



CSD-9 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 16 APRIL 2001

The ninth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-9) opened at UN Headquarters in New York today. At a brief morning session, delegates elected members of the Bureau, considered the agenda and organizational matters and heard opening statements, as well as reports from the CSD-9 intersessional meetings and other intersessional activities. The first Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on achieving equitable access to sustainable development was held in the afternoon.

OPENING PLENARY

Opening CSD-9, Chair Bedrich Moldan (Czech Republic) underscored the role of the CSD in monitoring progress and achievements toward sustainable development, and said he expected the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 to be discussed during the High-level Segment.

Welcoming participants, Nitin Desai, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, highlighted the theme of energy, an area in which the CSD had added value to the work of the UN. He said: CSD-9 is the first UN meeting where energy is being discussed as a sectoral issue; energy needs of populations and access to energy should be addressed as priorities, including by the CSD; and, noting that many concerns about the availability of sustainable development resources are linked to energy, suggested merging the CSD agenda with that of poverty eradication. He said health impacts, financing, technology transfer, institutional issues of implementation, stakeholder involvement, and ethics of global responsibility should be addressed, which would mean CSD-9 could be a template for addressing global concerns in other areas.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Delegates elected Madina Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan) as Vice-Chair to represent the Asian States and to serve as Rapporteur, and agreed to elect the Vice-Chair for the African group at a later date.

Chair Moldan introduced, and delegates adopted, the provisional agenda and other organizational matters (E/CN.17/2001/1), and said the organization of work could be modified as the Commission proceeds. He announced that three drafting groups will be established, with no more than two meeting simultaneously: drafting group one, on energy, chaired by Alison Drayton (Guyana); drafting group two, on

information for decision making and participation and on international cooperation for an enabling environment, chaired by Madina Jarbussynova; and drafting group three, on transport and atmosphere, chaired by David Stuart (Australia). He said the schedule will be decided later. Delegates approved the accreditation of the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety as CSD observers.

Chair Moldan noted that the High-level Segment will be held in three formal sessions on Thursday and Friday. He said introductory statements will precede the debate, and that country statements should be limited to five minutes, with the exception of the Alliance of Small Island States, the EU and the G-77/China, who will each be allotted ten minutes. He invited ministers to participate in informal exchanges on Thursday and Friday morning, and suggested that their interventions focus on the World Summit on Sustainable Development in order to guide CSD-10 deliberations. Regarding the interactive dialogue, he said two teams were proposed by the Bureau: the first to address challenges in meeting the growing need for energy for transport and the promotion of public-private investments; and the second assessing how successfully sustainable development has been integrated into national policies. He said a Chair's summary of the Multi-stakeholder Dialogues would be produced. SUDAN expressed his hope that the Bureau will ensure that the African group is given its share of Commission responsibilities. Chair Moldan urged the African group to nominate a representative for election as Vice-Chair of the Commission.

REPORTS OF INTERSESSIONAL ACTIVITIES: Vice-Chair David Stuart drew delegates' attention to the report of the Intersessional *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Transport and Atmosphere (E/CN.17/2001/16), highlighting the elements for a draft decision on both issues. Vice-Chair Madina Jarbussynova highlighted the report of the Intersessional *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Information for Decision Making and Participation and on International Cooperation for an Enabling Environment (E/CN.17/2001/17). She said the group had not agreed on all elements, and that reservations had been expressed at the end of the deliberations on text related to indicators for sustainable development.

The report of the Second Session of the *Ad Hoc* Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development (E/CN.17/2001/15) was presented by Irene Freudenschuss-Reichl (Austria), Co-Chair of the Group. She said there is no hope that

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internationally-agreed development targets can be met if there is no progress on access to energy. Co-Chair Mohammad Reza Salamat (Iran) noted that while the group managed to agree on many paragraphs in the negotiated text, they failed to reach agreement on text relating to nuclear energy technologies, international cooperation, and the function of markets. Bracketed text on these issues has been transmitted to CSD-9.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE: EQUITABLE ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

Chair Moldan opened the first Multi-stakeholder Dialogue session, which focused on equitable access to sustainable energy.

