



Special Report on Selected Side Events at WSSD PC-IV
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Events convened on Tuesday, 28 May 2002

Disaster risk and sustainable development: Reducing vulnerability to natural hazards

Presented by the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) Secretariat



Yasemin Aysan, UNDP, emphasizes that economic, social and ecological development can contribute significantly to disaster reduction.

Helena Molin-Valdés, ISDR Secretariat, introduced this event. She explained that the ISDR is an inter-agency UN body dedicated to building disaster-resilient communities by promoting awareness of the importance of disaster reduction initiatives and supporting such initiatives to reduce human, economic and social losses. She underscored that development practices create disaster risk.

Yasemin Aysan, UNDP, addressed linkages between development and disasters. She noted that the level of vulnerability to disasters in developing countries is very high, and that "low human development countries" are the most vulnerable, both in terms of human and economic losses. She outlined socioeconomic and socio-ecological factors that contribute to vulnerability.

Jasmin Enayati, Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future, outlined the findings of a recent online conference on disaster risk and sustainable development. The conference found that vulnerability is a result of human action or inaction, and barriers impeding risk prevention include poverty and an inadequate focus on long-term mitigation and community-based disaster preparation. To reduce disaster risk, participants emphasized the need for collective action, improved coordination and sense of responsibility, partnerships with civil society, and information and communication, particularly the use of local knowledge. The conference concluded that mitigation is not just about repairing damage but also building strong foundations for securing a more sustainable future for all at risk.

Josephine Shields, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), described the IFRC's work on risk reduction at the local level. She said the IFRC works on community-based disaster preparedness in 80 countries, building local capacity to reduce the impacts of disaster events and prepare for those that may occur. The IFRC also engages in mitigation activities, encourages governments to strengthen national capacities for disaster response, fosters community education and organization, and works to ensure that contingency plans are in place.

Bruno Merz, German Committee for Disaster Reduction, presented a proposal emerging from a March 2002 experts' meeting in Bonn, which calls for the development of a global programme and partnership on early warning, including an international early warning forum to facilitate dialogue between stakeholders and exchange of experiences.

Other speakers delivered presentations on: regional cooperation and capacity-building efforts by the Asian Disaster Reduction Centre; early warning scope and cooperation; and the International Centre for Research on El Niño.

More information:

<http://www.unisdr.org>
http://earthsummit2002.dyndns.org/pages/debate_intro.cfm
<http://www.ifrc.org>
<http://www.gfz-potsdam.de>

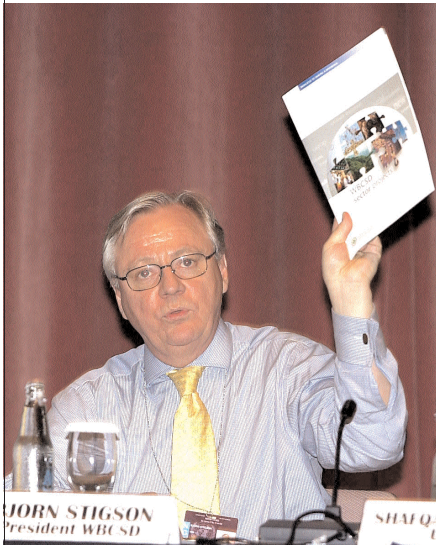
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World Business Council for Sustainable Development "Sector Projects" brochure launch

Presented by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)



Bjorn Stigson, WBCSD, introduced "Sector Projects," a new WBCSD brochure that outlines work undertaken by six industry sectors to achieve sustainability. He highlighted openness and stakeholder engagement as important features of the projects, and noted that analytical work has been carried out by an independent organization. He said the projects aimed to create an agenda for action toward sustainability for all stakeholders.

Nabiel Makarim, Indonesia, stressed the need for the business sector to: engage in voluntary initiatives that go beyond government obligations; demonstrate its commitment to address the most difficult sustainable development challenges in cooperation with other stakeholders; and make industrial practices and policies more sustainable.

Shafqat Kakakhel, UNEP, noted a growing recognition of the private sector's role in sustainable development, and highlighted cooperation between UNEP and the WBCSD. He said UNEP has encouraged sustainable practices in industry, facilitated codes of conduct for different industry sectors, and launched a reporting initiative to gauge progress by the private sector toward sustainable development. Kakakhel expressed hope that the WSSD would create new Type II initiatives building on the vital role of the private sector in sustainable development.

