



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## CSD HIGHLIGHTS FRIDAY, 19 APRIL 1996

Delegates to the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-4) completed their discussion on cross-sectoral issues not dealt with by the *Ad Hoc* Working Groups (technology, education, capacity building, trade, poverty, population, decision-making, institutions, major groups and national reporting). During the afternoon session, delegates elected Daudi Ngelautwa Mwakawago (Tanzania), Adam Vai Delaney (Papua New Guinea) and Enrique Provencio (Mexico) to the Bureau.

### CROSS-SECTORAL ISSUES

The CZECH REPUBLIC outlined findings from the Prague Workshop on Education and Public Awareness for Sustainable Development. Awareness of sustainable development is still limited. Education for sustainable development should incorporate the needs of minority groups, and indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge should be recognized as a valuable resource. He stated that indicators are a powerful information tool for identifying sustainability changes and trends. He noted that there is no general consensus on a clear, workable definition of sustainable development, in part because it is a dynamic process.

The EU stressed the need to address population, consumption and production patterns, food policy, and widespread poverty and inequality to achieve sustainability. He called for international cooperation on the ICPD Program of Action, notably on access to and utilization of reproductive health services. More attention should be given to the delicate balance between individual rights and common responsibilities. INDIA said the 1997 Special Session of the General Assembly should focus on Agenda 21 implementation. He highlighted poverty eradication, resource use, and the unsustainable patterns of production and consumption in developed countries, and outlined India's national plan to integrate environmental decision making in all ministries.

AUSTRALIA noted that CSD should consider environmental, economic and social aspects of development as a complete package. She also welcomed the focus of CSD-4 on the Barbados Programme of Action on SIDS, and did not support an intergovernmental process to develop non-binding guidelines on the use of trade measures in Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). SWITZERLAND drew attention to a recent

report on the transfer of environmentally sound technologies (ESTs), and noted that commercial policies and action to protect the environment can reinforce one another. He noted that voluntary labeling programmes can have a positive effect, but must also serve other consumer goals. The UK said that the CSD should take the political lead on key sustainable development issues, and cautioned against attempts to cover too much ground. The High Level Segment will look ahead to the Special Session and should identify a small number of high profile issues. He asked that the CSD give further consideration to simplifying the reporting process.

MEXICO stressed the importance of fighting poverty in strategies for sustainable development. He noted the need for sustainable economic growth that encourages links to sustainable development and implementation of the commitments from Rio. He also stated that environmental protection should not be a pretext to conceal protectionist policies. COLOMBIA agreed there should be no question of re-writing Agenda 21 commitments at the Special Session of the UNGA in 1997. On poverty eradication, he called for a balance between economic, social and environmental aspects and noted slow progress in the implementation of chapters 23 (major groups) and 24 (women) of Agenda 21 and set backs regarding financial resources. He also noted that, in regard to changing consumer patterns, environmental standards should depend on the exporting country's standards.

SWEDEN underlined the importance of efforts made by local authorities. He noted the need for clearer policy signals, cooperation and information from central levels of government. He noted that Habitat II will meet in June on the same dates that Rio met in 1992. JAPAN described a workshop on indicators of sustainable development (ISDs), which it sponsored in February to consider improvements in methodology sheets. Governments were invited to conduct pilot tests. The Workshop identified gaps, including guidance on sub-national data, e.g. institutional indicators for capacity building, key indicators for national decision making and linkages between different indicators.

The US noted its submission to the CSD of its National Environmental Technology Strategy, and described a nascent process of developing federal and local ISDs. He supported a strengthened and broadened institutional CSD role as a "main commission" for ECOSOC, and proposed that it move to Geneva after 1997 to facilitate inter-agency interaction. He raised concerns about the Secretariat's paper on trade, and expressed disappointment that the UNCTAD Secretariat had chosen to press

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its own views. He noted weaknesses in the depiction of ongoing key discussions MEAs.

The EU stated that the international community has a responsibility in promoting special coordinated efforts to assist developing countries in their capacity building efforts. Donor countries' development agencies should readjust to the need to foster capacity building by improving their own skills in institutional and capacity analysis. The NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL presented a report containing 65 country reports on the actions taken to implement the ICPD. The survey documents significant progress on implementation worldwide, but notes that less than one-fifth of the reports reflect ministerial or high-level governmental consideration of implementation.

COSTA RICA, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, emphasized the critical importance of implementation and follow-up measures to the Rio conference. He said that the transfer of ESTs should be on preferential and concessional terms, guarantee appropriate financial means and include expertise and training. Trade liberalization will assist societies in raising money to meet environmental needs. Environmental standards should not be imposed but adopted according to the economic needs of each country.

