

CSD-16 HIGHLIGHTS:

FRIDAY, 9 MAY 2008

On Friday, CSD-16 participants convened in parallel sessions to discuss Africa and interlinkages and cross-cutting issues, and to dialogue with Major Groups and representatives of partnerships.

THEMATIC DISCUSSIONS

AFRICA: CSD-16 Chair Nhema chaired the session.

Focusing on climate change, Ogunlade Davidson (University of Sierra Leone) stressed Africa's potential energy independence, the low baseline from which its energy development took off, and conditions favoring its future development. Mohamed El-Sioufi (UN-HABITAT) discussed the impact of climate change on cities and the impact of cities on climate change, and described strategies to increase Africa's cities' resilience. Luigi Cabrini (UN World Tourism Organization) said tourism can constitute a powerful tool for sustainable development and Africa's potential is unexplored. Peter Holmgren (FAO) said climate change will compound vulnerability patterns and stressed the need for risk transfer mechanisms, including crop insurance.

SENEGAL underscored that economic growth and stable governments are preconditions for poverty reduction. NIGERIA said it had freed itself from debt overhang and is enjoying strong macroeconomic performance. MALI underscored problems with soil erosion and land sterility. WOMEN called for capacity building and technology transfer for their integration in agribusiness, extension work and food production. INDONESIA highlighted the New Asian-African Strategic Partnerships. KENYA and MOROCCO called for support to NEPAD. COTE D'IVOIRE urged African countries to incorporate climate change impacts into their development plans. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY urged using new information technologies in extension services and technology transfer. EGYPT called for capacity building and technology transfer, and with LYBIA, lamented the non-reference to North Africa in the Secretary-General's report.

WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS said the current trade order deprives African agriculturalists of access to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) markets, and urged an accelerated conclusion of the Doha Round. VENEZUELA said with ODA, countries could reach the MDGs. JORDAN highlighted its investment in Sudanese agriculture. SWITZERLAND said economic growth in Africa has led to poverty, but not hunger, reduction, and that agricultural growth leads to reduced hunger.

ISRAEL said it had refocused its development cooperation and was initiating a new project with UNDP. RUSSIAN FEDERATION explained its efforts to establish a fair trade

regime with Africa. EU said it supports activities to bridge the digital divide, and on climate change, desertification and drought. CAPE VERDE highlighted Africa's successes and cautioned against viewing Africa in a condescending way.

BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY described how the private sector has promoted small farmers' integration in the product value chain. FARMERS said the lack of demand for their commodities "is what is holding back progress in Africa's agriculture." MEXICO highlighted its various collaborative partnerships in Africa. CANADA called for coordinated and integrated initiatives informed by accurate data.

During the afternoon session, Julie Howard (Partnership to Cut Hunger and Poverty in Africa) highlighted the benefit of targeted cash transfers to vulnerable groups as well as school feeding programmes. Akinwumi Adesina (Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa) said Africa needs its own green revolution, suitable to its diverse agricultural zones. Peter Hartmann (International Institute for Tropical Agriculture) stressed Africa's agricultural capacity, including in stabilizing global food security, granted leadership, and relevant models and concepts. Robert Richardson (Michigan State University) emphasized promoting climate change adaptation from a proactive standpoint.

ALGERIA highlighted the Afro-Asian research partnerships and called for the completion of the Doha Round. JAPAN committed to promote issues of trade and agriculture at the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in May and the G-8 meeting in July 2008. IUCN drew attention to its recommendations on improving food security in the Sahel through efficient use of local resources. TOGO called for partnerships to reinvigorate its tourism sector.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES stressed that implementation is, and will remain, a local issue. AOSIS called for increased collaboration between the African Union and the UN. CHILDREN AND YOUTH highlighted the need for entrepreneurial education programmes for young people. The US highlighted its Initiative to End Hunger in Africa, which will provide US\$1 billion over five years. NGOs said Africa does not need GMOs to solve the food crisis. EU said it provides over half of the world's ODA and is committed to qualitatively and quantitatively improving it.

NIGER noted the existence of varying country strategies to respond to climate change impacts. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES drew attention to an overemphasis in the discussion of agriculture over livestock-based food production, and urged infrastructure development in pastoral areas. ITALY described partnerships with Africa on water and tourism. ARGENTINA said climate change adaptation concerns the ability to control water in all its forms. FRANCE said food security, health, and ecosystems and adaptation to climate change constitute three key threats to Africa. WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS

“denounced the lack of a social dimension to the development programs” in Africa, and the absence of a level playing field in trade between OECD countries and Africa.

INTER-LINKAGES AND ALL CROSS-CUTTING

ISSUES: Vice-Chair Melanie Santizo-Sandoval (Guatemala) chaired the session. Peter McPherson (US National Association of State Universities) emphasized, *inter alia*, training people working in institutions, country stability, input from the population, free flow of information and reasonably sound economic policies. Cleophas Migiro (Cleaner Production Center, Tanzania) described the status of the African 10 Year Framework Programme on Sustainable Consumption and Production. Amb. Mona Elisabeth Brøther (Norway) described some lessons of rural development, including sustainable land use, secure tenure, empowerment, a bottom-up approach, and education. Nadine Gouzée (Belgium) emphasized that a sustainable development strategy should embrace reporting, planning, participation and monitoring.

