



CSD-13 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 21 APRIL 2005

On Thursday, CSD-13's high-level segment focused on turning political commitments into action, starting with an interactive discussion involving representatives of UN organizations, regional commissions, specialized agencies and Bretton Woods Institutions. This was followed by presentations from invited speakers, statements from ministers and other high-level government officials, and an interactive session with Major Groups. Delegates also continued to negotiate the Chair's revised outcome document, meeting late into Thursday night.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

On Thursday, CSD-13's high-level segment resumed its focus on the issue of "Turning political commitments into action," with sessions focused on UN agencies and other organizations, country statements and discussions, and Major Groups.

INTERACTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH UN ORGANIZATIONS, REGIONAL COMMISSIONS, SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND BRETTON WOODS INSTITUTIONS:

FAO emphasized that without resources, and unless the Monterrey commitments are honored, the MDGs will not be achieved until the year 2150. WHO highlighted the need to address water and sanitation needs collectively while protecting ecosystems, and urged multisectoral, multistakeholder, and public-private initiatives. UNFPA underscored the centrality of population and gender issues, especially the basic right to family planning services, in addressing poverty. He called for recognition of the poor, young people and women as agents of change. UNICEF highlighted water and sanitation services as powerful means to break the cycle of poverty, observed that the lack of these services hinders education, and urged ministers to give particular prominence to school sanitation.

The UN ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE highlighted the regional dimension of efforts to achieve the MDGs. WMO underscored the importance of high-quality shared data, and proposed a goal of reducing by half the number of deaths from natural disasters over the next 15 years. UNCCD highlighted the importance of IWRM in programmes being developed to combat desertification, and the role of UNCCD Networks. OECD explained that, although ODA is now increasing, domestic financing will remain the primary source for all but the poorest countries. RAMSAR CONVENTION noted progress on IWRM and cooperative work with the Convention on Biological Diversity and other UN conventions and bodies.

Responding to these comments, the US stressed the need to learn from successful experiences in using ODA to leverage

domestic financing. GUYANA noted that domestic capital is being limited by decisions being taken in the WTO and other fora. PAKISTAN discussed the role of private investment in achieving the MDGs, suggesting that entrepreneurs should be encouraged to invest in small and medium enterprises (SMEs). FRANCE noted the benefits from having its national sustainable development strategy peer reviewed. Luxembourg, speaking for the EU, stressed the complementarity between MDGs and WSSD goals, and urged substantial replenishment of the GEF.

UNEP stressed that environmental and ecosystem services are essential, and not a luxury. BRAZIL said sustainable development is sometimes being addressed primarily through its environmental pillar, and CSD is the right forum to address this problem.

Reflecting on the discussion, Jose Antonio Ocampo, Under Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, noted comments on the importance of trade issues, support for public sector financing of water and sanitation services to the poor, and the use of cross-subsidization and bond markets as innovative tools.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS: Late on Thursday morning, delegates heard presentations on the theme of "Turning political commitments into action" from invited speakers.

Mikhail Gorbachev, Founding President, Green Cross International, stressed that debate on water privatization should not become a stumbling block to progress, adding that the MDGs are not voluntary but rather about the right of access. He called for an international binding instrument that would guarantee the right to water and provide a mechanism for its implementation.

The other invited speaker, the Prince of Orange, was unable to attend. However, his speech was presented by a Dutch official, who called on donors to meet ODA commitments and suggested that local-level participation and an integrated, sustainable strategy to achieve the MDGs be considered as conditions for funding.

COUNTRY STATEMENTS AND DISCUSSIONS: On Thursday afternoon, ministers and other high-level government officials presented statements and engaged in discussions on the issue of "Turning political commitments into action."

Many speakers stressed their commitment to achieving the relevant internationally-agreed goals and targets, and shared experiences on domestic reforms. SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO, CHINA, BRAZIL, LAOS, ISRAEL, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION and others elaborated on their national sustainable development strategies. AUSTRALIA said achieving the MDGs requires economic growth, primarily driven by private investment and an enabling environment.



BARBADOS emphasized good governance, partnerships, technology transfer, use of critical data, and increased ODA.

FINLAND supported strengthened international environmental governance, and BELGIUM drew attention to the Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development. BRAZIL highlighted the need to review debt conditionalities, and CHINA, LAOS and the RUSSIAN FEDERATION underscored the challenges of urbanization. ESTONIA stressed cross-sectoral integration, particularly energy and agriculture, in water management. The EC highlighted an integrated approach to river basin management and the need for sustainable consumption and production patterns. PORTUGAL said governments must provide the private sector with clear rules. The GLOBAL WATER PARTNERSHIP stressed that action must shift from the international to the regional and subregional levels.

ST. KITTS AND NEVIS noted the need to address debt issues, and said that to disregard CSD-13's themes is to disregard basic human rights. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO stressed the need for environmentally-friendly technologies. LESOTHO, MOROCCO and SOUTH AFRICA highlighted the important role of the CSD-13 themes in development. MOROCCO also appealed for support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). SOUTH AFRICA underscored Africa's "special needs" and urged increased funding with less restrictive disbursement procedures. ZAMBIA called for debt relief, placing human settlements at the center of the development agenda, and long-term financing.