The EU supported international, preferably regional, mechanisms to exchange experiences in public awareness strategies. He stated that sustainable development education should encompass social, economic and environmental aspects and develop interlinkages between them. He also proposed a programme of work for the CSD on education. Regarding information for decision-making, he emphasized indicators and stated that the CSD-3 work programme on indicators will have a significant impact on the process of monitoring progress achieved since UNCED. Regarding institutional arrangements, he suggested that the institutional implications for forging new alliances for sustainable development be examined in the course of the preparatory work for the Special Session.

GERMANY presented the report of the Scientific Workshop on Indicators of Sustainable Development, held 15-17 November in Wuppertal, Germany. She stated that policy makers cannot wait for a perfect ISD system and called for testing of ISDs on a voluntary basis to incorporate this experience into the process of refining ISDs. BRAZIL highlighted transfer of ESTs and trade. He noted that: technical cooperation involves governments as well as the private sector; MEAs should act as instruments to facilitate EST transfer; environmental policies should enhance competitiveness; technology transfer is the most effective way to achieve environmental objectives; and UNCTAD-9 should reaffirm UNCTAD's special role in trade and environment.

MALAYSIA focused on trade liberalization and distorting practices, cautioning against unilateral trade sanctions. He stated that poverty is the major contributor to environmental degradation. He also highlighted the importance of access to ESTs in the public domain, as well as facilitating this through innovative legislative and market mechanisms. JAPAN stated that economic and environmental performance should not be incompatible. He recalled the recommendations of CSD-3 to study the environmental impact of trade policies, capacity building, and the internalization of environmental costs in developing countries.

The PHILIPPINES highlighted the importance of education in achieving sustainable development goals. The EU described integrating environment and development in decision-making through the following means: market based instruments; environmental dimensions of law making; raising public awareness; and enhanced international action. He stated that the

Secretary-General's report overemphasizes legal aspects of integrated decision-making, while neglecting economic aspects. He also highlighted the key role of international law.

The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY elaborated upon trade liberalization and environmental protection, stating that: they should be mutually supportive; environmental policy should not be detrimental to competitiveness; both "eco-duties" and unilateral trade actions should be avoided; the WTO Committee on Trade and the Environment (CTE) should invite greater input from NGOs; and current discussions should lead to rapid practical developments.

OECD presented a 1996 progress report on the implementation of Agenda 21, which details the OECD activities pertinent to the CSD-4 agenda. It addresses cross-cutting issues and sectoral issues, and includes an Annex describing OECD's contributions to the post-Rio conventions. INDONESIA asked whether trade and environment issues were included in the agenda as an attempt to justify trade barriers. He said the CSD must send a clear message against unilateral and discriminatory measures, and noted that some countries would keep developing countries from benefiting from the fruits of liberalized trade. CUBA has been developing an alternative approach to economic and social development, which will help improve understanding of the role of the environment. His country is incorporating environmental issues into its educational system and strengthening environmental training at university level. UNEP presented a survey on environmental technology, which was carried out through an extensive survey of 400 institutions and nine in-depth case studies. The survey represents a first step in environmental technology networking and proposes an informal network of institutions.

IUCN proposed an international strategic alliance between a number of UN agencies and international NGOs, and suggested that the group's work programme could include support for the development and implementation of national action plans.

### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

The chair of the *Ad Hoc* Group on oceans-related issues, Svante Bodin, is conducting informal consultations. Some expect that these consultations will resolve many related disagreements before they go to the drafting group. NGOs have expressed concern that this process is excluding their input and limiting their ability to influence the agreement with regard to issues they are following, such as by-catch, subsidies and overcapitalization of fishing fleets. In addition to oceans issues, participants have been anticipating debating points on finance and trade issues.

## **THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY**

**PLENARY:** The Plenary will meet in Conference Room 1 during the morning to hear a report on the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on finance and changing consumption and production patterns, presented by the Chair, Dr. Lin See-Yan (Malaysia). A discussion will follow, and continue during an afternoon meeting.

**PANEL ON FINANCE:** Dr. Lin See-Yan will chair the panel on finance, which will meet from 4:00 to 6:00 pm in Conference Room 1.

**NGO MEETING:** Elizabeth Dowdeswell will meet with NGOs in Conference Room 8 from 10:00 to 11:30 am to discuss environmental citizenship and ways that UNEP can work with the NGO community.