Bjorn Stigson, WBCSD, introduces WBCSD reports entitled "The Business Case for Sustainable Development," and "Tomorrow's Markets," and notes that the WBCSD will launch a "Walking the Talk" book at the WSSD.

Peter Eggleston, Rio Tinto, presented the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD) sector project, highlighting its unique level of multi-stakeholder engagement. He said this project examined the business, economic and political case for the sector, including how to safeguard the rights of communities affected by mining and address the environmental impacts of the sector.

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Wind power for the world

Presented by Greenpeace International



Liana Bratasida, Indonesia, said that renewable energy use can be greatly expanded in Indonesia and that the country will run out of oil in the next 20 years at the current rate of exploitation.

More information:

http://www.choose-positive-energy.org/html/content/news_global.html
<http://www.greenpeace.org>
<http://www.awea.org>

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 Liana Bratasida <dokie@cbn.net.id>

Steve Sawyer, Greenpeace International, presented "Wind Force 12," a joint report by Greenpeace and the European Wind Energy Association (EWEA), which represents a blueprint for generation of 12% of the world's electricity from wind power by the year 2020.

Christian Kjaer, EWEA, provided an overview of the state of wind energy. He highlighted an annual rate of growth in wind energy of more than 40%, and outlined success stories in Denmark, Germany and India. He said cost reductions have made wind energy competitive with conventional energy sources on good sites, and underscored the need for power market reform to remove market distortions that favor fossil fuels and nuclear power.

Corin Millais, Greenpeace International, illustrated projections for wind energy over the next 20 years to meet growing electricity demand, build market share, prevent carbon dioxide emissions, and reduce electricity costs. He outlined policy recommendations made in the Wind Force 12 report, including the establishment of legally-binding targets for renewable energy supply and reform of electricity markets at the national level, and an increase in energy-sector lending for renewable energy projects at the international level.

Liana Bratasida, Indonesia, spoke on the state of wind power in Indonesia. Underscoring the importance of energy supply in supporting peoples' lifestyles and its links with poverty alleviation, she highlighted the need to enhance renewable energy policies and build social awareness of the availability and low costs of wind energy. She highlighted constraints in financial resources, capacity building and manufacturing capacity, and advocated enhanced partnerships to foster wind power use.

Discussion: Participants discussed, *inter alia*: reputed noise and bird kill problems associated with wind power; local ownership of turbines; rural wind power usage; comparative advantages of wind and solar power; and electricity market distortions.

Inter-linkages - Synergies and coordination among multilateral environmental agreements: National and regional approaches in Asia and the Pacific

Presented by the United Nations University (UNU)



German Velasquez, UNU, says that synergies among MEAs should be demand-driven, ensure subsidiarity of decision making, and incorporate bottom-up as well as top-down approaches.

More information:

<http://www.unu.edu/env>

<http://www.geic.or.jp>

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Raman Letchumanan <raman@aseansec.org>

German Velasquez, UNU, stressed the need to focus on creating synergies between multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) at the national and regional levels, as that is where practical decisions to utilize synergies and coordination are made, issues are best linked, and country priorities are identified and related to other development concerns. He highlighted, *inter alia*, challenges for the implementation of synergies, including inadequate capacity, the need to balance centralization and devolution of authority, a lack of data, and negotiation and implementation gaps. He said regional and national case studies carried out by UNU could help identify concrete actions for creating inter-linkages.

Uli Piest, UNU, presented the outcomes of a Pacific Island case study on synergies and coordination among MEAs. The study assessed costs and benefits of linkages, focusing on national and regional issues and existing institutional mechanisms. He said the study revealed that: coordination of MEAs requires significant time and resources; ratification of MEAs may require coordination between legal, negotiating and implementing agencies; and the main challenge in implementation is how to translate international obligations into national and local agendas. He recommended, *inter alia*, the creation of national coordination systems, greater attention to capacity development, and intensified use of regional agreements to leverage global agreements.

Raman Letchumanan, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), presented a case study that examines how ASEAN countries could address the challenges of creating synergies through coordinated efforts. He highlighted the role of regional frameworks and existing institutional mechanisms in implementing MEAs.

