CSD INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP
WEDNESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 1999

Delegates to the Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) on Consumption and Production Patterns and Tourism met during morning and afternoon sessions to discuss and give specific comments on the Co-Chairs’ summary of Monday’s discussion and text outlining elements for a CSD draft decision on consumption and production patterns.

ELEMENTS FOR A CSD DRAFT DECISION

Co-Chair Hanif (Pakistan) stated that the discussion on the text outlining proposed elements for a CSD draft decision should enrich and guide the document and bring it into harmony with the thinking of the delegates. Delegates’ general comments included the EU’s indication of agreement with the document’s main thrust of integrating consumption and production patterns as overriding issues. He also commented on the different sections, including on the need to achieve sustainable consumption by all countries, the role of the affluent consumer and awareness raising. He emphasized the importance of the impact of urbanization and suggested that the CSD seek close cooperation with the Habitat Agenda on these issues.

SAUDI ARABIA expressed reservations regarding text on targets, indicators and standards, which he said were cited incompletely or out of context from UNGASS documents. He indicated these omissions should be corrected. CANADA suggested shortening the text to provide a better basis for an action-oriented decision. She said some elements needed to be included, such as shared responsibilities within societies, public awareness and the role of information to enable consumers to make informed decisions. She also proposed expanding text on consideration of how consumption and production patterns in developed countries influence developing countries.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION welcomed inclusion of references to education, information sharing, awareness raising, youth and economies in transition. The US noted the desire of delegations to overcome time consuming negotiations to produce results that have little meaning beyond the United Nations. He said the Co-Chairs’ paper did not appear to be consistent with the concise approach anticipated by delegations, with too many priorities identified for future work. He said the AHWG would have to shrink the document to reach the kind of outcome anticipated by CSD Chair Upton (New Zealand). He supported Canada’s proposal to reformulate the paper. JAPAN, SWITZERLAND, NEW ZEALAND and AUSTRALIA also called for a short, concise and action-oriented text. Delegates then offered amendments section by section.

INTRODUCTION: Guyana, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, proposed changing the calls for cooperation in the spirit of UNCED and reiteration of the conclusions of UNGASS to note that changing consumption and production patterns should: be with respect to Agenda 21 and paragraph 28 of UNGASS; be in the context of sustained economic growth and sustainable development; and take into account the situation of developing countries adversely affected by the process. The PHILIPPINES said all G-77/CHINA countries may not agree with the proposal. BRAZIL and INDIA associated their positions with the G-77/CHINA and stressed the importance of this section in establishing the agreement’s context. BRAZIL highlighted Agenda 21 and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities in this context. CANADA proposed incorporating the notion of shared responsibility. NEW ZEALAND suggested combining the G-77/CHINA proposal with references to Agenda 21, other international agreements, and the Canadian proposal. The US agreed and added the UNGASS agreement and the goal of eradicating poverty.

SWITZERLAND said the avoidance of “costs” of environmental damage and social inequity should be broadened to include tackling the environmental damage and social inequality. AUSTRALIA suggested that developing countries’ priority to “increase consumption” should read “increase living standards.”

PRIORITY FOR FUTURE WORK: The US suggested that the Commission address consumption and production patterns in the context of each sectoral issue considered at future CSD sessions.

EFFECTIVE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION: The G-77/CHINA proposed deleting references to involve by “all levels” of government and suggested adding references to the transfer of “appropriate” technologies to “developing countries.” The UKRAINE suggested including “economies in transition” as beneficiaries of technology transfer and the provision of financial resources. The G-77/CHINA, the EU and other delegations suggested deleting paragraphs on: the implementation of non-discriminatory environmental taxes on luxury and disposable goods that have negative environmental impacts; the internalization of environmental and social costs into market prices and the phasing out of subsidies with negative social or environmental effects. SWITZERLAND proposed including references to labels and labeling and ecological tax reform.

The US suggested using agreed UNGASS text on transfer of technology and provision of financial resources. He also stressed the importance of public awareness, participation and education, and suggested including means for effective policy, such as economic instruments. CANADA proposed gathering references to technology...
transformation, information, public awareness, education, involvement of
women and youth, informed decisions by consumers, economic instru-
ments and improvement of environmental management in this section.
MEXICO and NEW ZEALAND proposed amalgamating paragraphs on
governmental involvement and cooperation with international
organizations, businesses, NGOs, youth organizations and other stake-
holders. The PHILIPPINES suggested including reference to avoiding
potentially negative effects on developing countries’ access to markets.

NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND CLEANER
PRODUCTION: The G-77/CHINA sought deletion of references to
"cleaner production," "eco-efficiency," "codes of conduct" and "target
setting." The US and AUSTRALIA supported an emphasis on the key
themes of eco-efficiency, best practices, lifecycle management,
cleaner production and transfer of environmentally sound technologies
(ESTs). The RUSSIAN FEDERATION and UKRAINE added refer-
ces to economies in transition in the context of the transfer of ESTs
and capacity building. CANADA sought an introductory sentence on
the importance of greater efficiency in consumption and production for
increasing the quality of life. NORWAY cautions against deleting too
much and suggested using bullet points to highlight key themes
including cleaner production, lifecycle management, reporting,
demand side management and eco-efficiency. NEW ZEALAND also
called for a shorter text.

