



## CSD INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP TUESDAY, 2 MARCH 1999

Delegates at the *Ad Hoc* Intersessional Working Group (ISWG) on Oceans and Seas and the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) met in the morning to hear a statement by CSD-7 Chair Simon Upton (New Zealand) and a presentation on the recent Donors-SIDS Meeting. In the afternoon, Samoa delivered a presentation on progress in implementing the Barbados Programme of Action (POA) for the Sustainable Development of SIDS, which was followed by general discussion on SIDS.

### OPENING STATEMENTS

CSD-7 Chair Simon Upton noted the positive contribution of the recent roundtable meeting of donors and SIDS. He said it was time for the CSD to establish momentum for implementation of the POA up to and beyond the upcoming Special Session of the General Assembly. Upton described procedural changes to help revitalize the CSD's outcomes and make them more relevant. He expressed thanks for ministerial support and stated that, to avoid long and fruitless negotiations, delegations at the ISWG would produce two documents, a discussion paper and elements for a decision. He recalled the CSD's mandate to focus on implementation of Agenda 21 and said ministers agreed that generalized, "high-sounding" outputs that defy practical implementation, monitoring or evaluation should be avoided. He hoped the ISWG's draft elements for a decision could form the basis for constructive dialogue at CSD-7. He said there was no need to struggle for a final consensus at the ISWG. It would be more helpful for ministers if options were left open.

Upton explained that at CSD-7, each of five half-day sessions at the high-level segment would focus on a theme. The segment would be divided between time for country statements and time for interactive ministerial dialogue. He looked forward to a revitalized forum in which ministers were keen to take part and provide clear guidance for the completion of the CSD's work in its second week.

JoAnne DiSano, Director of the UN Division for Sustainable Development, recalled that the 19th UNGASS decided to convene a two-day Special Session in 1999 for a full and comprehensive review and appraisal of the implementation of the POA. She noted that the GA had also requested CSD-7 to review the POA in preparation for the Special Session. She stated that although SIDS have made substantial progress at the national, regional and international levels since the Barbados Conference in 1994, they continue to be fragile and vulner-

able in many ways. She said SIDS are: constrained by the inadequacy of financial resources, institutional infrastructure and administrative capacity; experiencing an intensification of natural disasters; and contending with emerging problems such as adverse economic developments. She stressed the need for continuous international support and for multilateral and bilateral resource flows to SIDS.

Denis Chouinard, on behalf of Roger Ehrhardt, Canadian Co-Chair of the Donors-SIDS Meeting (New York, 24-26 February 1999), highlighted lessons learned at the meeting, including that: priority areas for SIDS are financing, human resource development, capacity-building, institutional strengthening and technology transfer; specific vulnerabilities derive from small size, such as a narrow range of resources, excessive dependence on international trade and proneness to natural and environmental disasters; ODA to SIDS has substantially declined; and SIDS must accelerate efforts to foster enabling environments for external assistance. Donors emphasized the need for: wide participatory approaches; results-oriented approaches to development projects; development of indicators to measure progress; national and regional balance in development efforts; and recognition of the private sector's role in resource mobilization. The meeting reaffirmed that partnership between SIDS and donors is crucial for effective POA implementation.

SAMOA, on behalf of 14 South Pacific Islands, delivered a presentation on progress and key challenges in implementing the POA. He described imminent threats, including pollution of marine and freshwater from land-based activities, modification of critical habitats and unsustainable exploitation of living and non-living resources. A root cause of these threats is a deficiency in management stemming from problems of governance and understanding. He addressed a number of pressure points: priorities for the effective management of resources and increasing returns to the Pacific Islands; minimization of pollution, including international support for implementation of existing international agreements and compliance with relevant and international and regional conventions; and freshwater resources, including the coordination and refocusing of aid programmes and projects to assist SIDS to develop water management capacity. He said one of the critical constraints in the region is the lack of information relevant to decision-makers. He underscored the need for better UN coordination and effective use and mobilization of resources aimed at SIDS priorities. He also noted the need for: imple-



menting multilateral agreements, building capacity, raising awareness, strengthening links between environment and development and developing a composite vulnerability index for SIDS.

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

GUYANA, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, noted that although considerable progress toward implementing the POA has been made at national and regional levels, significant constraints remain. She suggested that the POA review focus on identifying existing constraints and means to overcome them. She drew attention to a G-77/CHINA position paper on the review of POA implementation, proposing a framework for an action-oriented outcome that includes references to: the role of the UN; capacity-building; technology transfer; monitoring and review; a SIDS network; climate change; energy; a vulnerability index; oceans and marine resources; tourism; and financial and technical support.

