



CSD-12 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 26 APRIL 2004

In the morning, delegates heard reviews of progress in implementation for the UNECLAC and UNESCWA regions. In the afternoon, delegates discussed the relationship among the three themes, focusing on the role of local authorities, and rights-based approaches.

REGIONAL SESSIONS

UNECLAC: CSD-12 Vice-Chair Bruno Stagno Ugarte (Costa Rica) chaired this session. José Luis Samaniego, UNECLAC, presented the overall situation in the region, noting its diversity and stressing the need to converge political will and technical regulation. Erminia Maricato, Ministry of Cities, Brazil, noted that while there was rapid and concentrated urbanization, there was also social inequality and low economic growth in Brazil. She described reforms undertaken at the national and local government levels. Carlos Humberto Pena, Ministry of Public Works, Chile, emphasized the potential of hydropower resources in the region, commented on institutional reform in Chile, and stressed the importance of financing, in particular providing subsidies for the poor. Miguel Solanes, UNECLAC, highlighted legal and institutional aspects of water management, called for a better balance between the three pillars of sustainable development in the region, and stressed the rights of indigenous peoples. Mirta Roses, WHO Regional Office for the Americas, informed participants of WHO's activities regarding the MDGs and JPOI health-related targets, referred to sectoral analyses and regional evaluations conducted on solid waste, and stressed the health impacts relating to waste in SIDS.

Discussion: UNEP ROLAC described joint activities with UN-HABITAT. WOMEN highlighted problems related to the lack of civil society and indigenous peoples' rights, and suggested that ECLAC adopt the CSD Major Groups' access format at its meetings. MEXICO suggested strengthening the legal basis of IWRM. The US proposed that ECLAC analyze capacity building needs in the region at all levels, in order for international organizations to respond in a more coordinated fashion. ARGENTINA addressed the need for appropriate solutions to tackle the water agenda, and outlined its national performance in water basin management and human settlements. The INTERNATIONAL RAINWATER HARVESTING ALLIANCE stressed the need to address the "fundamental question" of rainwater management for human settlements, which he noted was "mostly sidelined" in the region.

UN-HABITAT reported on projects with some Latin American countries aimed at addressing urban governance, and emphasized the role of capacity building for local authorities. TRADE UNIONS stressed the need for financial aid to the region. Samaniego rounded off the discussion, stressing the importance of an integrated and balanced way to address water, sanitation and human settlements problems, and called for new alliances of regional organizations and banks. He agreed with the US proposal to analyze the region's capacity building needs, and said ECLAC would take up the points raised at its next session.

UNESCWA: This session was chaired by CSD-12 Vice-Chair Toru Shimizu (Japan). Mohammad El-Eryani, Minister of Water and the Environment, Yemen, outlined findings from the Regional Implementation Forum of the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia. He identified challenges, including, *inter alia*: regional insecurity; imbalance between supply and demand; low efficiency; degraded water quality; mobilizing finance; pollution; and low service coverage. As next steps, he noted the planned establishment of an Arab Water Council, the development of regional networks to facilitate implementation, and the formulation of IWRM plans. Fatma El-Mallah, League of Arab States, outlined strategies and technologies to counter water scarcity, including desalination, wastewater reuse, tree planting, and rain-water harvesting. She stressed the need for awareness raising, public participation, financial resources, and international cooperation to improve access to technology in the region. Khaled Fakhro, Bahrain, said PPPs have resulted in improved services and the diffusion of low-cost sanitation technologies. He noted that the biggest challenge is securing political commitment to "walk the talk," advocated a reduced role for public authorities in implementation and supported "heavy" private sector engagement. Adly Hussein, Governor of Kalyoubiah, Egypt, outlined national strategies to provide housing in Egypt. He highlighted the role of NGOs in contributing to the provision of social, medical, educational and sanitation services.

Discussion: SYRIA highlighted the paucity of technical equipment for water purification and wastewater treatment in the region. TRADE UNIONS cautioned against privatization of water resources, noted that private finance will "cherry pick" urban areas with established infrastructure to the neglect of rural areas. He also highlighted corruption associated with the engagement of multinational corporations in the water sector. The US identified good governance, secure property rights and the rule of law as necessary conditions for unleashing entrepreneurial power of multinational and local businesses. Hussein described preferential loan rates and

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free land transfer to the poor as mechanisms for stimulating private sector engagement, and supported subsidizing water services to the poor. El-Eryani supported debt exchanges for water and sanitation services.

RELATIONSHIP AMONG WATER, SANITATION AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

This session was chaired by CSD-12 Chair Børge Brende (Norway).

The role of local authorities: Stating that sustainability involves integration, Kaarin Taipale, former Chair of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, highlighted good governance as a tool for integration and stressed the need for local governments to know the true cost of providing basic services in order to make informed choices. She said water, sanitation and human settlements issues are local by nature and hence require local solutions. She emphasized the need for legal frameworks and financial resources to equip local authorities with the mandate and ability to provide such services. Mark Hildebrand, Cities Alliance, highlighted the integrative dimension of the MDG goal on improving the lives of slum dwellers, noting that achieving this goal is the most efficient way to reach other MDGs. He called on the development community to focus on “inclusion strategies” adopted by mayors rather than pilot projects, and highlighted the role of national associations of local authorities in scaling up programmes.

