



EIGHTH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 24 APRIL-5 MAY 2000

The eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-8) opens today at UN Headquarters in New York and will meet until 5 May 2000. Participants will consider the sectoral theme of integrated planning and management of land resources, and the cross-sectoral themes of financial resources, trade and investment, and economic growth. The session will also consider the economic sector of sustainable agriculture and land management, which will be the theme of a multi-stakeholder dialogue. The final report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) will also be considered.

After consideration of procedural items on Monday, the Session will turn to the first of four Multi-stakeholder Dialogues on Sustainable Agriculture (24-25 April). There will be a High-level Segment on Wednesday and Thursday (26-27 April) with thematic sessions and interactive dialogues prefaced by expert inputs. Panels on Indigenous People will take place on Wednesday 26 April and Tuesday 2 May. No official meetings are scheduled for Friday 28 April. Drafting groups will commence work on Monday 1 May and are scheduled to conclude deliberations by Thursday 4 May. Three drafting groups will consider: land and agriculture; trade and investment and financial issues; and the contribution of CSD-8 to the forthcoming deliberations in the 55th UN General Assembly on preparations for the 10-year review of progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The third group will also consider the decision on the outcome of the IFF, and "other matters" on the CSD-8 agenda.

On Friday 5 May, CSD-8 will consider the report of the first session of the *Ad Hoc* Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy for Sustainable Development (6-10 March).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CSD

The CSD emerged from Agenda 21, the programme of action adopted by the 1992 UNCED. Agenda 21 called for the creation of the CSD to: ensure effective follow-up of UNCED; enhance international cooperation and rationalize intergovernmental decision-making capacity; and examine progress in Agenda 21 implementation at the local, national, regional and international levels. In 1992, the 47th session of the UN General Assembly set out, in Resolution 47/191, the

terms of reference for the CSD, its composition, guidelines for the participation of NGOs, the organization of work, the CSD's relationship with other UN bodies, and Secretariat arrangements. The CSD held its first substantive session in June 1993 and has met annually since then. In June 1997, five years after UNCED, the General Assembly held a special session (UNGASS) to review implementation of Agenda 21. Negotiations held in a Committee of the Whole, as well as several ministerial groups, produced a Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. Among the decisions adopted at UNGASS was the CSD work programme, which identifies sectoral, cross-sectoral and economic sector/major group themes for the subsequent four sessions of the CSD. Overriding issues for each year are to be poverty, and consumption and production patterns.

The sixth session of the CSD met from 20 April to 1 May 1998. Participants considered the economic theme of industry and the sectoral theme of strategic approaches to freshwater management. They also reviewed implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States and discussed the cross-sectoral themes of technology transfer, capacity building, education, science and awareness raising. Three drafting groups negotiated seven decisions at CSD-6. The seventh session of the CSD met from 19-30 April 1999. Participants considered the economic theme of tourism, the sectoral theme of oceans and seas, and the cross-sectoral theme of consumption and production patterns. They also prepared for the UN General Assembly's Special Session to review the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Delegates adopted 12 of 13 draft decisions deliberated during the second week of the session.

Delegates highlighted several aspects of their decision on oceans and seas, particularly a decision recommending that the General Assembly establish an open-ended informal consultative process as a means to broaden its consideration of oceans and seas issues. Other decisions addressed the need to reverse the downward trend in official development assistance (ODA), preparation for CSD-9's work on energy, and improving the integration of consumption and production policies into the CSD's work programme.

MEETINGS OF THE CSD-8 BUREAU

The sixth (UN Headquarters, New York) and seventh (by teleconference) meetings of the CSD-8 Bureau took place on 24 March and 5 April 2000. The sixth meeting was chaired by CSD-8 Chair Juan Mayr

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Maldonado (Colombia). He was joined by CSD-8 Vice-Chairs, Zvetolyub Basmajiev (Bulgaria), Abderrahmane Merouane (Algeria), Choi Seok-young (Republic of Korea) and, by video link, Patrick McDonnell (Ireland). The Bureau considered: the organization of work during the High-Level Segment, with a view to encouraging delegations to leave as much time as possible for interactive dialogue; and invitations to high-level non governmental experts to make presentations. They also drew up plans for three drafting groups, and discussed a date for a meeting of the Bureau with ECOSOC. The teleconference on 5 April was scheduled to address issues raised by a number of delegations after a briefing by the Chair.

