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CSD INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP MONDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 1997

The UN Commission on Sustainable Development's *Ad-Hoc* Open-Ended Intersessional Working Group convened at UN headquarters in New York on Monday, 24 February 1997. Delegates are preparing for CSD-5 and the UN General Assembly's Special Session (UNGASS) to review implementation of the post-UNCED agenda. Delegations heard introductory statements and began their assessment of the implementation of sectoral issues and strengthening the role of major groups during morning and afternoon meetings.

PLENARY

Paul de Jongh (Netherlands), CSD Vice-Chair, convened the first meeting of the Intersessional Working Group and stressed the importance of continuity in the Commission's work. The Working Group elected Co-Chairs Derek Osborn (UK) and Amb. Celso Amorim (Brazil). Amb. Amorim said the goal of the intersessional meeting is to negotiate a detailed 10-15 page outline document for CSD-5 in April, to be accompanied by a 2-3 page draft preamble or declaration. Chair Osborn said there has been some loss of momentum since UNCED. The international community must rediscover the spirit of Rio.

Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, asked delegations to recognize that UNGASS is the first to undertake a five-year review of a major UN process. Preparations are being made for UNGASS participation at the highest level. He suggested that the process be as innovative as UNCED. He said some Working Group resolutions could be dealt with at CSD-5 while the political purpose of the Special Session is to secure real high-level political commitment on implementation, financing for sustainable development, technology transfer and capacity-building. He stressed the need to integrate economics into the CSD's work and to increase the Commission's leverage with financing bodies.

REPORTS ON INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS: UNEP
Executive Director Elizabeth Dowdeswell reported on the 19th Session of the UNEP Governing Council. She announced the recent release of UNEP's state of the environment report. The Nairobi Declaration, drafted at the Governing Council, indicates that UNEP has been and should continue to be the principle UN body focusing

on environmental issues. The first of April is the proposed date for resumption of the suspended Governing Council session. The NETHERLANDS reported on the Fourth Expert Group Meeting on Financial Issues of Agenda 21, chaired by Dr. Lin-See Yan (Malaysia). It met from 8-10 January in Santiago, Chile. Participants discussed, *inter alia*, the role of ODA, interlinkages between Agenda 21 financing sources and the potential for private sector initiatives, including green investment funds.

NORWAY reported on the Workshop on Sustainable Production and Consumption held in Brasilia, Brazil from 25-28 November 1996. The aim of the workshop was to identify policy instruments and to formulate a work programme for the CSD on this topic. The workshop highlighted the common interest between North and South in making consumption and production more sustainable and called for a partnership strategy for governments, business and civil society. Policies to change consumption in the industrialized world should be accompanied by dialogue with developing countries and support to ease the transition process. AUSTRIA presented the findings of the "Expert Workshop Fostering the Linkage between Energy and Sustainable Development within International Institutions," held from 22-24 January in Vienna, Austria. The workshop recommended that: the CSD dedicate a session to a sustainable energy future; the effectiveness of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and on Energy for Development be enhanced; and a new global forum to discuss steps towards sustainable energy systems be considered.

BELGIUM presented the results of the second International Workshop on Indicators of Sustainable Development (ISDs), held in Ghent, Belgium from 20-22 November 1996. The conclusions of the workshop endorse guidelines and a timetable for national testing of ISDs and agree that regular reporting would be useful for all partners in the testing process. Regional meetings to continue the process and to provide training in the use of indicator methodologies are underway. CANADA reported on the second Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Management, which met in Ottawa, Canada from 10-14 February 1997. Funding for developing country participation has been difficult to obtain. One recommendation was for donors to ensure that development policies include support for the necessary capacity-building in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION:
Delegates adopted the agenda (E/CN.17/WG/I) and began

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consideration of Agenda Item 3, preparations for the Special Session. Tanzania, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, stressed that the cross-cutting issues of financial resources, technology transfer, trade and investment and poverty alleviation should be given adequate attention in the preparatory process for the Special Session. The NETHERLANDS, on behalf of the EU and associated countries, said the reports tabled at the Intersessional indicate that progress requires enhanced integration of policies. He invited the Special Session to: signal to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) negotiators the need to control human influence on global climate change; promote common energy policies; address emission standards, traffic management and infrastructural development; and prioritize food security and sustainable tourism.

