



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Vol. 5 No. 104

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development

Friday, 24 April 1998

CSD-6 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 23 APRIL 1998

CSD-6 participants met in Plenary, where they adopted the CSD-6 agenda and then debated the cross-sectoral themes, implementation of the Programme of Action for Sustainable Development of SIDS and sectoral issues.

DEBATE ON CROSS-SECTORAL THEMES

Reports on relevant intersessional meetings were presented prior to the debate. The conference on Environment and Society: Education and Public Awareness for Sustainability, co-sponsored by UNESCO and Greece, stressed that education and public awareness should form an integral part of government policies and group activities. The international expert meeting on Environmental Practices in Offshore Oil and Gas Activities, co-sponsored by the Netherlands and Brazil, suggested that sustainable development can be operationalized through environmental best practice guidelines obtained through open discussion between industries, government and interested parties. The Commission on Social Development discussed social integration and highlighted the need for promotion of ethics in commercial activities and the importance of investments in social institutions and quality lifetime training. The Republic of Korea hosted an expert meeting on transfer and diffusion of publicly-funded technology, which highlighted governments' role in driving the demand and regulation for ESTs.

In the debate on technology transfer, the G-77/CHINA called for: preferential access to technology; encouragement for the marketing and use of publicly-owned ESTs; and incentives for private EST transfers. He called for reporting and action on constraints on transfer. The EU called for: government policy, legal and institutional frameworks including IPR protection; donor cooperation with multilateral institutions to assist recipient countries in restructuring IPR regimes; and information exchange. JAPAN supported eco-partnerships, self-help and South-South cooperation. CHINA called for a mechanism to facilitate technology transfers and cooperation between institutions.

The US said strong IPR systems encourage firms to introduce technologies into developing countries. BRAZIL recalled that the CSD has been "stuck with" a familiar North-South dialogue on technology transfer but has never called for a study or engaged in a full discussion on the issue. UNIDO described the UNIDO-UNEP Cleaner Production Centers' activities, including: assessing developing countries' technological needs at the industrial plant level; demonstrating technical and financial feasibility of specific technologies; training management and workers to apply technology; and strengthening local capacity to identify appropriate technological solutions. RUSSIA recommended establishing an Internet information system on tech-

nology transfer. KAZAKSTAN supported recommendations on ensuring access by economies in transition to basic technologies through increased FDI and regional cooperation. PERU noted national initiatives to generate voluntary regulations on waste management and cooperation among SMEs to promote standardization of clean technologies. CANADA stressed the need for a favorable environment conducive to research and development. INDIA said developed countries should facilitate financing for EST transfers and supported linking ODA and FDI. The INTERNATIONAL OCEAN INSTITUTE proposed using the European EUREKA program as a model for technology transfer. PAKISTAN called for measures to address constraints on the supply and demand sides.

The G-77/CHINA called for exchanges of experience and networking, regional scientific network resources and strengthened scientific and technical capacity using multilateral, bilateral and special funding mechanisms. The EU called for multilateral support for capacity building to develop and implement national strategies for sustainable development by 2005. UNDP emphasized that countries can succeed in building capacity if driven by national priorities and national ownership. CANADA said capacity building includes exchange of experiences and best practices.

The G-77/CHINA called for further development of UNESCO's concept of education for a sustainable future. The EU urged governments and education authorities to produce sustainable development education strategies and industry to promote in-service training and education. The US and POLAND emphasized that education is an overarching factor for action on all cross-sectoral issues. SWITZERLAND called for more emphasis on gender balance in education. The NGO EDUCATION CAUCUS called for further efforts to involve the education community in the CSD's work and for monitoring, evaluation and annual reporting on the CSD's education work programme. MEXICO said education requires a bottom-up approach. AUSTRALIA stressed training of decision-makers on sustainable development. UNITAR reported on a recent seminar that highlighted the need to mainstream sustainable development education and focus on education to change production and consumption patterns, notably in business schools. The YOUTH CAUCUS called for: resource training centers; an end to privatization of education; increased budgets for education; and development of an indicator on integrating sustainable development into education. NORWAY recommended that UNESCO report annually on an inter-agency working group on education. CUBA emphasized universal access to education. UNESCO said it has been working to get its own house in order and emphasized the importance of national programmes.

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*© <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Chad Carpenter, LL.M <chadc@iisd.org>, Peter Doran <pdforan@ecology.u-net.com>, Kira Schmidt <kiras@iisd.org> and Lynn Wagner, Ph.D. <lynn@iisd.org>. The Editor is Pamela Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Managing Editor is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation, the Government of Canada (through CIDA) and the United States (through USAID). General Support for the *Bulletin* during 1998 is provided by the German Federal Ministry of Environment (BMU), the European Community (DG-XI), the Government of Norway, the Swiss Ministry for Environment, Forests and Landscape and the Ministry for the Environment in Iceland. Funding for the French version has been provided by ACCT/IEPF, with support from the French Ministry of Cooperation and the Québec Ministry of the Environment and Wildlife. The *Bulletin* can be contacted by e-mail at <enb@iisd.org> and at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted by e-mail at <info@iisd.ca> and at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada. The opinions expressed in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications only and only with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Managing Editor. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists and can be found on the Linkages WWW server at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/>. The satellite image was taken above New York City ©1998 The Living Earth, Inc. <http://livingearth.com>. For further information on ways to access, support or contact the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, send e-mail to <enb@iisd.org>.



The G-77/CHINA called for investment targeted to sustainable development and for more action-oriented research. The EU highlighted the IPCC and CGIAR as examples of linking scientific advisory processes with dialogue and cooperation with policy-makers. JAPAN underscored regional research networks and earth observation technologies. The NGO CAUCUS ON AGING proposed that CSD-6 recognize older persons as a major group. MEXICO recommended that information provided in national reports be used to conduct analyses of sectoral themes. BENIN said more national reports would be produced if budgetary provisions were provided.

DEBATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR SIDS

The Secretariat introduced the documentation on Implementation of the Programme of Action (POA) for Sustainable Development of SIDS (E/CN.17/1998/7 and Add.1-9; A/53/65-E/1998/5). He noted that CSD-7 will serve as a preparatory meeting for a General Assembly Special Session to review implementation of the POA in 1999.

The G-77/CHINA underlined the unique vulnerability of SIDS and the need for international cooperation. AOSIS noted the decline in external resources available to SIDS, notably for regional programmes. JAMAICA said the Secretary-General's report on SIDS should have been more closely linked to other CSD work, noting the importance of responsible entrepreneurship for SIDS. AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, JAPAN, CANADA and others highlighted development assistance efforts in the areas of SIDS, climate change, tourism development and marine and coastal zone management.

The G-77/CHINA underlined the importance of support for the Kyoto Protocol and assistance to curtail the consequences of climate change. AOSIS, supported by the PHILIPPINES, urged many more States to sign the Kyoto Protocol, noted continuing uncertainties, and underscored practical actions for adaptation. NEW ZEALAND highlighted Pacific islands' problems with waste management and vulnerability to climate change. He stressed the need for national action to strengthen capacity. PAPUA NEW GUINEA noted that waste disposal and pollution prevention problems are exacerbated for SIDS due to limited land area and increasing population. He noted that the Secretary-General's report does not indicate the impact of UN programmes or how partners will provide information on ESTs for waste management. The G-77/CHINA noted the relative fragility of SIDS' hydrological cycles and difficulties in obtaining data. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO highlighted severe constraints on preserving the quality and quantity of freshwater in SIDS and the need for assistance to improve supply through desalination or rainwater catchment.

The MARSHALL ISLANDS said SIDS fear they will be used as testing grounds for genetically-modified organisms and supported strengthened controls through the Biosafety Protocol. AOSIS, supported by FIJI and MALTA, supported work on a vulnerability index for SIDS. JAMAICA emphasized the need for financial assistance to bolster national and regional institutions and, with FIJI and GUYANA, noted problems caused by the lack of human resource development.

BARBADOS noted that globalization has taxed the institutional resources of SIDS and urged international support for regional coordination. The EU noted that all SIDS should have sustainable development strategies in place by 2002 and called upon multilateral development organizations and bilateral donors to promote capacity building. He urged the DESA-UNDP donor roundtable before CSD-7 to review individual States' implementation of the POA when they consider proposed projects. The US supported using existing mechanisms for information exchange among SIDS. CUBA supported efforts to strengthen regional mechanisms for coordination and implementation of the POA.

DEBATE ON SECTORAL THEMES

On freshwater, the G-77/CHINA emphasized that water cannot be seen solely as an economic good at the expense of its social aspects. He disagreed with the suggestion that water resources should be allocated to more profitable sectors that generate income for food imports, rather than to domestic food production. GRULAC supported: strengthening regional and international cooperation through EST transfers; supporting the Inter-American Network on Water Resources; and guaranteeing access to drinking water and sanitation. The EU called for a clear statement of goals, an integrated approach, emphasis on local and national commitment to action, and arrangements to ensure follow-up. The US supported: following the results of the Harare and Paris expert meetings; using existing funds rather than establishing a new financial mechanism; recognizing that water pricing may be necessary for cost recovery; and addressing the linkages between population and water resources. SWITZERLAND stressed the role of agriculture, ecosystem management and land-use impacts. SUDAN requested that the CSD develop policies that enable management to address local conditions and financing issues. IRAN emphasized the need for public sector involvement in providing drinking water and sanitation. The ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT stressed the need for a mechanism to assess the water quality of transboundary watercourses and every State's right to a reasonable quota in keeping with international treaties. SYRIA emphasized the results of the Petersburg meeting because it conformed with the international watercourses convention. INDIA said it has not signed that convention and the CSD is not the appropriate forum for issues with legal implications.

On industry, the G-77/CHINA called for, *inter alia*: developed countries to offer incentives for technology transfers; governments to play a major role in transferring publicly-funded technologies; and the international community to help strengthen capacities and human resources. NORWAY, supported by SWITZERLAND, said the proposed review of voluntary initiatives requires a clear mandate and active stakeholder participation, and should identify the key characteristics of successful initiatives. An *ad hoc* mechanism should report to CSD-7. The US stressed that all stakeholders must be comfortable with the process. CANADA called for a background document on voluntary initiatives. NORWAY called for a decision on gender mainstreaming. GRULAC supported: fulfillment of commitments on transferring resources and technology; efficient use of non-renewable energy sources; and policies that support cleaner production.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On and off the conference room floor, the performance of UNESCO in its role as task manager for sustainable development education has come under scrutiny. The EU called on UNESCO to report "as a matter of urgency" on the programme of action agreed at CSD-4, while NGOs are openly questioning the agency's productivity. Some disquiet has also been mooted regarding levels of consultations on the Thessaloniki Conference Declaration (1997). While at least one government is advocating an amended coordinating role for UNESCO, some NGOs are floating the suggestion that UNEP take over as task manager.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary will convene at 10:00 am in Conference Room 1 for the distribution of draft decisions.

DRAFTING GROUPS: The Drafting Groups are expected to convene following the Plenary. Conference Rooms 1 and 2 are reserved for morning and afternoon meetings.

TRIBUTE TO BELLA ABZUG: UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is expected to lead a special tribute to the late Bella S. Abzug (WEDO) in the General Assembly Hall from 1:15 – 2:45 pm.