



CSD-8 AD HOC INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUPS: 22 FEBRUARY - 3 MARCH 2000

The *Ad Hoc* Intersessional Working Groups (AHWGs) for the eighth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-8) begin today and will continue through 3 March 2000 at UN Headquarters in New York. The AHWG on the cross-sectoral themes of Finance, Trade, Investment and Economic Growth will meet from 22 - 25 February. The AHWG on the sectoral themes of Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources and Agriculture will meet from 28 February to 3 March. Each AHWG will send two documents to CSD-8 (24 April - 5 May): a Co-Chairs' "summary" that will outline the state of international debate on a given issue; and an "elements" for decision paper containing action-oriented and concise proposals for negotiation at CSD-8. The elements will also guide Ministerial input at the High-Level Segment. Major groups organizing a Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Sustainable Agriculture at CSD-8 will make an initial presentation to the AHWG on Land Resources.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CSD

The Commission on Sustainable Development emerged from Agenda 21, the programme of action adopted by the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). Agenda 21 called for the creation of the CSD to: ensure effective follow-up of UNCED; enhance international cooperation and rationalize intergovernmental decision-making capacity; and examine progress in Agenda 21 implementation at the local, national, regional and international levels. In 1992, the 47th session of the UN General Assembly set out, in Resolution 47/191, the terms of reference for the Commission, its composition, guidelines for the participation of NGOs, the organization of work, the CSD's relationship with other UN bodies, and Secretariat arrangements. The CSD held its first substantive session in June 1993 and has met annually since then.

In June 1997, five years after UNCED, the General Assembly held a special session (UNGASS) to review implementation of Agenda 21. Negotiations held in a Committee of the Whole, as well as several ministerial groups, produced a Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. Among the decisions adopted at UNGASS was the CSD work programme, which identifies sectoral, cross-sectoral and economic sector/major group themes for the subsequent four sessions of the Commission. Overriding issues for each year are to be poverty, and consumption and production patterns.

The sixth session of the CSD met from 20 April to 1 May 1998. Participants considered the economic theme of industry and the sectoral theme of strategic approaches to freshwater management. They also reviewed implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and discussed the cross-sectoral themes of technology transfer, capacity building, education, science and awareness raising. Three Drafting Groups negotiated seven decisions at CSD-6.

The seventh session of the CSD met at UN Headquarters in New York from 19-30 April 1999. Participants considered the economic theme of tourism, the sectoral theme of oceans and seas, and the cross-sectoral theme of consumption and production patterns. They also prepared for the UN General Assembly's Special Session to review the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The session also saw a concerted attempt by CSD-7 Chair Simon Upton (New Zealand) to inject a new sense of purpose and direction through minor procedural innovations designed to generate a clearer focus in the Commission's discussions and outcomes. At the High-Level Segment, 89 ministers and high-level government officials offered statements and engaged in a dialogue led by Chair Upton (New Zealand). Delegates deliberated on 13 draft decisions during the second week of the session, adopting 12 of them on 30 April.

Delegates highlighted several aspects of their decision on oceans and seas as positive outcomes, particularly their decision recommending that the General Assembly establish an open-ended informal consultative process as a means to broaden and deepen its consideration of oceans and seas issues. Other decisions addressed the need to reverse the downward trend in official development assistance (ODA), preparation for CSD-9's work on energy, and improving the integration of consumption and production policies into the CSD's work programme.

MEETINGS OF THE CSD-8 BUREAU

The fourth meeting of the CSD-8 Bureau took place in New York on 31 January 2000. The meeting was chaired by Minister Juan Mayr Maldonado (Colombia), Chair of CSD-8. He was joined by CSD-8 Vice-Chairs, Zvetolyub Basmajiev (Bulgaria), Patrick McDonnell (Ireland), Abderrahmane Merouane (Algeria) and Choi Seok-young (Republic of Korea). On plans for the High-Level Segment at CSD-8, the Bureau reiterated the importance of involving Ministers with responsibilities in such areas as finance, agriculture and land planning together with Ministers of the Environment. The Chair undertook to



wrote to Ministers, inviting them to participate in the High-Level segment organized around five main themes. The Bureau will meet again on 4 March.

At previous meetings the Bureau discussed: the outcomes from intersessional meetings; the significance of CSD-8 as the first global forum on sustainable development in the year 2000; plans for the CSD-8 High-Level Segment to discuss preparations for Earth Summit+10; the need to have the CSD integrate the work of other organizations such as the World Trade Organization's Committee on Trade and Environment; and CSD-8's decision-making on forests. The Bureau also discussed the Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development and preparations for the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Segment on Sustainable Agriculture and the Day of Indigenous People at CSD-8.

INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS RELATED TO CSD-8

A number of meetings that have taken place during the intersessional period have a direct bearing on issues to be taken up at the AHWGs and/or at CSD-8.

