



Special Report on Selected Side Events at the Fourteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-14)

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Ecological Footprint Accounts: Measuring Human Demand on the Biosphere

Presented by Government of Switzerland, WWF International, Global Footprint Network



Justin Kitzes, The Global Footprint Network, said that ecological footprint accounts can measure both nature's supply and the human demand placed upon it; and that with goals, metrics by which to measure these, and national commitment, progress can be made

Noting the upcoming second cycle of Switzerland's National Sustainability Strategy beginning in 2007 and its significant effect on the environmental, social and economic aspects of sustainability, Olivier Chave, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, said Switzerland had recently calculated their ecological footprint. He reported that they undertook this calculation, with help from the Global Footprint Network, in order to inform decision makers and parliamentarians as they finalize pending policies, notably, the new Climate Protection Policy. Chave highlighted lessons learned from evaluating the Strategy's concluding phase, including that the program lacks linkages between national and global perspectives and that deficits exist in regards to communicating with the public and decision makers. Chave concluded that Switzerland's ecological footprint exceeds a sustainable level by three times.

Justin Kitzes, Global Footprint Network, defined sustainable development as "living well within the means of nature," and explained the concept and the methodology of the ecological footprint (the amount of resources used globally or per country in relation to bio-capacity). He noted that in order to achieve global sustainability, each person has a possible ecological footprint of 1.8 hectares, although for 2002, the actual footprint was 2.2 hectares. Kitzes demonstrated how to link environmental metrics to social and economic metrics, saying that no countries are meeting both an ecological footprint of 1.8 hectares and a human development index (HDI) of 0.8, considered to be "high human development" by the U.N. He emphasized that high HDI does not necessitate a high footprint. He highlighted the successful calculation of Switzerland's ecological footprint, and extended an offer to other nations to attempt this exercise.

Gordon Shepherd, WWF International, addressed how the ecological footprint can be used in the global policy dialogue, highlighting the CBD's adoption of the Living Planet Index stemming from the Living Planet report, which provides an update on the state of the world's ecosystems. He emphasized that people are living well beyond their means, noting that the European footprint is six hectares. Shepherd highlighted BedZED, an eco-village that is 90% more efficient than most OECD communities, saying that the One Planet Living programme aims to establish other sustainable communities using BedZED's guiding principles, such as: zero carbon; zero waste; and sustainable transport. He said WWF is looking to promote One Planet Living to business, then a One Planet economy, with the long term goal of seeing the Living Planet Index increase concurrently with a decrease in the global ecological footprint.

Participants discussed: whether the ecological footprint examines ocean productivity and gender dimensions; the footprint's uncertainties; the footprint's methodological developments in the area of nuclear energy; dynamic carrying capacity and bio-capacity; and whether there is linearity between area and time.

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<http://www.deza.admin.ch/>
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Small is Beautiful: Making Decentralized Energy a Reality

Presented by Intermediate Technology Development Group, Practical Action, and Winrock International

Sarah Adams, Global Village Energy Project (GVEP), introduced the side event by saying GVEP will examine the main barriers to decentralized energy and sustainable operation and management.

Syda N. M. Bbumba, Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, Uganda, emphasized the importance of small-scale energy projects as a way to scale up electrification in Africa, due to, *inter alia*, the “sorry state” of transmission networks. She described her countries' experience and noted the need for mobilization of financial resources and a paradigm shift to small and decentralized institutions.

René Karottki, European Commission, described the EU's development policy perspectives on decentralized energy, emphasizing energy's role in poverty alleviation. Noting Africa's goal of increasing access to reliable and affordable commercial energy supply from 10%-35% in the next 20 years, Karottki highlighted EU Energy Initiative's ACP-EC Energy Facility. He said the new EU development policy was created in December 2005, highlighting key issues concerning access to decentralized energy, including that dedicated financial instruments, sometimes through a blending of public and private resources, are needed to ensure affordability of the energy services for the poor.

Wendy Aulakh, Winrock International, described the Nepal Biogas Support Program, saying that the program has been widely successful because it: provides an environmentally and healthy cooking option; is comprehensive and involved the private sector from the outset; utilizes a uniform technical design which enables high-quality monitoring and evaluation; provides financial support for end-users via government subsidies; and can be replicated.

