



Special Report on Selected Side Events at WSSD PC-III
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Tuesday, 2 April 2002

Events convened on Monday, 1 April 2002

Promoting health through sustainable development

Presented by Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR)

Karen Hopfl-Harris, PSR, provided an overview of public health problems associated with poor air quality and lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitation, stressing that environmental health is key to sustainable development.

Vanessa Tobin, UNICEF, highlighted trends in water-related environmental threats to children's health, emphasizing that diarrheal diseases kill nearly two million children annually. She noted that water, environment and sanitation interventions have led to decreases in under-five mortality due to diarrhea, although morbidity rates continue to rise. She highlighted lessons learned, including the need to: combine the provision of hardware with hygiene education; aim at hygiene improvement, rather than simply increases in service coverage; focus on families and schools for changes in behavior; and disseminate simple but effective messages.

Deron Lovaas, Natural Resources Defense Council, discussed the increase in urban sprawl in the US, which has resulted in increases in vehicle miles traveled and in emissions of carbon dioxide and air pollutants. He stressed the need for smart growth, which consists of development that makes more efficient use of land, including a greater mix of residential and commercial uses and higher density growth. He also emphasized the importance of protecting open spaces and revitalizing existing communities.

José Manuel Galindo, North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation (CEC), presented a film on Mexico's experience with eliminating DDT while also decreasing the incidence of malaria, which was a result of cooperation between the ministries of health and environment. Mexico's efforts to achieve sustainable malaria control included the use of alternative vector control methods, epidemiological stratification, and focalized treatment on those thought to be infected.

Karen Hopfl-Harris, on behalf of Rashid Chotani, Johns Hopkins School of Medicine and Public Health, highlighted the adverse impacts of lead on human health. She noted that many developing countries have not yet taken steps to phase out lead in gasoline. She explained that a country's phase-out schedule depends on the speed of refinery modifications, the need to reduce health risks due to environmental pollution, the vehicle turnover rate and the need for unleaded gasoline to protect catalytic converters. She stressed the importance of public education and strong commitment by both governments and NGOs for a successful phase-out.



José Manuel Galindo, CEC, describes a GEF project on demonstrating sustainable alternatives to DDT for malaria vector control in Mexico and Central America, which includes demonstration projects and dissemination, strengthening of national institutional capacity, elimination of DDT stockpiles, and coordination and management.

More information:

<http://www.psr.org>

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Deepening and broadening participation in sustainable development

Presented by the Earth Council

Alvaro Umaña, UNDP, said that local involvement is central to UNDP's work. He highlighted UNDP's successful local development programmes and said a new Capacity 2015 programme would soon be launched. He underscored that much can be accomplished with minimal resources at the local level, and urged the development of governance participation mechanisms.

Erna Witoelar, Indonesian National Director for WSSD Prepcom IV, described the Indonesian National Council for Sustainable Development's (NCSD) experiences with creating a multisectoral process under conditions of political crisis. She stressed that political realities can support or ruin sustainable development, and underscored the need for an ethical framework such as the Earth Charter.

Bernard Charrier, Green Cross International, reported on the first Earth Dialogues Forum, which addressed key issues to be raised at the WSSD from an ethical perspective. He said the Forum agreed on the need for ethical codes to guide sustainable development and welcomed the Earth Charter as a tool to support decision making for sustainable development at all levels.

Carlos Garcia-Robles, Mexican NCSD, reported on achievements and challenges in strengthening multi-stakeholder participation and establishing a multi-layered NCSD, highlighting the need for public participation, democracy and co-responsibility of civil society and government in the design of political programmes.

Dairijav Dagvadorj, Mongolian NCSD, attributed the Mongolian NCSD's notable success to its application of key strategies such as structural reorganization, creation of a multi-layered sustainable development network, and establishment of education programmes.

Hiro Sakurai, Sokka Gakkai International, and Fayen d'Evie, Earth Council, introduced a film on raising public awareness of the WSSD, produced by the Earth Council in cooperation with UNDP and UNEP, which featured successful case studies on empowering people and changing mindsets for sustainable development.



