



Special Report on Selected Side Events at WSSD PC-IV
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Events convened on Monday, 27 May 2002

Briefing on the DESA/UNCCD Panel of Eminent Personalities on the Poverty-Environment Nexus and Implementation of the UNCCD

Presented by the Secretariat of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

Arba Diallo, Secretary-General of the UNCCD Secretariat, gave a brief overview of the history of the UNCCD and the work of the DESA/UNCCD Panel of Eminent Personalities on the Poverty-Environment Nexus in the Context of Timely and Effective Implementation of the UNCCD.

Adamou Namata, Minister of Water, Environment and Control of Desertification of Niger, expressed hope that the Agadez Call, issued

by the Panel at its second meeting in Agadez, Niger, would be heeded by those with the ways and means to address desertification and land degradation. He also expressed hope that leaders would consider desertification at the upcoming G-8 meeting in Canada.

Mostafa Tolba, former Executive Director of UNEP, raised the recurring question of whether desertification is a rural or global issue, citing the large number of signatories to the UNCCD as evidence of a growing recognition that it is indeed a global problem. He highlighted the GEF's potential acceptance of land degradation as a focal area as a way to mobilize the donor community, and said that developed countries must be convinced of their stake in combating desertification in order to stimulate their involvement.

Grant Chapman, Australian Senator, noted the unique position of Australia as both a country affected by desertification and a donor. He outlined Australian aid programmes for land degradation, and expressed the desire to further extend Australia's sharing of expertise and knowledge in this field.

Uwe Holtz, former Chair of the German Parliament's Development Cooperation Committee, said the Panel had found strong links between desertification, biodiversity and climate change that must be tackled in order to achieve sustainable development. He said the term "desertification" does not convey to the global public the broad stakes in land degradation issues, and underscored the integral links between land degradation and poverty.

Discussion: In the ensuing discussion, participants highlighted several issues, including: the need for political will to implement the UNCCD and strategies to mobilize support for it; linkages between population and desertification; the lack of financial resources for the UNCCD; and GEF funding priorities.



Left to right: Eminent personalities Mostafa Tolba, Adamou Namata, and Arba Diallo.

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Governing sustainable development: The next steps

Presented by the Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future-UK Committee and IUCN



Kaarin Taipale, ICLEI, underscores the legitimacy of local governments in sustainable development governance.

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This event addressed governance issues in the WSSD process and in the text for negotiation on an institutional framework for sustainable development.

Rosalie Gardiner, Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future, presented an analysis by the Stakeholder Forum of the text on an institutional framework. The analysis assesses weaknesses in the text as presented to PrepCom IV, with overviews of 11 key areas and commentary on individual paragraphs.

Jerry Velasquez, UN University's Institute for Advanced Studies, Philip Dobie, UNDP, and Kaarin Taipale, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), spoke on vertically and horizontally integrated governance for the implementation of sustainable development strategies, as well as on the role of local and municipal governance.

John Waugh, IUCN, raised questions regarding the interaction of national sovereignty and international oversight of governance, underlining enhanced partnerships as a key outcome of the WSSD process. He said that while good governance will not prove sufficient for entry into the international "winners' circle," it will be a necessary part of any successful sustainable development solution.

Discussion: Participants discussed, *inter alia*: the importance of integration between various levels of government and different ways in which this is carried out; sub-national levels of government; a definition of good governance that incorporates predictability, transparency, accountability and sustainability; and common sense in good governance.

Implementation Conference: Stakeholder Action for Our Common Future

Presented by the UN Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Minu Hemmati, Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future, provided an update on the Implementation Conference, which will take place from 24-26 August in Johannesburg, and which will focus on implementation of sustainable development agreements through collaborative stakeholder actions, including potential Type II outcomes. She explained that the Conference will focus on freshwater, energy, food security, and health, all with a view to poverty eradication, social inclusion and empowerment, good governance, gender equity, and corporate citizenship. She noted that draft action plans are under development by Issue Advisory Groups for each of the issue areas.

Robert Whitfield, Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future, outlined current and future efforts related to the Conference, which include continued development of the draft action plans, further identification of potential partners, and identification of funding sources for implementation of Conference outcomes.

Yasmin von Schirnding, World Health Organization (WHO), emphasized the need for the WSSD to address the links between health, environment and poverty alleviation. She stressed that solutions exist that are implementable today, including access to drugs and vaccines, measures to strengthen health systems, environmental management, and health education. She outlined WHO's priorities in the area of health and environment, including efforts to reduce indoor and outdoor air pollution, ensure food safety, and improve water resources management, sanitation and hygiene.

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Minu Hemmati and Robert Whitfield, Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future, present elements of the draft action plans on freshwater, energy, food security, and health being developed for the upcoming Implementation Conference.

Linking local actions with strategies and mechanisms for sustainable development

Presented by the Governments of Indonesia and Bolivia

Gempur Adnan, Indonesian Ministry for Environment, outlined the development of Indonesia's national council for sustainable development. He highlighted initiatives underway in Indonesia to measure and compare the level of public participation in communities, and to identify the most effective incentives for communities to participate in sustainable development.

René Gómez-García, Bolivian Ministry of Sustainable Development and Planning, described Bolivia's initiative to develop and implement a national strategy for sustainable development. He highlighted institutional capacity building, a strong participatory process, the implementation of local efforts in municipalities, and intragovernmental coordination as key determinants of its success.