Teodoro Sanchez, Practical Action, emphasized the enormous challenges of providing access to energy in rural developing areas, including lack of technology, financial mechanisms, local capacity and appropriate legal framework. He discussed a case study in Conchan, Peru, where they provided a new management scheme for a micro-hydro power system, based on private enterprise management and a tariff scheme. He noted the impacts, including that the electricity services scheme: is technically and financially successful; created local capacity to operate and manage the scheme; and that the community has new ideas about enterprise and business.

Discussion: Participants discussed: the micro-hydro power project's costs for the local community; linkages between access to energy services and microfinance; comparing the economic costs of macro and micro-hydro power projects; and how people access new technologies if they cannot access subsidies.



Syda N. M. Bbumba, Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, Uganda, highlighted the challenge of accelerating electricity services to poor people in villages in the developing world while concomitantly reducing the burden of unsustainable consumer subsidies



Wendy Aulakh, Winrock International, noted that Biogas is comprised of methane and carbon dioxide derived from plant or animal waste. She said that biogas is non-polluting and that these systems are mostly used for cooking in China and India

More information:

<http://www.gvep.org/>
<http://www.energyandminerals.go.ug/>
<http://energyefficiency.jrc.cec.eu.int/>
<http://www.winrock.org>
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From left to right: Teodoro Sánchez, Practical Action; Syda Bbumba, Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, Uganda; Sarah Adams, GVEP; Wendy Aulakh, Winrock International, and René Karottki, EC

Energy for Poverty Reduction

Presented by the Global Network on Energy for Sustainable Development (GNESD) and Environment and Development of the Third World (ENDA-TM)

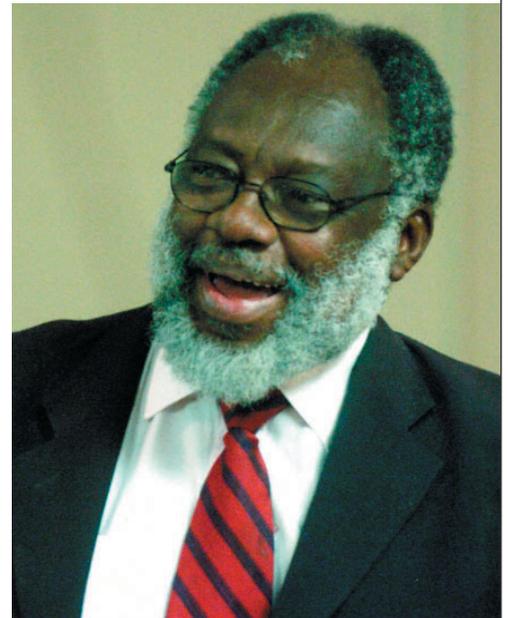
M.I. Sharif, GNESD, described the GNESD, which connects centers of excellence around the world to build capacity and influence energy policy. He noted the importance of accountability and transparency, and highlighted partnerships and joint workshops enabled by the network. He noted milestones achieved in providing energy access associated with research dissemination and implementation, and gave examples of energy policy impacts in Lebanon, Kenya, and China, adding that success depends on the ability to inform decision makers.

Ogunlade Davidson, Co-Chair of GNESD, stressed that although energy is not mentioned in the MDGs, it acts as a multiplier, underlying them all. He said that in order to bring true development there is a threshold that needs to be surpassed, beyond which it is difficult to revert back to poverty. He addressed the need to consider gender equity and the empowerment of women, and described the impacts of five projects in Senegal, Brazil, and Kenya involving liquid petroleum gas and electrification. He cited lessons learned, including: the importance of government as a project driver; that not all projects require external assistance; and that for the private investor, the telecommunications sector is more attractive than energy.

Touria Dafrallah, ENDA, described the benefits of participating within the GNESD, including the common spirit of seeking energy as a prerequisite for sustainable development, sharing information and lessons learned, and networking. Some of the key findings of their research included that social electrification boosted the access rate, and that electrification is mainly used for light, and not wealth generation. She noted the market and political constraints on renewable technologies.