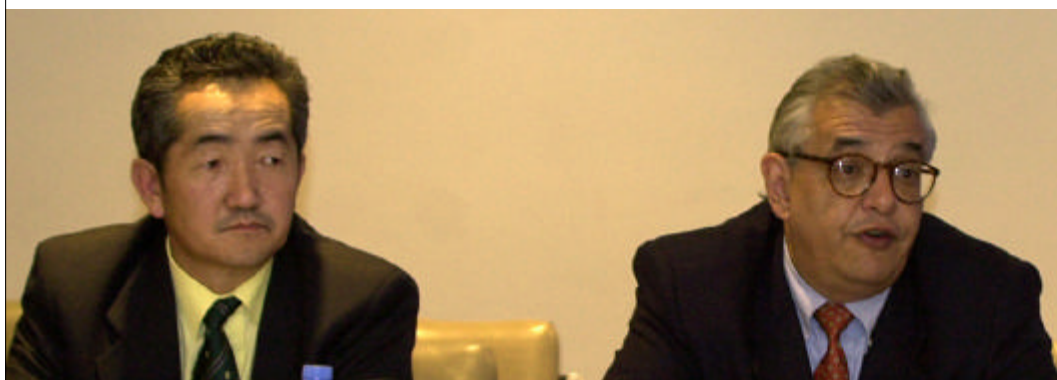
Erna Witoelar, Indonesian NCSD, says the Earth Charter could link sustainable development with democratic processes and good governance, and could be adopted as soft law to provide an ethical foundation for governmental decision making.

More information:

<http://www.earthcharter.org>
<http://www.earthdialogues.org>
<http://www.gci.ch>
<http://www.un-mongolia.mn/projects/map21>
<http://www.sgi.org>

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Dairijav Dagvadorj, Mongolian NCSD, and Alvaro Umaña, UNDP.

Cleaning up the world's fuel supply: Subtracting sulfur from diesel

Presented by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

Richard Kassel, NRDC, explained that the world's growing fleet of diesel vehicles emits particulate matter (PM), toxics and nitrogen oxides (NOx), which exacerbate urban air pollution and associated human health impacts. He noted that although the US, Europe and Japan are implementing measures to eliminate sulfur in diesel, diesel sulfur levels and emissions are uncontrolled in most of the world. He emphasized that reducing diesel sulfur levels to near zero is the first step toward cleaner diesel vehicles, and said the WSSD presents an historic opportunity for the world to "dump dirty diesels" by committing to near-zero sulfur levels by 2010.

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Water: Crisis or opportunities?

Presented by UNESCO and Green Cross International

Andras Szöllösi-Nagy, UNESCO, and William Cosgrove, World Water Council, introduced the joint UNESCO/Green Cross International project "From Potential Conflict to Cooperation Potential: Water for Peace" (PC→CP) and its role in addressing key water security challenges facing the UN World Water Assessment Programme, particularly the challenge of "shared water resources."

Marcia Macomber, Oregon State University, described her university's initiative and partnership on developing water conflict indicators and databases, which aim to enhance capacity and cooperation in shared freshwater basins worldwide.

Léna Salamé, PC→CP: Water for Peace, presented the objectives of the PC→CP project, including defining and surveying conflicts, monitoring indicators of conflict and potential cooperation, developing educational materials, providing decision-making tools and disseminating results and best practices. She highlighted the project's innovative approach, which combines analysis and research with practical applications.

Bertrand Charrier, Green Cross International, described the Water for Peace framework, which focuses on six locally managed transboundary river basin sub-projects. He underscored the need for political commitment to address water management issues, and highlighted an NGO initiative appealing for an international framework convention for water.

Discussion: Participants addressed: issues of transboundary aquifer management and participation of the private sector, youth and civil society in transboundary water management; and the advantages of local and regional partnerships over initiatives for a global treaty.



Marcia Macomber, Oregon State University, highlights the role of transboundary water management institutions and institutional resilience in water conflict prevention.

More information:

<http://www.gci.ch>
<http://www.infocus.com>
<http://www.worldwatercouncil.org>
<http://www.transboundarywaters.orst.edu>
<http://www.unesco.org/water>

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Nuclear applications for sustainable development

Presented by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)



Werner Burkart, IAEA, discusses the use of sterile insect techniques to eradicate the tsetse fly in parts of Africa.

