

EIGHTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 3-14 MAY 2010

Delegates to the 18th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 18), which opens today and continues through 14 May 2010, at UN headquarters in New York, will focus on the thematic cluster of transport, chemicals, waste management, mining, and the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns (SCP). The CSD meets annually in two-year "Implementation Cycles," with each cycle focusing on one thematic cluster alongside cross-sectoral issues. This approach was outlined in a multi-year programme of work (2004-2017) adopted at CSD 11 in 2003. Each cycle is comprised of a Review Year and a Policy Year. CSD 18 will thus conduct a review of barriers and constraints in implementation, as well as lessons learned and best practices, in relation to the thematic cluster. CSD 19, in May 2011, will convene as the "Policy Year" for this thematic cluster, when delegates will negotiate policy recommendations based on CSD 18's review of the issues.

In addition to reviewing the thematic cluster of issues, CSD 18 delegates will participate in several additional discussions. During a one-day preparatory committee for the five-year high-level review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Implementation of the Barbados Plan of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States, which will take place in September 2010, CSD 18 delegates will review implementation of the Mauritius Strategy. A multistakeholder dialogue and high-level segment will also convene, and a Partnerships Fair, Learning Centre and side events will take place in parallel with CSD 18.

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 by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the "Rio 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 47th session of 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 is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and its decisions are forwarded to ECOSOC. The CSD has 53 member states, although all UN member states are invited to participate in its sessions. The Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), within the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), serves as the CSD's Secretariat.

The CSD held its first substantive session in June 1993 and has convened annually since then at UN headquarters in New York. During its first five years, the CSD systematically reviewed the implementation of all chapters of Agenda 21. 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 five-year CSD work programme organized around sectoral, cross-sectoral and economic thematic issues. The economic, sectoral and cross-sectoral themes considered, as determined at UNGASS, were as follows: industry, strategic approaches to freshwater management, and technology transfer, capacity building, education, science and awareness raising (CSD-6); tourism, oceans and seas, and consumption and production patterns (CSD-7); sustainable agriculture and land management, integrated planning and management of land resources, and financial resources, trade and investment and economic growth (CSD-8); and energy and transport, atmosphere and energy, and information for decision-making and participation and international cooperation for an enabling environment (CSD-9).

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) met from 26 August-4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa, and adopted two main documents: the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. The JPOI is designed as a framework for action to implement the commitments originally agreed at UNCED and includes chapters on: an introduction; poverty eradication; consumption and production; the natural resource base; health; SIDS; Africa; other regional initiatives; means of implementation; and institutional framework. The Johannesburg Declaration outlines the path taken from UNCED to the

WSSD, highlights present challenges, expresses a commitment to sustainable development, underscores the importance of multilateralism and emphasizes the need for implementation.

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION MEETINGS: The UN Regional Commissions, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the CSD, organized Regional Implementation Meetings (RIMs) in order to contribute to the work of CSD 18. The Western Asia RIM took place from 4-6 October 2009, in Cairo, Egypt. The African RIM took place from 27-30 October 2009, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Asia and the Pacific RIM took place from 30 November-1 December 2009, in Bangkok, Thailand. The Latin America and the Caribbean RIM took place from 26-27 November 2009, in Antigua, Guatemala. And the Europe and North America RIM took place from 1-2 December 2009, in Geneva, Switzerland.

SIDS REGIONAL MEETINGS: Three regional meetings convened in preparation for the SIDS MSI+5 PrepCom during CSD 18.

The Pacific High Level Dialogue on the five-year review of the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island States convened from 8-9 February 2010, in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The meeting adopted strategies for strengthening implementation, including: a call on the international community to honor their commitments; the adoption of green growth policies; and the strengthening of implementation mechanisms and adequate budget allocation.

The SIDS of the AIMS (Africa, Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and South China Sea) region met in Male, Maldives, from 9-10 March 2010. Representatives at the meeting suggested that work should be undertaken to develop country vulnerability-resilience profiles, building on earlier work carried out on various vulnerability indices for small island States. The goal of such an effort would be to help channel future development assistance in response to clearly documented sources of vulnerabilities and to areas where coping capacity of SIDS could be strengthened. Participants also highlighted the need to establish regional support mechanisms for intra-regional cooperation among the AIMS-SIDS, including regional centres of excellence for research, training, advisory services and strategic planning and advocacy at the international and regional level. In doing so, they noted the importance of building on existing mechanisms such as the Nairobi and Abidjan Conventions.

The Caribbean Regional meeting convened in St. George's, Grenada, on 16 and 18 March 2010. As a way forward to address identified challenges, participants supported, *inter alia*: identifying and assessing adaptation needs; addressing the issue of access to low carbon technologies and enhanced technology transfer; promoting energy efficiency and enhancing renewable energy resources and related services; expanding current initiatives to transform existing economies into more environmentally-friendly ones, promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, and building capacity in valuation and costing of ecosystem resources and ecosystem services; strengthening early warning systems and expanding a risk management framework that would be complemented by insurance and re-insurance schemes; promoting greater regional

cooperation in research and development for SIDS-appropriate applications for improved knowledge management; and fully operationalizing the Regional Coordination Mechanism.

INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS: Four intersessional meetings were also organized around the topics on the CSD 18 agenda.

The Inaugural Meeting of the Regional 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) Forum in Asia, which convened in Tokyo, Japan, from 11-12 November 2009, agreed on a statement on the establishment of the Forum, for the promotion of the 3Rs in the Asia region.

The Workshop on Case Studies in the Sound Management of Chemicals took place from 3-4 December 2009, in Geneva, Switzerland. This workshop collected inputs, reviewed and advanced the content for the CSD 18 publication "Practices in the Sound Management of Chemicals." This publication will be officially launched on 12 May during the High-level Segment of CSD 18, by the CSD Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention, and the UN Environment Programme Chemicals Branch.

The International Expert Group Meeting: United Nations Forum on Climate Change Mitigation, Fuel Efficiency and Sustainable Urban Transport met in Seoul, Republic of Korea, from 16-17 March 2010. Participants developed a number of recommendations related to: trends and issues in urban transport; public transport in urban areas; financing of public transport in developing countries; social and safety concerns; the role of city administrations in the development of urban public transport; technologies for curbing growth of emissions from motor vehicles; innovative transport business models and green growth; policy options for curbing growth of emissions from motor vehicles; urban planning and measures to promote sustainable urban transport; and enhancing policy coherence to address the transport challenges.

The International Consultative Meeting on Expanding Waste Management Services in Developing Countries convened from 18-19 March 2010, in Tokyo, Japan. Participants developed recommendations related to: common issues and challenges in the area of waste management in developing countries; innovative approaches and strategies for integrated waste management; issues with the informal sector; and strengthening partnership to enhance technical and financial cooperation towards sustainable waste management at local level. The meeting acknowledged the Government of Japan's intention to continue its support for similar activities, including the follow-up meeting scheduled to be held in January 2011, as an input to CSD 19.

THEMATIC SEMINAR SERIES: In preparation for CSD 18, the CSD Secretariat organized a Thematic Seminar Series for Second Committee delegates and others who are active in the CSD process. This Seminar Series featured presentations by technical experts, video documentaries, and interactive discussions. A Chair's summary was developed at the conclusion of each seminar, and e-discussions were launched to follow-up on the CSD 18 and 19 thematic cluster of issues.