Discussion: The EU welcomed the opportunity to consider linkages between the three themes and said such discussions should be a characteristic of future review sessions. He called for greater coherence among relevant policies and cooperation between UN agencies. JAPAN described how their sustainable forest management approach and agriculture initiative simultaneously tackle the three issues. TRADE UNIONS stressed the importance of rural development, and expressed concern over the privatization and commodification of water. Hildebrand highlighted the interdependence of urban and rural development. QATAR noted the importance of delineating city boundaries and long-term planning. SENEGAL mentioned their establishment of a legal foundation for the “rights of cities.” FRANCE underscored the need to support decentralization, and enhance access to credit and other financial resources to help local authorities provide basic services. SOUTH AFRICA noted the benefits of decentralized over top-down initiatives in servicing water, sanitation and human settlement needs.

PAKISTAN said increasing ODA for technical support and capacity building is critical to “maintaining a degree of optimism” for achieving the targets. He urged the provision of ODA across sectors and not in a compartmentalized manner. IRAN said the discussion on integration should not be limited to the thematic cluster of issues, but include other themes, such as those in the JPOI. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY said water should be regarded as a “public good,” that its ownership should be controlled by local governments, and that the private sector should focus on the management of water service delivery. SWEDEN underscored the role of women and called on the CSD to promote women’s participation in planning and implementation. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA said the CSD should assist UN Member States in drafting IWRM strategies, firstly through a standardized approach and secondly on a country-by-country basis. The SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY emphasized links between good science, business and government. MEXICO called for indicators to measure progress.

Rights-based approaches: Highlighting the scale of the problems relating to water, sanitation and human settlements, Miloon Kothary, UNCHR, said only a human rights paradigm can offer fundamental and systemic changes to achieving sustainable development. He congratulated CSD on initiating a dialogue on integra-

tion and urged CSD to build upon commitments made in Agenda 21, which he said were underpinned by human rights principles. Jamie Bartram, WHO, indicated that the three themes should not be addressed in isolation, and highlighted benefits in integrating them. He said a rights-based approach provides a framework for ensuring basic services for the most vulnerable populations.

Discussion: NORWAY said the rule of law must be made applicable to the poor. He highlighted the need for government accountability at all levels, and for dedicated programmes to fight corruption. PAKISTAN noted that urbanization is directly related to problems in rural areas. The US said there is no internationally-agreed formulation for a “right to water” and that negotiations on this would not be a productive use of resources. FINLAND said there were three accepted definitions on the right to housing: a legal right; an obligation to act by the State or municipality; and a human right. He said the discussion should focus on the obligation to act at the municipal level. SWITZERLAND outlined the WHO/UNECE Protocol on water and health, which addresses, *inter alia*, water-related diseases, protection of ecosystems and human health, and monitoring. YOUTH urged government to support women’s participation and invest in youth leadership for sustainability. TRADE UNIONS said the way out of poverty is through employment. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES said the lack of recognition and respect for their rights is one of the largest obstacles to their participation in decision making. She also noted that indigenous peoples have suffered involuntary resettlements due to large-scale water projects.

Bartram noted that the challenge in identifying the contribution of a rights-based approach to implementation merits further discussion. Kothary underscored the Vienna Conference on Human Rights, citing the obligation to protect the human rights of all people, particularly the vulnerable and the poor. He said this right should form the basis of any discussion on a rights-based approach.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates were visibly excited on Monday evening at the prospect of sinking their teeth into the long-awaited product of this first ever CSD review session – the “Chair’s Summary Part 1.” The 35-page draft was distributed informally to the main country groups on Monday, and initial reactions from some delegations centered on the length of the report. While evaluations were generally favorable, the final shape of the report will depend on what transpires in regional discussions on Tuesday morning. Chair Brende is keeping a busy schedule with informal consultations planned with the regional groups before Tuesday afternoon’s Plenary discussion. It remains to be seen how deftly he can keep the process of perfecting the summary within the confines of a “non-negotiated outcome,” by incorporating the essence of positions and fending off the basic instinct of some veteran delegates to unleash their editing skills in a basement drafting group.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

RELATIONSHIP AMONG THE THREE THEMES: In the morning, delegates will convene in Conference Room 1 to discuss the relationship among water, sanitation and human settlements, focusing on poverty eradication and other cross-cutting issues.

CHAIR’S SUMMARY PART I: CSD-12 Chair Brende will present Part I of the Chair’s Summary at 4:30 pm in Conference Room 1. Delegates will be invited to make brief comments on the report.

PARTNERSHIPS FAIR AND LEARNING CENTER: Partnerships presentations will take place in Conference Room 6. The Learning Center will be held in Conference Room D. Check *CSD Today* for details or visit

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd12/csd12.htm> for details.