OPENING STATEMENTS: The Chairman of the WORLD ENERGY COUNCIL, speaking on behalf of industry, emphasized the need for greater energy access, availability and acceptability, and urged actions relating to, *inter alia*, reforming markets, reducing political risk and improving energy efficiency. A representative from the TATA ENERGY INSTITUTE, speaking for the scientific and technical community, urged the phasing out of subsidies, underlined the value of decentralized energy and the need to build local institutional capacity, and expressed concern with the decline of support for research and development. A representative from THE INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF FREE TRADE UNIONS, on behalf of trade unions, emphasized the need for greater worker participation in energy production decisions, called for ratification of International Labour Organization Convention 155 on worker health, highlighted concerns with transport-related accidents, and urged greater support for research into the employment implications of the transition to sustainable energy. Representatives from the JOHANNESBURG MUNICIPALITY and the MUNICIPALITY OF RIO DE JANEIRO, speaking for local authorities, noted that the poor often lack access to commercial energy, and urged greater investment in renewable and cleaner energy and in energy efficiency.

A representative from CHRISTIAN AID, speaking for NGOs, urged governments to: immediately phase out nuclear energy; place a moratorium on the extraction of fossil fuels from environmentally-sensitive areas; impose a carbon-based fuel tax; and cease building large-scale dams. She advocated the creation of a new UN agency to promote renewable and sustainable energy.

OPEN DIALOGUE: PAKISTAN cautioned against removing all subsidies, noted concerns with the cost of decentralized energy, and stressed the importance of transparency of market decisions regarding prices. SAUDI ARABIA noted that poverty eradication is the principal priority for developing countries, whereas developed countries focus on the three pillars of sustainable development. INDONESIA called for regional, national, and international cooperation and public-private partnerships for equitable access to sustainable energy.

STAKEHOLDER RECOMMENDATIONS: Representatives of NGOs recommended: imposing restrictions on new subsidies for unsustainable energy sources; promoting greater access for women to sustainable energy; halting oil and gas extraction in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge; phasing out nuclear energy; ensuring that the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade-related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights does not negatively impact transfer of sustainable energy to developing countries; establishing norms for equitable benefit distribution; and calling for specific proposals to ensure that prices accurately reflect externalities.

TRADE UNION representatives offered recommendations on: the greater participation of workers in decisions on energy and transport issues; promoting linkages between worker, community and environmental health; undertaking research into employment implications of the transition to sustainable energy; and increasing North-South technical transfer.

Representatives of the SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY highlighted: disproportionate use of energy by developed countries; the challenge of meeting increasing energy demands of developing countries while minimizing environmental risk; the need to focus on energy services; greater use of life-cycle cost assessments and full-cost accounting; and interdisciplinary collaboration, particularly in developing countries, to strengthen the role of science in energy decision-making.

Representatives from INDUSTRY made recommendations relating to: the potential role of liquid petroleum gas as a clean energy source; efforts of the petroleum industry to minimize their impacts in environmentally-sensitive areas; benefits of social impact assessments of energy production activities; accounting of external costs as well as benefits, including derivative benefits; and implementation of innovative market mechanisms.

Representatives of LOCAL AUTHORITIES: described their climate protection campaigns; supported the use of certain subsidies for renewable and clean energy sources; and called for the phased removal of energy subsidies.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Energy was the buzzword today and promises to be the issue of the session, with interest focusing in particular on the text relating to nuclear technologies. Although there is overwhelming support for a proposal to delete this text, a small number of countries are pushing for its retention. Some participants speculate that motivation for its retention is driven by an interest in exporting nuclear energy technologies to developing countries in order to earn carbon credits. These participants are furious at the prospect, observing that it is unsustainable and a heavy investment with little benefits to already marginalized groups. Others contend that the cost of managing nuclear waste is too high, thus non-users would not adopt it. Delegates' positions at the inter-sessional have also reportedly been rattled by the recent US articulations on the Kyoto Protocol.

Besides the energy issue, participants noted other challenges that the session faces. The loss of a Vice-Chair will over-stretch the Bureau's capacity. Following 12 weeks of diverse UN negotiations, many developing country delegations are exhausted and ill-prepared for the session. In addition, the informal consultations on international environmental governance planned for later this week and on the World Summit on Sustainable Development are promising to be crowd-pullers.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE: The second Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on sustainable choices for producing, distributing and consuming energy will take place from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm in Conference Room 3. Speakers will include, *inter alia*, representatives from the following organizations: World Energy Council, IUCN, the Maroochy Shire Council (Australia) and the New Energy NGO (Ghana), with Australia as a respondent.

The third Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on private-public partnerships to achieve sustainable development will take place from 3:00-6:00 pm in Conference Room 3. The scheduled speakers will include representatives from: the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, the City of Leicester and the European Federation for Transport and Environment, with Sweden as a respondent.

SIDE EVENTS: Diverse briefings on energy, transport, mountain development and consumption at various venues and NGO caucuses are planned. Consult the daily list of events for the updated schedule.