AD HOC INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUPS (ISWGs)

The CSD's *Ad Hoc* Intersessional Working Group (ISWG) on Financial Resources and Mechanisms & Economic Growth, Trade and Investment met in New York from 22-25 February 2000. The Working Group produced Co-Chairs' summaries of discussions and reports outlining possible elements for action-oriented decisions at CSD-8. The Co-Chairs' report on elements for a draft decision on financial resources and mechanisms: outlines priorities for future work; identifies actions for governments and international financial institutions; and addresses the mobilization of domestic finance, promoting innovative financial mechanisms and improving institutional frameworks. The Co-Chairs' report on elements for a draft decision on economic growth, trade and investment identifies priorities for future work and addresses the promotion of sustainable development through trade, investment and economic growth.

The ISWG on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources & Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development followed, from 28 February to 3 March 2000. The Co-Chairs' report on elements for a draft decision on integrated planning and management of land resources addresses prevention and/or mitigation of land degradation, access to land and security of tenure, government actions on critical issues, stakeholder participation and international cooperation. The Co-Chairs' report on elements for a draft decision on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD): identifies the major objective of SARD as increased food production and enhanced food security; outlines priorities for action and recommendations on implementation of SARD goals; and addresses, *inter alia*, access to resources, eradication of poverty, finance, transfer of technology and capacity building, biotechnology, genetic resources, integrated pest management and sustainable plant nutrition, land tenure, desertification and drought.

INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS RELATED TO CSD-8

A number of meetings held during the intersessional period have a direct bearing on issues to be taken up at CSD-8.

CULTIVATING OUR FUTURES CONFERENCE ON THE MULTIFUNCTIONAL CHARACTER OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND (MFCAL): The "Cultivating Our Futures" Conference on the Multifunctional Character of Agriculture and Land (MFCAL) took place from 12-17 September 1999 in Maastricht, the Netherlands. Organized jointly by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the Government of the Netherlands, the Conference was attended by participants from more than 100 countries. The main outcome of the conference was the final report of the Chair, which reviews progress in the implementation of sustainable agriculture and rural development and identifies instruments and issues for future action.

WORKSHOP ON LAND TENURE AND CADASTRAL INFRASTRUCTURES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: A Workshop on Land Tenure and Cadastral Infrastructures for Sustainable Development was held in Bathurst, Australia, from 17-23 October

1999. The Workshop brought together international land administration experts from 23 countries to develop the Bathurst Declaration. They addressed, *inter alia*, the relationship between land and sustainable development and the consequent relationship of land tenure to land administration. The Bathurst Workshop was followed by an open international conference in Melbourne at which the Bathurst Declaration was presented.

FIFTH EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON FINANCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The fifth Expert Group Meeting on Finance for Sustainable Development was held in Nairobi from 1-4 December 1999. The Expert Group proposed that the CSD support research on: the relationship between foreign investment and sustainable development; whether globalization and sustainability goals provide a new and compelling rationale for debt reduction, and their implications for ODA; improved assessment of the cost of subsidies; and green budget reform.

FOURTH SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS (IFF-4): The fourth session of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF-4) convened from 31 January to 11 February 2000 at UN Headquarters. At its final session, the Forum had before it the task of finalizing conclusions and proposals for action to be submitted to CSD-8. The programme elements discussed at IFF-4 included: the promotion, facilitation and monitoring of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests' (IPF) proposals for action; financial resources; trade and environment; transfer of environmentally sound technologies; and mechanisms to promote the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests. IFF delegates failed to reach a consensus on many key issues left pending from the IPF, including reference to new financial mechanisms, the creation of an international forest fund or whether to explore expansion of the Global Environment Facility's scope to support a wider range of sustainable forest management activities. The Forum was also unable to reach agreement on linking intellectual property rights and traditional forest-related knowledge in the development of mechanisms to realise benefits from such knowledge. On the question of a forest convention, delegates agreed to recommend to the CSD that the UN establish an intergovernmental body, the UN Forum on Forests and, within five years, "consider with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests."

THE FIRST MEETING OF THE AD HOC OPEN-ENDED INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP OF EXPERTS ON ENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development, established by the UN General Assembly to prepare input for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-9), met in New York from 6-10 March 2000. The Expert Group considered National Submissions and Reports of the UN Secretary-General on Energy and Sustainable Development, and produced a Co-Chairs' Summary of the discussions. Delegates also agreed on an intersessional programme of work and a provisional agenda for their next session, prior to CSD-9.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

OPENING OF THE SESSION AND MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE: The first Plenary meeting of CSD-8, will commence at 10:00 am in Conference Room 1. The first Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Sustainable Agriculture will take place from 3:00-6:00 pm in Conference Room 2. The second Dialogue will be held from 6:30-9:30 pm, also in Conference Room 2.

DAILY NGO STRATEGY MEETING: The daily NGO strategy session will take place at 9:15 each morning.