

FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 30 APRIL - 11 MAY 2007

The fifteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-15) will open today and continue through 11 May 2007, at UN headquarters in New York.

The CSD meets annually, in two-year "Implementation Cycles," with each cycle focusing on thematic clusters alongside cross-sectoral issues. Each cycle is comprised of a Review Year and a Policy Year. Building on the outcomes of CSD-14 (which was the Review Year of the second cycle), CSD-15 will focus on policies and options to expedite implementation of commitments in the areas of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution and the atmosphere, and climate change, as contained in Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Declaration. Various cross-cutting issues will also be addressed.

Following CSD-15's official opening on Monday morning, 30 April, delegates will engage in interactive discussions with Major Groups. In the afternoon delegates will convene to consider regional perspectives on the themes under discussion. On 1 and 2 May, delegates will discuss policy options and possible actions contained in the Chair's draft negotiating document, which was the outcome of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting in March, as well as interlinkages and cross-cutting issues. A revised draft negotiating text incorporating comments and discussions is expected on 2 May. Deliberations and negotiations on this text are expected to take place beginning on 3 May.

CSD-15 will conclude with a high-level segment from 9-11 May, when ministers will gather in both closed and open meetings, including dialogues with Major Groups, UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations. A Partnerships Fair, Learning Center and numerous side events are also scheduled to take place during the session.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CSD

The Commission on Sustainable Development emerged from Agenda 21, the programme of action for sustainable development adopted in June 1992 at the United Nations

Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the "Earth Summit." Agenda 21 called for the creation of the CSD to ensure effective follow-up of UNCED, enhance international cooperation, and examine progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the local, national, regional and international levels. In 1992, the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 47/191, which established the CSD's terms of reference and composition, organization of work, relationship with other UN bodies, Secretariat arrangements, and guidelines for the participation of Major Groups. The CSD held its first substantive session in June 1993 and has since met annually. During its first five years, the CSD systematically reviewed the implementation of all chapters of Agenda 21.

UNGASS-19: In June 1997, five years after UNCED, the 19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS-19), also known as "Rio+5," was held to review the implementation of Agenda 21. Negotiations produced a Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. Among the decisions adopted at UNGASS-19 was a new five-year CSD work programme, which identified sectoral, cross-sectoral and economic sector/major group themes for the next four sessions of the Commission. Overriding issues for each year were poverty, and consumption and production patterns. In 1998, CSD-6 included industry among the issues on its agenda, and adopted a decision on industry and sustainable development.

CSD-9: The ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development took place from 16-28 April 2001, at UN headquarters in New York. The session reviewed the sectoral themes of energy and atmosphere, the economic dimension of transport, and the cross-sectoral themes of information for decision-making and participation, and international cooperation for an enabling environment. The decision on energy contained six sections on general considerations, issues and options, overarching issues, regional cooperation and international cooperation, which dealt with diverse matters relating to, *inter alia*: energy efficiency; renewable energy and advanced fossil fuels; and making markets work for sustainable development and international endeavors. Consensus was not reached on certain issues, including: energy efficiency codes and standards; the phase-out of harmful subsidies in developed countries; reductions in atmospheric pollutants; and references to the development of policies supporting energy for sustainable development.

WSSD: CSD-10 acted as the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which took place from 26 August to 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa. The WSSD adopted two main documents: the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. The JPOI addresses energy in the context of sustainable development, and calls for action on access to energy services, recognition of the linkage between energy provision and poverty eradication, alternative energy technologies, and diversity of supply. The JPOI addresses climate change as a “global concern” (paragraph 38), considers industrial development in the context of poverty eradication and sustainable natural resource management, and considers the health impacts of air pollution (paragraph 56).

CSD-11: The eleventh session of the CSD took place from 28 April to 9 May 2003 at UN headquarters in New York. The session set out the Commission’s multi-year programme of work for the period 2004–2017 and decided on the modalities for reporting, partnerships, and enhancing both UN system coordination and Major Groups’ contributions. Delegates also decided to introduce two-year “Implementation Cycles” for the CSD’s future sessions, with each cycle focusing on thematic clusters alongside cross-sectoral issues. Each cycle is comprised of a non-negotiating Review Year followed by a Policy Year.

