



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Vol. 5 No. 51

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Thursday, 25 April 1996

CSD HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 24 APRIL 1996

Delegates to the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-4) considered reports regarding implementation of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) programme of action (POA) and resumed their discussion of financial, oceans and atmosphere issues during two Plenary meetings. The Drafting Group considering financial issues met during the afternoon.

PLENARY

Joke Waller-Hunter, DPCSD, presented the Secretary-General's report on progress in the implementation of the SIDS POA (E/CN.17/1996/20) and addenda 1-7. She emphasized the importance of regional and sub-regional cooperation and the need for considerable financial and technological support. The report on sustainable tourism (E/CN.17/1996/20/Add.3) notes adverse impacts on local social systems and fragile ecosystems. SIDS are recommended to adopt uniform incentives to attract foreign capital. The report on current donor activities in support of SIDS is contained in (E/CN.17/1996/21). The report regarding the development of communications (E/CN.17/1996/20/Add.6) notes a relationship between telecommunication density and GDP per capita and recommends restructuring and liberalization of market access where monopolies exist.

The report regarding management of natural and environmental disasters in SIDS (E/CN.17/1996/20/Add.1) recommends: integrating disaster reduction into planning and environmental management; regional cooperation; and improved early-warning capacities. The report on sustainable development of air transport (E/CN.17/1996/20/Add.5) recommends: responding to new ICAO standards for safe air transport; creating regional master plans; and sponsoring energy-efficient and low-cost air transport studies. The report on maritime transport in SIDS (E/CN.17/1996/20/Add.4) recommends: investing in ships, infrastructure and safety; acceding to international instruments; and developing regional freight conferences and harmonizing maritime legislation.

The report on sustainable development of energy resources (E/CN.17/1996/20/Add.2) notes trends of energy production and consumption in SIDS. Among renewable resources, solar power is growing in some States, but growth is limited by a lack of finances.

The Vice-Chair of the 22-23 April High-Level panel on SIDS

introduced the report. SIDS were encouraged to adopt an outward orientation and to create an enabling environment for investment. Participants noted that the new multilateral trade framework offers SIDS new trading opportunities, as well as the risk of increased marginalization.

UNDP, which was requested at the Barbados Conference to assist SIDS in preparing a technical assistance program, reported progress on: technical cooperation on African and Caribbean SIDS; a dialogue with regional institutions in the South Pacific; SIDSNET; and a directory of experts and institutions. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, on behalf of AOSIS, noted omissions in the CSD-4 review of the Barbados process. While some small islands appear to be achieving economic progress, this should be balanced against their vulnerability as demonstrated by natural disasters. PAPUA NEW GUINEA, chair of the South Pacific Forum, said the Barbados POA recognized the unique role of SIDS as guardians of over half of the world's ocean environment. Macroeconomic stability is required for sustainable development.

The MARSHALL ISLANDS said there has been little implementation after Barbados and the international community has yet to rally to help SIDS. The reports to CSD-4 brush over issues of vital concern to small islands, in contravention of instructions. The removal of all nuclear waste left over from tests will demand resources beyond those locally available. SAMOA said the Barbados POA remains a critical blueprint for sustainable development and CSD-4 is an opportunity to revitalize the agenda. INDIA noted national activities and stressed SIDS' need for professional knowledge as well as for the recognition of their traditional knowledge.

The EU highlighted an upcoming assessment of the Lomé Convention, commitments under the UNFCCC, and support for fishery management. JAPAN cooperates with the South Pacific Forum to promote island industries and will strengthen relations with the Caribbean region. The BAHAMAS called for management assistance with fisheries, coral reefs and national parks. CUBA highlighted technical cooperation and resources, as well as adequate coordination of UN institutions. PAKISTAN noted the importance of regional organizations and said that bilateral assistance cannot supplant UN agencies. JAMAICA said the survival of SIDS is at stake, but the POA has received little attention. The US noted its recent actions on SIDS, and supported a mechanism for consultation within the Pacific region. NEW ZEALAND noted that SIDS are strained to participate in relevant international negotiations. AUSTRALIA expressed concern that

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international momentum on SIDS has slowed.

CANADA called for: a single forum for SIDS issues; innovative financial resources; national priority setting; and market access for SIDS. BARBADOS outlined national plans for ICZM. She called for alternative energy sources and disaster management planning. MEXICO outlined regional SIDS initiatives in the Caribbean. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA called for financial resources and technology transfer. BRAZIL highlighted: falling ODA; South-South cooperation in energy development; and technical support from UNCTAD. MALTA called for regional cooperation among SIDS, and outlined national investments in human resources and communication infrastructure. The SOUTH PACIFIC REGIONAL ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME outlined progress in implementing the POA on: climate change; waste management; energy resources; and biodiversity conservation.