John Christensen, GNESD, addressed the question of how to reform the power sector so as to increase energy access amongst the world's poor, noting that 50% of the world is classified as such, and are largely dependant on biomass fuel. He urged protection of financing for electrification. Later, speaking on behalf of the Bariloche Foundation, Christensen gave an overview of a renewable energy and poverty project, noting that this is a politically sensitive issue. He said that renewable energy can involve both complex and simple technologies, and that the project explored solutions to country-specific barriers to implementation.

Participants discussed, among other things: cost barriers to adoption of renewable energy technologies; ensuring that access to energy is considered within poverty reduction strategy papers; and the need to achieve a certain development threshold to fully eradicate poverty.



Ogunlade Davidson, Co-Chair of GNESD, said that CDM contains transaction cost barriers, requires reform, and that the pricing of energy for the poor must be considered



Touria Dafrallah, ENDA, described GNESD as "a dynamic poverty-electrification laboratory"



M.I. Sharif, GNESD, addressed participants at the Global Network on Energy for Sustainable Development side event

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One More River: The Deal That Split the Cree

Presented by UNCSD NGO Energy Caucus and the Indigenous Environmental Network

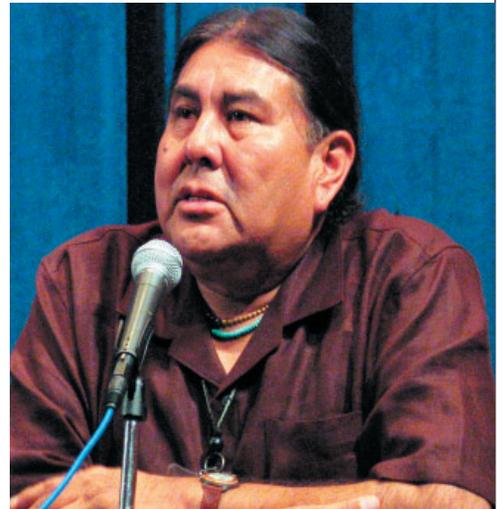
The event opened with "One More River," a film that documents the process by which indigenous consent was sought for a large-scale development in the Rupert River region, located in the traditional territory of the James Bay Cree in Quebec, Canada. The film recounted how in 2001 the Grand Chief of the Cree, Ted Moses, entered into an Agreement-in-Principle (AIP), prior to local consultation, with the Government of Quebec. The AIP would give the Cree \$3.5 billion dollars over 50 years in exchange for hydro-electric, mining and logging rights in the region. Moses then undertook a three-month process to convince the nine affected indigenous groups to vote in favor of the final deal. Through interviews with locals and their leaders, the film explores how the deal created a rift within the Cree, and how most of its opponents boycotted the referendum, which led to the deal's approval.

In the panel discussion that followed, Tom Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network, said the film serves to illustrate the problems associated with the concept of "free, prior informed consent" as defined by the World Commission on Dams Framework for Decision-Making, and added that the concern voiced by the Cree regarding inadequate consultation is indicative of a growing movement around the world. He urged the development of indicators to assess the risks posed by development to the spiritual health of a people, and noted that the introduction of electoral governance has supplanted traditional consensus-based decision-making, and is causing tension.

Jogi Carino, World Commission on Dams, said that in the Philippines, indigenous people are affected by dams disproportionately, as both are located in mountainous regions. She noted that some progress had been achieved in the recognition of ancestral land rights, but that this has yet to be put into action.

Jihan Gearon, Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative, described the impacts of coal and uranium mining in the Black Mesa region of Arizona, including the depletion and pollution of aquifers.

Annie Wilson, Sierra Club, stated that the environmental impact study hearings for the Rupert River project recently commenced on 4 May 2006, and emphasized that mega-hydro projects that involve large-scale flooding should not be considered "green" power.



Tom Goldtooth, Indigenous Environmental Network, commented that the film is indicative of a growing movement around the world, raising the bar regarding what constitutes consent



Jihan Gearon, Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative, described the challenges associated with opposing the mining industry



Jogi Carino, World Commission on Dams, said that the creation of every dam is heartbreaking



Annie Wilson, Sierra Club, emphasized that mega-hydro projects such as that proposed for the Rupert River should not be considered as green power, as recently confirmed by laws passed in New York and other states

More information:

<http://www.energycaucus.org>
<http://www.ienearth.org>
<http://www.irn.org>
<http://www.sierraclub.org>
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