



NINTH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 16-27 APRIL 2001

The ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-9) opens today at UN Headquarters in New York and will meet until 27 April 2001. Participants will consider the sectoral themes of energy and atmosphere, the cross-sectoral themes of information for decision making and participation and of international cooperation for an enabling environment, and the economic sector theme of transport. The session's Multi-stakeholder Dialogues, at which scientists will participate for the first time as a major group, will be on sustainable energy and transport.

After consideration of the procedural items, the session will turn to the first of four Multi-stakeholder Dialogues on sustainable energy and transport (16-18 April). There will be a High-level Segment on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday (18-20 April) with two thematic interactive dialogues, a panel and general debate. Drafting groups will commence work during the second week.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CSD

The CSD emerged from Agenda 21, the programme of action adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in June 1992. 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 of Agenda 21 implementation at the local, national, regional and international levels. In 1992, the 47th session of the UN General Assembly (GA) set out, in resolution 47/191, the CSD's terms of reference, its composition, guidelines for the participation of NGOs, the organization of work, its relationship with other UN bodies, and Secretariat arrangements. The CSD held its first substantive session in June 1993 and has since met annually. In June 1997, five years after UNCED, the General Assembly held a Special Session (UNGASS-19) to review the implementation of Agenda 21. Negotiations produced a Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. Among the decisions adopted at UNGASS was a new five-year CSD work programme, which identi-

fies sectoral, cross-sectoral and economic sector/major group themes for the subsequent four sessions of the CSD. Overriding issues for each year are poverty, and consumption and production patterns.

CSD-6 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 Barbados 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.

CSD-7 met from 19-30 April 1999 to consider the economic theme of tourism, the sectoral theme of oceans and seas and the cross-sectoral theme of consumption and production patterns. Participants also prepared for the UNGASS review of the Barbados Programme of Action.

CSD-8 met from 24 April to 5 May 2000. Participants deliberated on the economic theme of sustainable agriculture and land management, 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 conclusions and proposals in the final report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests were also discussed, as were preparations for the ten-year review of UNCED.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

55TH UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY: On 20 December 2000, the GA adopted resolution 55/199, on the 10-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcomes of UNCED. In this resolution, the GA decided to organize the 10-year review of UNCED in 2002 at the summit level to reinvigorate the global commitment to sustainable development, and accepted South Africa's offer to host the summit, which will be called the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The review should focus on the identification of accomplishments and areas where further efforts are needed to implement Agenda 21 and other UNCED outcomes, on action-oriented decisions in areas where further efforts are needed, and on new challenges and opportu-

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nities within the framework of Agenda 21. The Summit should result in renewed political commitment and support for sustainable development.

Among other things, the resolution decides that the meetings of CSD-10 will serve as an open-ended preparatory committee for the Summit, and sets out the activities that the preparatory committee should engage in, as well as the schedule of preparatory meetings. The organizational session will take place in 2001 and the first and second substantive preparatory sessions will be held in January and March 2002, respectively, with a third, ministerial, session to be held in May 2002, in Indonesia.

21ST SESSION OF THE UNEP GOVERNING COUNCIL AND SECOND GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM:

The 21st session of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council and Second Global Ministerial Environment Forum took place from 5-9 February 2001 at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya. The Governing Council considered: a range of policy issues; governance; UNEP's contribution to future sessions of the CSD; follow-up to General Assembly resolutions; linkages among and support to environmental and environment-related conventions; and numerous programmatic, administrative and budgetary matters, including UNEP's work programme and budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

On the meeting's final two days, a high-level ministerial dialogue was held to discuss implementation of the Nairobi Declaration on the Role and Mandate of UNEP and the Malmö Ministerial Declaration. Topics included energy policy issues, governance, the specific needs of Africa, UNEP's contribution to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the linkages between environment, health and poverty, and environmental vulnerability to natural and man-made disasters.