JAPAN stated that the UNGASS report should be concise and based on previous reports of other conferences. He stressed that no renegotiation of existing arrangements should be conducted. A joint political declaration should be issued focusing on: priority future programmes and projects; the future institutional structure and role of the CSD; and recommendations for urgent issues. It should also recognize the importance of regional level action. Achievable global targets should be established at UNGASS. NORWAY said that most follow-up action on UNCED decisions remains to be carried out. The Special Session output should look toward future implementation, identify areas of priority, initiate new processes and invigorate existing ones. The CSD should not duplicate or replace work done in other fora. He noted that it is premature to negotiate a legally-binding instrument on forests because, for such an instrument to be effective, it must be based on consensus. He emphasized the need to increase the role of civil society in implementing the Rio agreements and to establish working modalities for the Special Session that encourage the active participation of major groups.

Two YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES spoke of the critical importance of providing a space in the UNGASS preparations for youth. They noted work to shift the current reality of multiple forms of domination of both people and nature, and outlined their work on fair trade, consumerism and alternative energy. SAMOA, on behalf of AOSIS, recommended prioritization of: the Berlin Mandate's completion and the adoption of a legally-binding instrument at FCCC COP-3; information systems on oceans and seas protection; protection of the marine environment, which had been omitted from the Secretary-General's report; renewed commitment on transport and storage of nuclear waste; and the relationship between environmental quality and tourism. He noted the special contribution of regional initiatives.

Costa Rica, on behalf of the CENTRAL AMERICAN REGION, noted regional activities to implement those countries' Rio commitments. The region has pledged strong political support for sustainable development and has established a subregional forestry arrangement. She expressed concern that many developed countries have not honored their Rio commitments. COLOMBIA noted an imbalance between implementation of Agenda 21 at the sectoral versus the cross-sectoral level. He expressed concern that the trend in ongoing negotiations on certain legally-binding instruments may undermine the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. He called for freshwater resources and ocean matters to be addressed according to national policies and priorities and, with regard to the atmosphere, for emphasis to be placed on transportation.

SWITZERLAND announced that it will present the second report on the state of the world's mountains and called for a lead role for the CSD in coordinating a global strategy on policies and measures for energy efficiency. She called for UNGASS support

for further implementation of UN environmental conventions. Mostafa Tolba (EGYPT) called for agreed targets, including a 10% increase in alternative energy source investments over five years and the elimination of lead from gasoline in ten years. He said the GEF should increase finances to deal with deforestation and desertification on an equal footing with other global environmental issues, and questioned the wisdom of the Secretary-General's call for a global convention on shared river basins, suggesting local treaties instead.

US Permanent Representative Bill Richardson called for the Special Session's results to be focused and implementable. He said: implementation can only be accomplished at the most decentralized level; UNGASS should recognize the importance of good governance; the dialogue on financing and technology transfer should expand to include private capital flows and investment; and consideration of sustainable production and consumption should be renewed. GREENPEACE INTERNATIONAL, on behalf of several NGOs, said the CSD NGO Steering Committee has developed a list of critical issues. He highlighted four points, including calls for governments to: endorse a legally-binding CO₂ reduction target of 20% of 1990 levels by 2005; establish an intergovernmental panel on oceans; redress fisheries problems; and ensure NGO access and participation at UNGASS.

AUSTRALIA said the CSD should identify existing gaps and address the big picture. He called for a search for integrated approaches rather than new forms of regulation. The CSD should be the UN body to coordinate oceans and coastal areas issues. The NGO CAUCUS ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE called on governments to: review and reinforce the goals of UNDP's Sustainable Agriculture Network and Extension programme; facilitate and implement a global facility for urban agriculture; prioritize integrated pest management; and support programmes to achieve local, regional and global food security.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While strengthening the role of major groups was on Monday's agenda, NGOs noted that delegations addressed the item only peripherally in their statements. Many NGOs who have been active supporting Agenda 21 since the Earth Summit are concerned that their participation in UNGASS will be restricted because they do not currently hold consultative status with the UNGA, as they do with ECOSOC. Observers have noted many governments' resistance to extending NGO consultative status to the UNGA. Some suspect it stems from their fear that this could open the door to calls for participation in more politically sensitive areas of the UNGA's work, such as security. One NGO representative stated that, if governments are serious about partnership with major groups in their pursuit of sustainable development, special arrangements must be made for civil society participation at the Special Session to review implementation of Agenda 21.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Delegates are expected to meet in Conference Room 4 during the morning and afternoon. They will continue to discuss implementation of sectoral issues and strengthening the role of major groups, after which they will consider implementation of cross-sectoral issues.

RIO+5 FORUM: The Earth Council will present a briefing on the Rio+5 Forum (to take place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil from 13-19 March 1997). The briefing will be held in Conference Room 4 from 1:00-2:15 pm.