GERMANY, on behalf of the EU, underscored the importance of national and regional sustainable development strategies for effective use of human, institutional, financial and natural resources. He called for complementarity between the EU and UN member States and better coordination among multilateral development agencies to optimize available resources. He highlighted development assistance available to SIDS through the Lomé Convention and called for further enhancement of partnerships with the private sector and improved donor coordination.

SAMOA, on behalf of AOSIS, emphasized the importance of identifying constraints and opportunities for international support for SIDS and agreeing on an action-oriented outcome. He stated that while partnerships between SIDS and the international community have been constructive, they have not adequately addressed climate change and sea-level rise, biodiversity resources, waste management and natural disasters. He proposed consideration of energy use and its linkages with sustainable tourism. He emphasized the long-term nature of the POA goals and called for consistency in implementation to maintain momentum and benchmarks to review progress. He identified the need for effective financial support, targeted capacity-building, improved coordination, institutional strengthening and transfer of technology to address fundamental constraints to sustainable investment.

Regarding follow-up to the Donor-SIDS meeting, NORWAY called for: human and institutional capacity-building; vulnerability indicators; private sector cooperation; and improved coordination and resource mobilization. AUSTRALIA noted a lack of baseline data for SIDS on most environmental indicators, making progress difficult to gauge. He called for more rigorous data collection, analysis and reporting and the establishment of indicators to measure progress.

CANADA called for private sector and NGO involvement in capacity-building programmes. He stressed the need to examine the impact of globalization and trade liberalization on SIDS' economies and the possible impacts of climate change on SIDS. He stated that programme design must facilitate leadership by SIDS. He underscored the need to consolidate the work programmes of UN specialized agencies focusing on SIDS in ocean-related matters. JAPAN underscored that the sustainable development of SIDS is linked to climate change, biodiversity and forests. He spoke of the need for SIDS to develop competitive private sectors and increase their ability to respond to the threat of climate change, highlighting Japan's assistance in these areas. NEW ZEALAND noted that, in addition to economic and environmental vulnerability, the culture and traditions of SIDS are under threat. He stated that while most SIDS have ratified international conventions on biodiversity and transboundary movement of hazardous wastes, many lack the capacity to implement them. He noted that SIDS have limited capacity to adapt to changes in trade rules and the internationalization of business. He highlighted New

Zealand's support in developing an ecological vulnerability index, which, *inter alia*, would help determine funding priorities. He noted growing acceptance for the concept of the index as an objective tool supporting the case for special and differential treatment of small States.

The US emphasized the need to implement transparent and inclusive participatory approaches and improve the effectiveness of assistance. Along with other speakers, he observed that the recent meeting of donors and SIDS was productive and encouraging. He noted consensus on the need to support capacity-building in SIDS to formulate effective policies, enforce decisions and facilitate their participation at international negotiating fora. He said the upcoming Special Session would provide the opportunity to focus on the problems facing SIDS and take steps to focus on implementation of the POA.

The PAN-AFRICAN MOVEMENT, on behalf the CSD NGO STEERING COMMITTEE, identified lack of access to capital and credit, under-utilization of human resources and structural adjustment policies as hindrances to SIDS' advancement. She called for increased transparency and representation in the WTO, cancellation of SIDS' debt, control of irresponsible capital flows, a self-standing UN SIDS unit, strengthening of regional coordination structures and creation of coherent sustainable development plans. CUBA noted education and medical assistance as examples of cooperation and capacity-building to address the vulnerability of SIDS.

### IN THE CORRIDORS I

The CSD Secretariat has issued an informal information note outlining its views on the possible components of a preparatory process for the discussion on energy and sustainable development to take place during CSD-9 in 2001. UNGASS mandated CSD-7 to initiate the preparation. The Secretariat is suggesting: two meetings of the Open-Ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development to be held in 2000 and 2001 in conjunction with the CSD intersessionals; a contribution from the new Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development's (CENRD) subgroup on energy; and contributions from the UN system, other international organizations, government-led initiatives and major groups. Delegations will receive a briefing on the preparatory process on Friday.

### IN THE CORRIDORS II

As delegations begin to examine a number of proposals for enhanced international coordination of oceans and seas issues, NGOs are expressing concern that any institutional proposal involving the General Assembly could result in a radical reduction in the level of participation by major groups. A number of countries have already offered assurances that major group participation will be a consideration in the negotiation of CSD-7's decision on oceans and seas.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**DISCUSSION OF DRAFT DOCUMENTS:** Following consultations by the G-77/CHINA in the morning, the ISWG on oceans and seas and the sustainable development of SIDS is expected to reconvene at 3:00 pm in Conference Room 4 to discuss the Co-Chairs' summary of discussion on oceans and seas and elements for a draft CSD-7 decision.

**NGO ROUNDTABLE ON OCEANS:** The Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development will convene a roundtable on oceans at 1:00 pm in Conference Room D.