CULTIVATING OUR FUTURES CONFERENCE ON THE MULTIFUNCTIONAL CHARACTER OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND (MFCAL)

The “Cultivating Our Futures” Conference on the Multifunctional Character of Agriculture and Land (MFCAL): The “Cultivating Our Futures” Conference on the Multifunctional Character of Agriculture and Land (MFCAL) took place from 12-17 September 1999 in Maastricht, the Netherlands. Organized jointly by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Government of the Netherlands, the conference was attended by 260 participants from more than 100 countries. The main outcome of the conference was the final report of the Chair, which reviews progress in the implementation of sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD) and identifies instruments and issues for future action. The outcome will contribute to CSD-8 discussions on integrated planning and management of land resources and SARD.

HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATION ON RURAL WOMEN AND INFORMATION: The FAO organized a High-Level Consultation on Rural Women and Information from 4-6 October 1999. The objective of the consultation, which included 326 participants, was to examine the “Strategy for Action for policies meeting the challenges of both food security and gender equality - The role of information”. The strategy, prepared by the Secretariat, aims at informing more broadly policy-makers, planners, the media and the general public of the roles and responsibilities of men and women in agricultural production so as to ensure an equitable allocation of resources to the people who play a key role in food security.

Delegates recognized the importance of rural women and of their contribution to agricultural production and food security. Yet they acknowledged that several constraints and barriers continue to exist for rural women, preventing the full realization of their potential and the reduction of poverty. With regard to the Strategy for Action, the delegates provided a number of guidelines to focus more closely on issues related to the production, dissemination and utilization of information on rural women to enhance gender equality and food security.

WORKSHOP ON LAND TENURE AND CADASTRAL INFRASTRUCTURES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

A Workshop on Land Tenure and Cadastral Infrastructures for Sustainable Development was held in Bathurst, Australia, from 17-23 October 1999. The Workshop brought together 40 international land administration experts from 23 countries representing all continents to develop a Bathurst Declaration. They addressed: the changing relationship of humankind to land; the relationship between land and sustainable development; the consequent relationship of land tenure to land administration; and a strong recognition of the inter-dependency of land, water and food. The Bathurst Workshop was followed by an open international conference in Melbourne at which the Bathurst Declaration was presented.

FIFTH EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON FINANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The fifth Expert Group Meeting on Finance for Sustainable Development was held in Nairobi from 1-4 December 1999. Over 50 experts from developed and developing countries attended. The main goals of the meeting were, *inter alia*: to generate analysis and policy options to assist CSD-8 in preparing for discussion of Agenda 21 financial issues; to identify trends in finance for sustainable development; to discuss issues critical for Sub-Saharan Africa; to discuss a strategy to increase ODA and deal with external debt; and to further develop policy options for mobilizing private foreign and domestic capital.

The Expert Group proposed that the CSD support research on: the relationship between foreign investment and sustainable development; whether globalization and sustainability goals provide a new and compelling rationale for debt reduction and a rising trend of ODA; improvement of calculations of the magnitudes and costs of unsustainable subsidies; green budget reform; and capacity and institution building for the mobilization of financial resources for sustainable development. The experts agreed that in all proposed research work, the cooperation of civil society should be sought.

FOURTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS:

The fourth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF-4): The fourth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF-4) convened from 31 January to 11 February 2000 at UN Headquarters. At this final session of the Forum, delegates had before them the task of finalizing conclusions and proposals for action to be submitted to CSD-8. The programme elements discussed at IFF-4 included: the promotion, facilitation and monitoring of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests' (IPF) proposals for action; financial resources; trade and environment; transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs); and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests. Issues in need of further discussion were: the underlying causes of deforestation; traditional forest-related knowledge; forest conservation and protected areas; forest research; valuation of forest goods and services; economic instruments; future supply of and demand for wood and non-wood forest products; and assessment, monitoring and rehabilitation of forest cover in environmentally critical areas.

While the IFF did succeed in producing conclusions and proposals for action on all of the issues under its mandate, delegates failed to reach a consensus on many key issues left pending from the IPF, including reference to new financial mechanisms, the creation of an international forest fund or whether to explore expansion of the Global Environment Facility's scope to include a wider range of sustainable forest management activities. The Forum was also unable to reach agreement on linking intellectual property rights and traditional forest-related knowledge in the development of mechanisms to realize benefits of such knowledge. On the question of a forest convention, delegates agreed to recommend to the CSD that the UN establish an intergovernmental body, the UN Forum on Forests and, within five years, “consider with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests.”

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

OPENING SESSION AND GENERAL DISCUSSION: The *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Finance, Trade, Investment and Economic Growth is expected to begin work at 10:00 am in Conference Room 4. Initial agenda items include the election of officers, opening statements by the Co-Chairs, the introduction of the report of the Secretary-General and other documentation and reports from relevant intersessional meetings, followed by general discussion on finance.

NGO MEETINGS: The Women's Caucus will meet at 8:30 am. The NGO Strategy Session will take place at 9:15 am. The NGO Steering Committee will meet at 1:00 pm. All of these meetings will take place in Conference Room D.