Werner Burkart, IAEA, spoke on applications of nuclear technologies in the health, agriculture and water sectors. He described, *inter alia*: health technologies to prevent and combat communicable diseases, assess and improve nutrition, and monitor pollution; agricultural applications for pest control, spoilage reduction, and accelerated plant breeding; and water resource uses in coastal zone management, climate change monitoring, and groundwater safety assessment. Burkart noted that IAEA has sponsored numerous technical cooperation projects and places a strong emphasis on capacity building.

Hans-Holger Rogner, IAEA, described IAEA's energy planning services for developing countries, underscoring the long life and ongoing impacts of energy decisions. He said all energy options are treated equally and neutrally throughout IAEA's planning process, which helps countries to assess advantages, disadvantages and costs of each option, uses computer models to incorporate these factors, and provides assistance in interpreting the results, with a focus on capacity building throughout the process. Rogner further addressed indicators for sustainable energy development, outlining social, economic and environmental factors in energy assessment.

More information:

<http://www.iaea.org>

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Discussion: Participants discussed, *inter alia*, the use of groundwater assessment techniques for arsenic detection, variability between countries in sustainability indicators, applications of the IAEA energy planning process for analysis of the Millennium Development Goals, and the safety of food and non-food irradiation techniques.

Cleaning up the world's fuel supply: Subtracting sulfur from diesel

(continued from page 2)

Bruce Bertelsen, Manufacturers of Emission Controls Association, stressed that achieving meaningful emission reductions requires a systems approach that includes advanced engine designs, advanced emission controls, and high-quality fuel. He explained how lead in gasoline prevents meaningful emission control in gasoline-powered vehicles, and how fuel sulfur negatively affects catalyst-based emission control technology. Highlighting fuel quality as a critical element in achieving emission reductions, he underscored the need to eliminate lead in gasoline and reduce to near-zero the level of sulfur in gasoline and diesel fuel.

Michael Walsh, consultant, explained that fuels have an immediate impact on emissions and air quality and can enable or disable pollution control technology. He stated that reducing sulfur in gasoline and diesel lowers direct PM and SO₂ emissions, allows the use of advanced diesel NOx and PM control technologies, improves the performance of advanced technologies, enhances retrofit opportunities, and can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



Richard Kassel, NRDC, stresses the need to reduce sulfur levels in diesel fuel in order to reduce urban air pollution and related public health impacts.

More information:

<http://www.nrdc.org/air/transportation/psulfur.asp>
<http://www.meca.org>

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Integrating a human rights framework for sustainable development

Presented by the People's Movement for Human Rights Education (PDHRE)



Joji Cariño, Tebtebba Foundation, says fundamental imbalances in human relations are the cause of imbalances between human beings and the earth.

More information:

<http://www.pdhre.org>
<http://www.stakeholderforum.org>
<http://www.tebtebba.org>
<http://www.yuvaindia.org>
<http://www.anped.org>

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Shulamith Koenig, PDHRE, introduced the concept of human rights as a political and moral paradigm. She stressed that the body of international law reflects the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Felix Dodds, Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future, underlined the need for citizens to exercise participation and governance rights in order to ensure the implementation of agreed environmental measures, and called for the integration of human rights language into the Johannesburg Declaration.

Davinder Lamba, Mazingira Institute, underscored States' obligations to prevent violations of human rights arising from poverty.

Joji Cariño, Tebtebba Foundation, discussed the human rights concerns of indigenous peoples with respect to sustainable development. She said the current focus on partnerships and trade-offs can end in domination by powerful groups unless empowerment of youth, women, major groups and others is successful.

Minar Pimple, Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action, addressed linkages between environmental degradation and human rights, and noted that poor or nonexistent access to fuel, food and water results in deprivation of other human rights.

Discussion: Participants discussed, *inter alia*: the relation between rights and responsibility; the human right to an environment adequate to health and well-being; strategies for bringing attention to human rights within the WSSD process; and respect for human rights as a conditionality in negotiations.