



Special Report on Selected Side Events at WSSD PC-III
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Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, Environmental Liaison Centre International and ANPED, states that, without a clear structure of Type I political commitments, NGOs may not be willing partners in Type II outcomes.

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Elements for a political declaration

Presented by the Third World Network

At this event, participants discussed elements for Johannesburg's political declaration, focusing on the priorities of NGOs and major groups.

Makarim Wibisono, Indonesia, highlighted efforts being undertaken by the Indonesian Government, as the host of PrepCom IV, to engage the highest level of political commitment to the declaration. He stressed that the declaration should be concise, inspiring, visionary, and forward-looking. He emphasized the need for the declaration to reflect that issues of sustainable development are not only issues of government but of all stakeholders. He underscored the importance of commitment at the highest political level to the sustainable development objectives enshrined in Agenda 21, the Monterrey Accord from the International Conference on Financing for Development, the Millennium Declaration and other global agreements.

Jos Delbeke, European Commission, underscored the EU's commitment to the WSSD process and to a productive outcome from Bali. He recognized that ensuring that sustainable development is put into practice in the EU is key to its credibility in preparations for the WSSD. He stressed the need for the declaration to reflect a vision of a world in which sustainable development is the basis of democracy and improved governance in the North and the South. Delbeke highlighted the EU's recent agreement to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, and expressed hope that others would follow suit in Johannesburg. He said the EU's primary goals for the declaration include a focus on: poverty eradication; changing unsustainable production and consumption patterns; water; energy; governance at all levels; and the integration of environmental, social and economic decision making.

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Take Uemura, Asian Representative on the WCSF Steering Committee, highlights problems with the UN's ability to promote progressive environmental programmes, given the various and often conflicting national interests of governments.

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World Civil Society Forum: Consultation and briefing

Presented by the World Civil Society Forum and Mandat International

This event consisted of a briefing about the World Civil Society Forum (WCSF), to be held from 14-19 July 2002 in Geneva, and a consultation about its role in international cooperation and decision making.

Rob Wheeler, North American Representative on the WCSF Steering Committee, outlined the history of the WCSF. He recalled that the initiative for a WCSF emerged from the Millennium Forum in May 2000, with the idea that increased cooperation among civil society organizations (CSOs) and between CSOs, the UN and other international organizations could strengthen programmes and means of implementation. A preparatory session for the WCSF was held in Geneva in July 2001, where participants agreed on the framework for the WCSF.

Wheeler explained that the objectives of the WCSF are to: promote cooperation among CSOs around the world; facilitate cooperation between civil society and the UN system; create space for dialogue on the relation between different stakeholders on the international stage; and consider the constitution of a permanent WCSF. The thematic topics to be addressed at the upcoming WCSF are: environment, trade and sustainable development; civil society cooperation with the UN and other international organizations; health promotion; information society; indigenous women; human rights and humanitarian law; the right of peoples to self-determination in conflict prevention; the relation between civil society and the private sector; and peace and disarmament.

Take Uemura, Asian Representative on the WCSF Steering Committee, stressed the need for a strong mechanism for sustainable development governance "from below," from citizens and NGOs, and stated that the WCSF meets this need.

Participants then divided into two groups. One group identified specific agenda items to be addressed under the Forum's main thematic issue of environment, trade and sustainable development, including: linkages between mining and the environment; energy issues; social responsibility of investment; population and the environment; and WTO prioritization of environmental issues. The other group discussed how to increase participation in the WCSF, highlighting the need to: use the internet as well as radio to spread the word about the WCSF; create structures to receive and respond to input from CSOs, communities and individuals around the world; recognize that grassroots movements are more organized in some areas than others; and elaborate the definition of civil society.

Changing the global paradigm: A critical shift from corporate to earth-based priorities

Presented by the Loretto Community in cooperation with the Earth Values Caucus, Peace Caucus and Energy Caucus

Jane Blewett, EarthCommunity Center and Medical Mission Sisters, said that the intrinsic value of nature, diversity and the community of life should continue to guide the processes of profound change on which humanity is embarking. She recalled that "the glory of the human became the devastation of the Earth," which, in its turn, is becoming the destiny of the human. She said, therefore, that all future plans and strategies should facilitate the mutually enhancing "human-Earth relationship."

Bhaskar Menon, UNdiplomatic Times, described the story of the universe as being shaped by corporations, which have the same or greater powers as individual human beings and which heavily influence political and development processes. He stressed that, in order to ensure a socially just, culturally rich and environmentally sustainable future, new mechanisms for representation of people's interests are needed. He suggested the creation of economically self-sustaining "Community Corporations," which would operate on a well-defined ethical code and aim to provide social services and address community issues, and expressed hope that this concept would be tested in real life.

Discussion: Participants addressed several issues relating to this paradigm shift, including: the role of the internet in creating and enhancing communities; the need for human aspects in the paradigm shift; and the benefits and challenges of "Community Corporations."