CANADA supported strengthened UN inter-agency coordination, highlighting the role of UN Water. ARMENIA urged broader international cooperation on regional IWRM. The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC called for a change in the development paradigm, and an increase in international aid for development. TUVALU, on behalf of several Pacific Island States, proposed devoting a minimum of one day in each future review session to review progress on the Mauritius Strategy. JAPAN elaborated on its international assistance for water projects. The CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC highlighted the relevance of CSD's themes to rural populations, COSTA RICA underscored the issue of payment for environmental services, and NIGERIA called for developed countries to provide debt relief and swaps.

INTERACTIVE DISCUSSIONS WITH MAJOR

GROUPS: On Thursday afternoon, an interactive discussion was held with Major Groups. WOMEN called for a rights-based approach, and noted that achieving the sanitation target requires infrastructure, behavioral change, and social empowerment. CHILDREN AND YOUTH urged changes in unsustainable consumption and production patterns and noted that youth-led projects are innovative, resourceful and cost-effective. INDIGENOUS PEOPLE called for recognition of the right to self-determination in the CSD-13 outcome document.

Responding to these statements, a number of countries, including the EU, NORWAY, SWEDEN and BRAZIL supported Major Groups' integration and participation in CSD, while others discussed national initiatives and projects. CAPE VERDE, SWEDEN and others highlighted the need to strengthen and support women's role in environmental issues. EGYPT emphasized the need to mainstream environmental concerns and simplify donor processes. NORWAY said the contentious issue at CSD-13 was the rights-based approach, predicting that it would gain acceptance over time.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES and NORWAY supported decentralization of responsibilities and resources. NGOs urged a rights-based, pro-poor approach, scaled-up assistance, unconditional debt cancellation, fair trade, and a UN-based follow-up mechanism on targets and plans. TRADE UNIONS highlighted worker participation, decent jobs, and workplace health and safety as fundamental for sustainable development,

and encouraged countries to take advantage of ILO technical assistance programmes. SENEGAL supported CSD's role in coordinating monitoring on policies and actions.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY underscored, *inter alia*, that "business does not support privatization of water resources," highlighting provision of water and sanitation services as a public service, whether operated by public or private entities. The SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY stressed the need for information and data collection with open access. FARMERS underscored the need to enhance the role of all stakeholders equally. SOUTH AFRICA expressed concern that the conference space provided at UNHQ has constrained Major Groups' participation.

NEGOTIATIONS ON THE CHAIR'S REVISED TEXT

Informal small-group negotiations on CSD-13's draft outcome document continued on Thursday, on the basis of the updated Chair's text that had been issued late on Wednesday. One group dealt with the preamble and non-thematic sections, and another addressed thematic issues. Further progress was reported, but no final resolution had been reached as of 9:00 pm Thursday night.

PREAMBLE AND NON-THEMATIC SECTIONS:

Negotiations in this group continued throughout the day. Future CSD procedures and timelines for follow-up review were debated early in the day. Several paragraphs of the preambular section were approved *ad referendum*, but less progress was made on the operative part, where only the first paragraph was agreed by Thursday evening. Several items in the second operative paragraph were discussed at length, but remained unresolved by the evening. Among the contentious issues was the question of the "user-friendly" (or "Chair's") matrix that would summarize policy options and practical measures; the matrix's status was questioned by the G-77/CHINA.

The EU, US and G-77/CHINA expressed preferences for three different alternative texts on increased ODA and other resources. In addition, disagreements persisted on language dealing with the complementarity of the JPOI goals and MDGs. Good governance proved to be another contentious issue, with the G-77/CHINA insisting on mentioning the international level, and the US objecting to this. Alternative language that would refer to "improved governance at all levels" was also considered. Opposing views were expressed on the need for decentralization, with the RUSSIAN FEDERATION insisting on dropping relevant text.

THEMATIC ISSUES: In the group on thematic issues, suggested references to the "ecosystems approach" in the sub-section on IWRM proved contentious, with the EU and others in favor, and the G-77/CHINA against. Concerns in the G-77/CHINA over a reference to cost recovery were eventually resolved when language was added noting that cost recovery would not be a barrier to the poor's access to water. There were also disagreements on text dealing with cooperation among riparian states, with some countries opposing the use of JPOI language.

IN THE CORRIDORS

"A tale of two CSDs" is how one participant described events on Thursday. With participants torn between the formal discussions in plenary and the informal negotiations, some smaller delegations were complaining that it was proving almost impossible to support their ministers in the plenary while also participating in negotiations on CSD-13's outcome document—talks that are now well past their original Tuesday deadline.

The pressure was perhaps best reflected in the afternoon, when at one point all members of the Bureau were involved in informal negotiations, resulting in a delay in starting the plenary.

Meanwhile, some observers were talking about concerns among Major Groups and UN agencies about their degree of involvement in the decision-making process.