G-77/CHINA emphasized enhancing financial flows, trade opportunities, access to and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, capacity building and development support. EU urged changing unsustainable consumption patterns, policy coherence, and participation in national sustainable development strategies. PSIDS called for planning, financial resources and technical assistance from development partners, including for addressing climate change impacts.

CANADA stressed democratic governance and women’s empowerment, and committed to meeting the Gleneagles target of doubling its aid to Africa by 2009. LIBYA called for protecting local seeds and other natural resources. BARBADOS highlighted improving water use efficiency and rain water harvesting.

IRAN stressed the provision of financial resources, transfer and diffusion of technology, and attention to the needs of women. MALAYSIA suggested creating a virtual library and streamlining the current reporting format to institutionalize best practices and monitor progress. CUBA reported that its land programme involves media articles and training for farmers and population. CHILDREN AND YOUTH highlighted the role of education and information, including carbon footprint labeling.

INDIA stressed poverty eradication, suggested pursuing synergies of the Rio conventions at the national level, and expressed concern about declining ODA levels. FRANCE highlighted the need to link sustainable development and poverty reduction strategies. The CZECH REPUBLIC said a forthcoming national action plan will focus on sustainable lifestyles, particularly the problem of obese children. US suggested focusing science and education on identifying the efficient use of inputs, and highlighted good governance and empowering women. NORWAY highlighted women’s rights and roles related to land and agriculture. ITALY, SWEDEN, FINLAND and SWITZERLAND discussed their work chairing four of the seven task forces for the Marrakesh Process on sustainable consumption and production.

SOUTH AFRICA stressed the global imbalance of agricultural trade and health implications of nutrition-related conditions. WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS noted the absence of freedom of association and collective bargaining in rural areas. MEXICO emphasized strengthening scientific and educational institutions and capacity building. ARGENTINA said initiatives similar to the “carbon footprint” create distortions and protectionist barriers to trade.

In the afternoon, Mazlan Othman (UN Office of Outer Space Affairs) highlighted uses for space-based technologies and applications in relation to the CSD-16 themes. Pedro Sanchez (The Earth Institute at Columbia University) described the Millennium Village Project, which has provided fertilizers and high-yielding seeds to small farmers in Africa and tripled their crop production.

The NETHERLANDS emphasized the benefits of sustainable public procurement policies. NGOs suggested recognizing the rights of the poor to food and productive resources. SOUTH

AFRICA noted the need for a comprehensive science and technology agenda, infrastructure and capacity building programmes, and said technological investment in Africa is a challenge. GUATEMALA highlighted early warning and prediction using space technology. FAO highlighted food security and food rights.

DIALOGUE WITH MAJOR GROUPS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVES

Vice-Chair Ojdanic chaired the session and said the outcome would be summarized in the CSD-16 report. Officer-in-Charge Abdalla summarized document E/CN.17/2008/10, on partnerships for sustainable development. FARMERS emphasized sufficient funding for agriculture, improved communication between farmers’ associations and governments, and regulatory frameworks that provide market predictability. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES noted the need for collecting basic, disaggregated statistics on local conditions. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY said partnerships require establishing long-term relationships.

Loren Finnell (Latin American Clean Water Initiative) said partnerships need active participation of all actors. Helen Marquard (SEED Initiative) noted the importance of continuing financing for partnerships. LOCAL AUTHORITIES said most partnerships lack adequate funding. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY said a large portion of partnership financing comes from the private sector, and support from the public sector is decreasing for agriculture.

Kaddu Sebunya (Congo Basin Forest Partnership) noted the challenge of establishing long-term vision and short-term benefits for communities. Amanda Luxande (Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership) noted challenges presented by a lack of long-term energy planning and poor coordination among actors.

SWEDEN questioned whether it is better for donors to finance “soft” projects like capacity building or “hard” projects like irrigation. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITY stressed capacity building; WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS emphasized focusing on workers; and LOCAL AUTHORITIES said both are necessary.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES emphasized the importance of ecosystem and human rights approaches. CHILDREN AND YOUTH said they should be included at all stages of partnership development and implementation. WOMEN said partnerships lack funding for institution building.

Claire Servini (Global Bioenergy Partnership) suggested discussing bioenergy lifecycle analysis, labeling and certification internationally. Peter Holmgren (Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Initiative) emphasized improved access to resources, and identification and sharing of lessons learned. AUSTRIA emphasized food security, efforts to strengthen local governance, and a partnership approach.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While discussions on Africa produced many constructive ideas and recommendations for sustainable development in the continent, in the corridors participants pondered why the number of the poor is still growing in Africa, even though the continent has shown steady economic growth in recent years. Participants offered different reasons: some cite population growth and rising energy and food prices, and others mention unequal distribution of newly produced wealth, poor governance, political instability and armed conflict. The key to changing the situation, according to many delegates, lies in the allocation of more resources to agriculture and rural development, as agricultural development leads to tangible benefits for the poorest of the poor.

The dialogue with Major Groups and partnership representatives brought out concrete success stories, yet a few sobering comments were heard calling for closer scrutiny of their effectiveness and costs.