Jane Blewett, EarthCommunity Center and Medical Mission Sisters, describes the evolutionary process, and stresses the need for a mutually enhancing "human-Earth relationship."

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Samuel Senn, Hammond Redevelopment Commission, highlights how experiences from the redevelopment of a toxic site in the US could be applied in other countries.

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Urban brownfield development opportunities for economically challenged areas

Presented by the Hammond Redevelopment Commission

Samuel Senn, Hammond Redevelopment Commission, presented the redevelopment of an industrial brownfield site in Hammond, Indiana, US, as a case study on implementation of sustainable redevelopment.

Senn described the redevelopment site as an industrial waste dump with extensive deposits of slag, a substance that is difficult to remove and that releases metals and other pollutants into runoff. He said the site presented social and economic as well as environmental difficulties, as it was an abandoned "moonscape" with crime problems in an economically depressed urban area. Senn stressed that similar sites exist throughout the world.

Noting that the redevelopment goals for this site entailed creation of economically, environmentally and socially responsible and sustainable uses, Senn said the nonprofit Hammond Redevelopment Commission partnered with groups including local citizens, the US Environmental Protection Agency, other US federal and state agencies, Purdue University, and British Petroleum in the design, implementation and monitoring phases. Senn presented images of the project near completion, which incorporates a youth life skills training center, commercial golf course, wetlands area, and bike and walking trail.

Senn presented details of the construction process, which required capping the slag deposits with an impermeable layer to prevent groundwater contamination. He highlighted the experimental use of biosolids, a byproduct of sewage treatment processes, for this cap, noting that the material is abundant and acts as a nutrient-rich base for vegetation planted over it, and said a ten-year monitoring period will ensure the continued health and environmental safety of the construction.

Senn said the final project incorporates sustained benefits, including: health, education, and recreation components that enhance social equity in the area; self-financing, job creation and local economic revitalization through stimulation of development on surrounding sites; and environmental restoration and education through wildlife observation opportunities, as well as remediation of the brownfield site.



Jos Delbeke, European Commission, emphasizes that the declaration should reaffirm full commitment to Agenda 21, the Millennium Development Goals and agreed targets.



Makarim Wibisono, Indonesia, states that the declaration should reflect humankind's collective aspiration to live in peace and harmony with each other and with nature.

Elements for a political declaration

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Nombasa Tsengwa, South Africa, stated that South Africa views the declaration as a political deal that should include concrete deliverables and partnerships. She stressed that the declaration's preamble should be inspirational and provide hope, while the operational portion should be crisp and concise, address challenges faced in the past decade, specify priorities for international action, and provide clear instruction on what needs to be done. She noted South Africa's circulation of a non-paper, which addresses action around six key areas: water, energy, agriculture and food security, health, technology, and education, with particular emphasis on the economic dimension of sustainable development. She emphasized that heads of State must express their willingness to change the economic power relations of the world, and give life to decisions taken under other fora such as the WTO and the Financing for Development process. She also stressed the need for mechanisms to ensure follow-up from Johannesburg and accountability and coordination of governance issues.

Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, Environmental Liaison Centre International and ANPED, underscored that full implementation of Agenda 21 will not be possible without public participation and full recognition of the crucial role of civil society, including NGOs. He noted the absence of strong language on trade in terms of sustainable development thus far, and stressed that WTO agreements must be subject to UN agreements and MEAs. He highlighted several NGO priorities for the declaration to address, including: full corporate accountability; a rights-based approach to the environment; the right to clean water; consumption and production patterns; poverty eradication; and ratification of MEAs, particularly the Kyoto Protocol.

Discussion: Participants highlighted several priorities for the declaration, including: commitments to oppose the patenting of living organisms and support communities' rights to agricultural genetic resources; emphasis on corporate and UN governance rather than on local governance; commitment to peace and demilitarization; combating desertification; population; respect for the human right to a clean environment; and the articulation of endpoints of sustainable development.

Moving beyond Armageddon to create a sustainable world of peace and justice

Presented by the War and Peace Foundation and the Global Futures Network

This event raised awareness on relationships between conflict and environmental health.

Rashmi Mayur, Global Futures Network, presented examples of the environmental destruction resulting from wars, training exercises and the mining of weapons materials, and highlighted the negative effects of pollution on ocean health.

Selma Brackman, War and Peace Foundation, discussed the exploitation of women and children stemming from violence and conflict, underlining the dangers of prostitution and the use of child soldiers. She called on the UN to forbid the recruitment of children under the age of 18 for war activities.

Discussion: Participants discussed, *inter alia*: the idea of abolishing the nation-State; the particular vulnerability of women and children to the effects of conflict; and a new focus in the Dominican Republic on addressing poverty and women's and children's issues.



Rashmi Mayur, Global Futures Network, describes how chemicals can leach from abandoned landmines and pollute groundwater.

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