The Governing Council concluded its work by adopting over 30 decisions on issues including global governance, environmental law, desertification, biosafety, climate and atmosphere, the chemicals agenda, and UNEP's budget for the biennium 2002-2003.

Two decisions of particular relevance to CSD-9 include decision 21/6, on lead in gasoline, and decision 21/21, on international environmental governance. Decision 21/6 calls upon governments who have not yet done so to eliminate the use of lead in gasoline, and urges governments, intergovernmental organizations, the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety, and civil society to participate actively in assisting governments in this phase-out.

Decision 21/21, *inter alia*, establishes an open-ended intergovernmental group of ministers or their representatives to undertake a comprehensive policy-oriented assessment of existing institutional weaknesses, as well as future needs and options for strengthened international environmental governance. The decision also requests the President of the Governing Council to inform the CSD, at its first session as the preparatory body of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, of this decision of the Council, and of the views expressed by Ministers of the Environment on international environmental governance at the February 2001 Governing Council session.

ENERGY EXPERTS GROUP: The *Ad Hoc* Open-Ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development was formally established at CSD-7 to prepare inputs to CSD-9. Governments, civil society and other major groups, including the private sector, were called upon to actively participate in the preparatory process. The first session of the Expert Group met in New York from 6-10 March 2000, and considered reports of the UN Secretary-

General on "Energy and sustainable development: Key issues" and national submissions, and produced a Co-Chairs' summary of the discussions. Delegates also agreed on an intersessional programme of work and a provisional agenda for their second session. The second session was held in New York from 26 February to 2 March 2001, and focused on key issues relating to energy, energy efficiency, renewable energy, advanced fossil fuel technologies, rural energy, energy-related issues in transportation, and regional and international cooperation. Delegates failed to reach agreement on a number of contentious issues, most notably nuclear energy and international cooperation, and agreed to forward to CSD-9 a heavily-bracketed, revised Co-Chairs' proposal for elements for the draft decision.

INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP ON TRANSPORT AND ATMOSPHERE: The CSD-9 intersessional working group on Transport and Atmosphere, which met in New York from 6-9 March 2001, considered the Secretary-General's reports on transport and on protection of the atmosphere, and prepared two documents on each theme, one summarizing the discussions and the other outlining possible elements for decisions to be taken at CSD-9. Both draft elements highlight aspects relating to international cooperation and recommendations for action at the national level. Delegates considered these draft elements as a good basis for CSD-9 negotiations.

INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP ON INFORMATION FOR DECISION MAKING AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION: The CSD-9 intersessional working group on information for decision making and participation and on international cooperation for an enabling environment met in New York from 12-16 March 2001. Delegates prepared two documents for each theme, one summarizing the discussions and the other outlining possible elements for decisions to be taken at CSD-9. Delegates were unable to conduct a second reading of the two Co-Chairs' draft elements, and these were forwarded to CSD-9, as revised during the closing plenary. The Co-Chairs' draft decision on international cooperation for an enabling environment proposes action areas at the international level, including on official development assistance, the debt problem, market access and trade practices, reforming multilateral financial institutions, and the role of the UN. National level proposals deal with poverty eradication, an enabling domestic environment and programme and policy formulation. The draft decision on information for decision making and participation addresses: guidance to the multilateral system, indicators of sustainable development, and recommendations at the national level. During the closing plenary, several delegations opposed including text on indicators in the draft decision.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

OPENING OF THE SESSION: The first Plenary meeting of CSD-9 will commence at 10:00 am in Conference Room 2. The agenda includes election of officers, adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters (E/CN.17/2001/1), and presentations on the outcomes of the intersessional working groups and other intersessional activities.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE: The first Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on achieving equitable access to sustainable energy will take place from 3:00-6:00 pm in Conference Room 3.

NGO AND MAJOR GROUP MEETINGS: Various Major Group caucuses in support of the work of CSD-9 will meet throughout the day in Conference Room B and at the Church Center. See the daily list of events for the updated schedule.