ARGENTINA highlighted South-South cooperation in the Caribbean area and offered support. FIJI called for equal ODA funding for all SIDS and for seed money from the World Bank for implementing the POA.

Delegates then resumed their discussion of financial resources and mechanisms, and oceans and atmosphere.

IRAN noted that developed countries should implement Agenda 21, provide additional resources and ESTs and improve efforts under the UNFCCC. FRIENDS OF THE EARTH highlighted opportunities to improve social justice and equity, and discussed the concept of eco-space. The INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF FREE TRADE UNIONS emphasized the workplace and partnerships with workers. The EU recognized that developed countries should continue to lead in changing consumption and production patterns. The G-77/CHINA, and many individual developing countries, voiced concern over declining ODA and noted that intergovernmental cooperation cannot be replaced by the private sector. He supported an ECOSOC agenda item on innovative financial mechanisms.

The INTERNATIONAL OCEAN INSTITUTE said the International Seabed Authority should play a role in the UNCED process and recommended regional centers for marine sciences and technology. SWEDEN highlighted energy and transport, calling for demand-side solutions. CHINA outlined six components of its 1992 Marine Environmental Law. ICELAND stated that the CSD should be an overview mechanism for Agenda 21, but not interpret international agreements.

Regarding oceans, the UK highlighted: a forum for global priorities; UN coordination; and effective scientific advice. Regarding atmosphere, he emphasized: the FCCC; transport; and removing subsidies. MALAYSIA outlined national actions on oceans. He called for adequate financial resources, FAO assistance and transfer of fishing technology.

DRAFTING GROUP II

The Drafting Group considering financial issues, chaired by Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago (Tanzania), convened in the afternoon. In the draft decision on combating poverty (Chapter 3), the EU called for poverty eradication "as a matter of urgency" and added a reference to country-specific target dates to "substantially" reduce inequality. The G-77/CHINA said strategies should "be geared towards sustainably reducing poverty in the shortest possible time," with a target date specified by each country for the eradication of absolute poverty. They added a paragraph calling for mechanisms for eradicating marginality among the poorest. The US introduced language on "meeting the basic needs of all" and amended references to poverty eradication. India cautioned against over-emphasizing the rural poor.

In the draft decision on demographic dynamics and sustainability (Chapter 5), the G-77/CHINA deleted "in particular in support of gender issues" in the sentence acknowledging the importance of actions taken by governments in support of population policies and programmes. The EU added a paragraph suggesting that ECOSOC examine the division of labour between the Commission on Population and Development and the CSD.

In the draft decision on trade, environment and sustainable development (Chapter 2), the G-77/CHINA said trade measures in MEAs should not deter the search for other approaches. On eco-labelling, they suggested that the CSD invite UN bodies and the WTO to continue elaborating international standards. The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY said there should be a clear recognition that trade provisions in MEAs can play a role in tackling global environmental challenges. They added a subparagraph stressing that there is no evidence that environmental policy has a detrimental impact on competitiveness. The US also supported the role of trade measures in achieving the objectives of MEAs, and cautioned against CSD-4 interference in related deliberations at UNCTAD and UNEP. He reserved judgement on the merits of UNCTAD's BIOTRADE initiative. JAPAN suggested that the CSD invite UN agencies to examine trade liberalization. MEXICO bracketed the paragraph on MEAs.

In the draft decision on transfer of ESTs, cooperation and capacity-building (Chapter 34), the G-77/CHINA added a paragraph confirming the necessity of access to and transfer of ESTs, on favorable terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights and the need of developing countries to implement Agenda 21.

In the paragraph calling for countries to adopt an appropriate mix of policy measures, the EU added language calling for the adoption of "environmental legislation that would be favorable for successful penetration of ESTs in the market." CANADA suggested that the "private sector," rather than "business and industry," should be urged to further implement the Programme of Work. INDIA expressed concern that several suggestions enhanced the role of the private sector and diluted the role of the public sector, and proposed reference to publicly funded intermediaries and a catalogue of proven technologies.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The Informal Contact Group on Oceans met again on Wednesday to discuss Annex II of the report of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Sectoral Issues. Some believed that the split between groups of countries that appeared in the negotiations on the Straddling Stocks Agreement reappeared (a division between coastal countries and those that fish on the high seas). A few countries suggested that paragraph 32 of Annex II (which references recent agreements, including the FAO Code of Conduct, the Flagging Agreement and the Straddling Stocks Agreement) provided a good basis to continue negotiations. Others desired to shorten Annex II and focus it on ratification of the new agreements. The Chair will conduct informal consultations, and the group will meet again Thursday.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary will meet during the morning and afternoon in Conference Room 1 to hear national reports on experiences in coastal area management.

DRAFTING GROUPS: Drafting Group III is expected to meet during the morning in Conference Room 2. Drafting Group II is expected to meet during the afternoon.

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