Seth Vordzorgbe, DevCourt, outlined lessons learned from Ghana's efforts to build linkages between local and national sustainable development strategies and mechanisms. He stressed the importance of, *inter alia*: pursuing strategic, integrated and coherent processes for development programming; enhancing the human focus of development strategies; building adequate capacity for development strategy formulation and implementation; and employing local knowledge.

Delfin Ganapin, Philippines National Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), discussed the role of coordinating mechanisms in promoting national-local linkages and multi-stakeholder participation in the Philippines. He emphasized that the PCSD and the Philippines' national Agenda 21 created critical paradigm shifts in policy at the national level and a political mandate at the highest level. He highlighted lessons learned, including that: general sustainable development policies and strategies must be translated into different local contexts; local people must "own" sustainable development efforts; the multi-stakeholder nature of the mechanisms facilitates local participation; it is easier to mainstream within existing roles and structures; and advocates are still needed to implement local Agenda 21 programmes.

Philip Dobie, UNDP, discussed UNDP's efforts to develop capacities for sustainable communities. He outlined successes and failures of Capacity 21, and noted that UNDP is now in the process of launching Capacity 2015, which will be a "platform" with broad ownership based on partnerships, and will focus on local-level activities. Its components will include capacity development for local sustainable development, national strategies for sustainable development, and implementation of multilateral environmental agreements, as well as capacity building for small island developing States.



Seth Vordzorgbe, DevCourt, stresses the need to ensure that the text emerging from PrepCom IV includes provision of resources for expanding capacity development initiatives and partnerships tailored to the needs of developing countries.

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<http://www.undp.org/capacity21>

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Resilience and sustainable development: Building adaptive capacity in a world of transformations

Presented by the International Council for Science



Brian Walker, CSIRO, stresses that a shift away from "command and control" approaches toward the management of socio-ecological resilience should become a key issue for the WSSD.

Thomas Rosswall, International Council for Science, introduced a report by the scientific and technological community to the WSSD. He stressed that the scientific and technological community should: commit to more policy-relevant research; integrate research on the environmental, economic and social pillars of sustainable development; adopt participatory approaches; improve cooperation with civil society, the private sector, governments and intergovernmental bodies; and promote gender equality. He also stressed the role of the scientific and technological community in bridging the North-South divide and in developing clean technologies and sustainable production and consumption patterns, and highlighted the need to improve education and capacity building and increase investment in science and technology.

Brian Walker, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), discussed sustainable development with respect to resilience of socio-ecological systems. Defining resilience as the ability of such systems to maintain a certain state, self-organize and build capacity for adaptation and learning, he said sustainable development means maintaining the resilience of the desired states of socio-ecological systems, which requires identifying and managing the environmental, social and economic attributes that contribute to the systems' resilience. It also requires the creation of open collaborative institutes and networks.

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Good governance: Implementing Principle 10 in the UN/ECE Region

Presented by the Environmental Law Institute



Fe Sanchis Moreno, European ECOForum, stresses the need to educate the public on rights to and procedures for participation in environmental decision making.

More information:

<http://www.eli.org>
<http://www.iucn.org/themes/law>
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Carl Bruch, Environmental Law Institute, explained that this event would address a range of issues relating to the Aarhus Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters, as well as Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration (access to environmental information).

Svitlana Kravchenko, European ECOForum, described the process of preparation and negotiation of the Aarhus Convention. She said the Convention not only represents a tool to protect the environment and build democratic societies, but is also a successful example of NGO involvement in international negotiations. She noted positive examples of implementing the Convention in countries in transition, but said many difficulties remain in exercising the right to access environmental information.

Fe Sanchis Moreno, European ECOForum, said that although the Aarhus Convention has facilitated access to information, greater efforts to implement environmental laws are needed, highlighting the European ECOForum's report on implementing Principle 10 in Europe. She also noted problems with ensuring access to justice, such as the length and high cost of juridical processes, which prevent NGOs from exercising their rights through the legal system.

John Bonine, Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide, said Principle 10 is implemented in many parts of the world, and cited models of public access to information in Italy, India, and Thailand as positive examples. He also noted broadening acceptance of participatory democracy in Eastern and Central Europe, which is based on public participation and access to information and justice, and stressed the need to focus on decision-making procedures that help to design strategies reflecting national and regional conditions.

Samantha Sapienza, Italian Ministry of Environment and Land Protection, emphasized that Italy will continue its support of Principle 10 and the Aarhus Convention within the WSSD process. She said many successful initiatives for public participation in decision making are being implemented in her country, including a procedure for adoption of the national strategy for sustainable development.

Éva Csobod, Regional Environmental Centre, described the Aarhus Convention as a common effort of Western and Eastern European countries toward implementation of sustainable development principles. She highlighted problems with ensuring access to information and justice, including high fees charged by national authorities for environmental information, and a lack of environmental information related to private sector activities and data on the state of the environment at the local level. She called for capacity building and sharing of experiences on public participation in decision making.

Implementation Conference: Stakeholder Action for Our Common Future

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Franklin Moore, US Agency for International Development (USAID), underscored the US Government's interest in extending existing partnerships and creating new ones, particularly in the areas of oceans and coasts, forests, education, water, energy, health, and food security. He highlighted the formation of partnerships as the key yardstick for the success of the WSSD, as partnerships will enable the crucial shift from talking about sustainable development to actually implementing it.

Lucien Royer, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, outlined a programme of action on workplace assessments being presented by trade unions, which aims to facilitate cooperation between local unions and employers to implement sustainable workplaces worldwide.

Stephen Turner, Water Aid, discussed the capacity and efforts of NGOs to engage in partnerships, highlighting examples in the drinking water sector.

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