities: ICZM; living marine resources; straddling and highly migratory fish stocks; the GOOS; and institutional relations. THAILAND highlighted living marine resources, including endangered species and an action plan for restoration, as well as sewage treatment capacity. He emphasized the difficulty in reducing bycatch, asking States to refrain from unilateral trade action. He outlined a commitment to the FCCC, including mass transit and demand side energy efficiency.

DRAFTING GROUP III

The Drafting Group considering issues including decision-making and national reporting met during the afternoon. On the draft text regarding integrating environment and development in decision-making (Chapter 8 of Agenda 21), the G-77/CHINA changed the paragraph calling for governments to continue efforts to establish mechanisms and develop strategies for sustainable development to: recognize that the responsibility for change lies with national governments and encourage efforts to establish national mechanisms and develop participatory strategies for economic growth and sustainable development. The US said that "economic growth in the context of sustainable development" would be acceptable.

The US proposed that efforts to "strengthen" technical cooperation in the area of methodological development should be undertaken "within available resources."

On the draft decision on information for decision-making (Chapter 40 of Agenda 21), the G-77/CHINA requested the ECOSOC working group on informatics to give particular attention to facilitating access by UN member states to environmental databases throughout the UN system. The EU said a working group already has this mandate and suggested acknowledging the group's achievements. The Secretariat noted that the WWW Home Page would differ by integrating information on sustainable development throughout the UN system, rather than focus on DPCSD activities. The US proposed noting that work be completed "within existing resources." The G-77/China also requested a reference to "national" indicators to clarify that they are not international.

In the draft decision on major groups (Chapters 23 and 32 of Agenda 21), the EU proposed that ECOSOC be invited to ensure the continuation of the Rio arrangements regarding participation of

major groups to the 1997 CSD; and that the GA be invited to ensure appropriate arrangements for the contribution of major groups to the Special Session of 1997 and its follow-up. The US requested clarification of the Rio arrangements.

Australia and the US deleted the specification that governments support, "through financial and other resources," the initiatives of major groups to make contributions to the 1997 review. The US specified that the contributions would be to the "preparations for" the 1997 review.

The G-77/CHINA deleted the sub-paragraph urging governments to include major group representatives in their national delegations. In the same sub-paragraph, the US deleted the reference to major group representatives in delegations to the Special Session.

The G-77/CHINA added paragraphs recommending that ECOSOC place NGOs accredited to the Commission by Council decision 1993/2.20 on the Roster, and encouraging major groups to strengthen their support to the developing countries by raising funds to finance activities related to sustainable development, including required technology. Canada added two sub-paragraphs, supporting the recommendations agreed to at CSD-2 confirming ECOSOC Roster status of all CSD NGOs, and inviting major group participation during the preparations for and at CSD-5 and in the 1997 Special Session. The US objected.

On national mechanisms and international cooperation for capacity-building in developing countries, the G-77/CHINA proposed noting the need to keep capacity building as one of the central objectives in the promotion of development projects, in accordance with their national priorities. She suggested language calling on governments and international organizations to enhance their efforts on financial mobilization and technology transfer in order to assist developing countries.

On the draft decision on international institutional arrangements (Chapter 38 of Agenda 21), the EU proposed an additional paragraph noting that the CSD welcomes the proposed review by ECOSOC of the regional commissions with a view to strengthening their active participation on the implementation of major UN conference decisions. He also called for mainstreaming all policies to the goals of sustainable development.

IN THE CORRIDORS

NGOs have been busy following up a Resolution from last year's meeting of the General Assembly (December), which considered plans for the 1997 special session to review and appraise implementation of Agenda 21. The Resolution recognized "the important role played by major groups, including NGOs, at the UNCED and in the implementation of its recommendations," but stopped short of setting a precedent by specifying modalities for NGO participation in next year's meeting. Some fear that the financial climate at the UN and the accompanying "short termism" may raise obstacles. However the sense of ownership that civil society has established around Agenda 21 is expected to keep the doors open, possibly at informal meetings. Additional procedural issues NGOs have been following include the denial of visas to some individuals hoping to attend CSD-4.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary will meet during the morning and afternoon in Conference Room 1 to discuss implementation of the SIDS Programme of Action.

DRAFTING GROUP II: The Drafting Group considering financial issues is expected to meet in Conference Room 2 during the morning and afternoon.