In a paragraph on the dissemination of best practices in cleaner
production and environmental management, the G-77/CHINA
suggested deleting the qualifier "where appropriate" before a reference
to the transfer of practices in developing countries and added "required
technologies and know how." The EU sought specific references to the
role of business and industry in facilitating transfers.

AUSTRALIA suggested deleting a paragraph calling for studies of cleaner
production, eco-efficiency and demand-side management
because such work is already being undertaken by UN agencies.

The G-77/CHINA proposed deleting eco-efficiency and codes of
conduct. TURKEY suggested amending a reference to sharing experi-
ence to evaluate the impact of environmental manage-
ment on the competitiveness of developing countries, in particular
their SMEs. CHILE said a reference to the lifecycle of products should
not go beyond references in the UN Guidelines on Consumer Protec-
tion.

In a paragraph calling on governments to engage industry in the
debate on sustainable consumption and production, the EU added
the theme of "integrated product policies" and a reference to government
responsibility for eco-labeling.

GLOBALIZATION AND ITS IMPACTS ON CONSUM-
TION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS: The G-77/CHINA
suggested that the proposed studies examine the ways and means to
promote sustainable consumption and production patterns. The EU
suggested that the scope be widened to include environmental issues.
A further proposal that studies on the impact of globalization should
include developed countries was supported by the RUSSIAN FEDER-
ATION. AUSTRALIA proposed that assessments of transfer of
consumption patterns refer to unsustainable consumption patterns. The
US proposed that studies undertaken on impacts of globalization cover
both the positive and negative aspects and suggested deletion of refer-
ces to assessments on the transfer of consumption patterns from
industrialized countries to developing countries. He proposed that the
document refer to Governments alone and not to international organi-
izations so as to increase efforts to make policies on trade and sustain-
able production and consumption mutually supportive.

SWITZERLAND suggested calling for studies on the role of the
financial sector and of investments on environment issues and
improved coherence between multilateral trade standards and multilat-
eral agreements. NEW ZEALAND suggested that references to trade
and sustainable consumption include a reference to non-creation of
artificial trade barriers. CHINA expressed strong reservation on refer-
ces to universal environmental standards, stating that the issue is
best addressed in trade fora.

URBANIZATION AND ITS IMPACTS ON CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS: The G-77/CHINA said local
authorities are subsumed in references to government, and proposed
deleting all references to local authorities. To text calling for "develop-
oped country expertise and financial resources," she suggested
deleting "developed country expertise." She also said "in-depth studies" should be conducted at the national level. The US proposed
retaining "developing country expertise" and replacing "financial
resources" with developed country "experience." The EU suggested
adding references to the Habitat Agenda and the UN Centre on Human
Settlements. The EU, supported by AUSTRALIA, proposed
expanding the reference to waste collection systems and disposal facil-
ities to reference the "prevention, minimization and recycling of
wastes." The UKRAINE added "energy" to a list of environmental and
social impacts of urbanization. The US said the text on "Earth
Summit+10" should refer to the comprehensive review to be
done by CSD-10. He also suggested adding text on consumer
information and education.

CO-CHAIRS’ SUMMARY OF MONDAY’S DISCUSSION ON
CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

The Co-Chairs’ Summary contains six sections entitled: introduc-
tion, general considerations, natural resource management and cleaner
production, the impact of globalization on consumption and produc-
tion patterns, urbanization, and consumer information and education
and social values.

The EU said the text was factually correct and reflected the
AHWG’s discussion. The US proposed adding clarifying language to
indicate that the text was not consensus language. BRAZIL also
cautioned that the draft gave the impression that the text was based on
a consensus. The G-77/CHINA proposed giving more attention to the
national activities that delegates discussed and said the text failed to
indicate that developed countries should take the lead on the issue.
AUSTRALIA sought to clarify that a number of references to
consumption standards should refer, instead and inter alia, to living
standards, income and quality of life. JAPAN recalled its proposal for
"social systems" approaches to bringing about sustainable consump-
tion and production.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Budgetary implications (in both New York and Washington) will
compete with a desire to put the "Earth Summits" back on the global
media agenda in an emerging discussion on the possibility of holding
CSD/Earth Summit+10 outside New York. India, one potential host
country, is actively considering a suggestion that Earth Summit+10 go
to New Delhi. Bangkok and Manila are also said to be possible venues.
One observer suggested that a final decision is unlikely this side of a
presidential election in the United States.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

DISCUSSION OF DRAFT DOCUMENTS: The AHWG is
expected to convene in Conference Room 4 at 3:00 pm to discuss the
Co-Chairs’ summary and elements for a draft CSD decision on tourism
and sustainable development.

SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION
INTO THE 21ST CENTURY: This Down to Earth side-event will
present perspectives on core issues for sustainable consumption and
production and implementation by stakeholders. It will meet at 1:30
pm in Conference Room D.