CSD-12: CSD-12 was held in April 2004, at UN headquarters in New York. The first three days (14–16 April) served as the preparatory meeting for the International Meeting on the 10-year Review of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The following two weeks were devoted to the CSD-12 Review Session. CSD-12 focused on identifying constraints, obstacles, successes and lessons learned with regard to water, sanitation and human settlements.

CSD-13: The thirteenth session of the CSD took place in April 2005, at UN headquarters in New York. Building on the outcomes of CSD-12 and an intergovernmental preparatory meeting in February/March 2005, CSD-13 focused on policies and options to expedite the implementation of commitments in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements.

CSD-14: CSD-14 took place from 1–12 May 2006 at UN headquarters in New York. As this was the first year of the second implementation cycle, CSD-14 was tasked to review progress in the areas of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change, together with cross-cutting issues. The first week of CSD-14 featured a series of thematic discussions and meetings to consider reports from the UN Regional Commissions on the status of implementation. One day was dedicated to a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue. During the second week, one day was dedicated to discussion on SIDS, with a review of the implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. The second week also included a high-level segment. At the conclusion of CSD-14, delegates adopted the report of the session, including the Chair’s non-negotiated summary, which contains an overview of the discussions and events.

IPM: The Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for CSD-15 took place from 26 February to 2 March 2007, at UN headquarters in New York. Throughout the week, delegates met in plenary to consider policy options for the four themes of energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change, as well as inter-linkages and cross-cutting issues. There was also a session on SIDS. These deliberations were reflected in a preliminary draft Chair’s negotiating document, which was distributed towards

the end of the meeting. The text was revised based on initial feedback from the participants and is expected to form the basis for further discussions and negotiations at CSD-15.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON THE HYDROGEN ECONOMY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: This seminar was co-organized by the Government of Iceland and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) from 28–29 September 2006, in Reykjavik. The seminar provided an opportunity for information exchange on the recent progress on hydrogen energy technologies. Participants adopted conclusions on the need for diversification and expansion of energy for sustainable development, critical challenges to advancing a hydrogen economy, and priority areas for international cooperation and participation of developing countries.

UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE: The twelfth Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the second Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol took place from 6–17 November 2006 in Nairobi, Kenya. Delegates focused, *inter alia*, on adaptation, long-term action on climate change, and developing a framework for action once the Kyoto Protocol’s “first commitment period” finishes in 2012.

IPCC WORKING GROUP I: The tenth session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Working Group I (WGI) took place from 29 January to 1 February 2007, in Paris, France. The meeting resulted in the acceptance of the WGI contribution to the IPCC Fourth Assessment Report (AR4), titled “Climate Change 2007: the Physical Science Basis.” WGI’s contribution finds that there is more than a 90% probability that human action has contributed towards recent climate change, and contains a series of projections for future impacts, including on temperatures, sea level rise, and extreme weather events.

TICAD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) Ministerial Conference took place from 22–23 March 2007 in Nairobi. The conference brought together experiences and lessons learned in Africa and other regions, and put forward recommendations for effective ways to address key energy and environment issues in the context of sustainable development. Participants emphasized three important perspectives: “Building Ownership,” “Promoting Regional Cooperation” and “Deepening Partnership.”

OSLO CONFERENCE ON GOOD GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY: This conference took place from 28–30 March 2007, in Oslo, Norway. It provided a platform for discussions on an integrated approach to corporate responsibility. It addressed a broad range of issues facing business, including human rights, decent work standards, environmental performance, combating corruption, and corporate governance.

IPCC WORKING GROUP II: The eighth session of the IPCC Working Group II (WGII) took place from 2–6 April 2007, in Brussels, Belgium. The meeting resulted in the acceptance of WGII’s contribution to AR4, titled “Climate Change 2007: Impacts, adaptation and vulnerability.” The contribution emphasizes the observed and projected impacts of climate change, including accumulating evidence that changes in many physical and biological systems are linked to anthropogenic warming.