Discussion: Participants discussed the importance of the ecosystem approach, the lack of capacity to create synergies, weaknesses of existing coordination mechanisms, the importance of clustering MEAs at local and national levels, and examples of initiatives for creating inter-linkages among MEAs in different regions and countries.

Johannesburg + 10: Implementing Agenda 21 after the WSSD

Presented by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)

This event addressed the history of the Rio Earth Summit and WSSD processes and the future of Agenda 21.

Jacob Scherr, NRDC, gave an overview of the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio and its outcomes at the international, regional, national and the local levels. He highlighted the entry into force of several conventions, the establishment of National Agenda 21s and environmental action plans in many countries, and increased public awareness and action.

Scherr discussed the gap in implementation since Rio, and outlined some possible outcomes from Johannesburg, highlighting Type II initiatives. He addressed the role of the US in the WSSD process, speculating on the attendance of President Bush at the Summit.

Discussion: In the ensuing discussion, participants touched on various issues, including challenges and imperatives for achieving sustainable development at the national and sub-national levels, the potential for success at the WSSD, individual countries' progress in implementing national Agenda 21s, problems with securing political will, and the role of the media as a development partner.



Jacob Scherr, NRDC, discusses the achievement of sustainable development, stating that if Rio was the Earth Summit, Johannesburg must be the "Down to Earth Summit."

More information:

<http://www.nrdc.org>

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Collaborative Partnership on Forests: An innovative inter-agency partnership

Presented by the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)

David Kaimowitz, Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), described the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) as an innovative inter-agency partnership uniquely designed to mobilize the strengths of key international organizations and instruments to advance the international agenda on forests. He explained that because numerous international agreements and intergovernmental agencies address forest issues, there was a need for an innovative mechanism to bring them into closer coordination, and said the CPF is effectively fulfilling this need.

Amb. Moeini Meybodi, UNFF Bureau, characterized the CPF as a new invention in inter-agency work at the international level. He said the CPF is a good example of successful and productive collaboration, and expressed the UNFF's optimism about the level of support CPF member organizations can provide for implementation of the UNFF's programme of action.

Tiina Vähänen, FAO, provided institutional background on the CPF. She explained that the CPF is not an institution or implementing agency but a voluntary partnership, in which 13 agencies collaborate and coordinate their activities to support the UNFF and foster implementation of its programme of work in member countries. She described the CPF's focal agency system, through which focal agencies address different elements of the UNFF's programme of work and cooperate with other CPF members to mobilize resources and expertise and avoid duplication of work.

Representatives of CPF member organizations, including the Secretariats of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Convention to Combat Desertification, and the UNFF, as well as the GEF, the World Bank, UNDP, and the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry, gave brief presentations on their role in the CPF.

Kazuo Asakai, Japan, presented the Asia Forest Partnership (AFP), which the Governments of Japan and Indonesia have agreed to launch as a WSSD Type II outcome. The AFP's purpose is to promote sustainable forest management in Asia, with a focus on forest law enforcement, good governance, illegal logging and rehabilitation and reforestation of degraded lands in ASEAN countries as well as in China, Korea and Japan. He said Japan and Indonesia are seeking to enlist the support, participation and feedback of governments, NGOs and international organizations in the partnership at PrepCom IV, and are convening a meeting in July to further develop it.

Jan McAlpine, US, highlighted the value the US Government places on the CPF, and said many frustrated bureaucrats view it as an effective mechanism to enable the necessary shift from words to action. She highlighted an initiative to support sustainable forest management in the Congo Basin, which the US is developing in cooperation with the World Bank, the International Tropical Timber Organization, and other CPF members, and called for input and contributions from interested parties.



David Kaimowitz, CIFOR, notes that although forests are not as prominent on the WSSD agenda as they were in Rio, they play an integral role in each of the main sustainable development issue areas now being discussed, including energy, biodiversity, water, and agriculture.

More information:

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forests.htm>

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World Business Council for Sustainable Development Sector Initiatives Brochure launch

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Mostafa Tolba, International Center for Environment and Development, described the history of his engagement with the WBCSD and his participation in assurance groups to guarantee the neutrality and validity of the findings of WBCSD sector projects. He stressed that civil society and the private sector still speak different languages, and recommended that the WBCSD further facilitate involvement of civil society in dialogue on the role of industry in sustainable development.

More information:

<http://www.wbcd.org/projects/projects.htm>

<http://www.iied.org/mmsd>

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