



WSSD +5 PREPARATORY COMMITTEE 3-14 APRIL 2000

The Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the Special Session of the General Assembly (GA), entitled "World Summit for Social Development and beyond: Achieving social development for all in a globalizing world," begins its second substantive session today at UN headquarters in New York. The main task of the PrepCom is to negotiate proposals on a draft political declaration and a document on further actions and initiatives to implement the commitments made at the 1995 World Summit for Social Development (A/AC.253/L.5/Rev.2).

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WSSD+5 PROCESS

During the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD), held in Copenhagen, Denmark, 6-12 March 1995, government delegates reached consensus on the need to put social improvement and people at the center of sustainable development at local, national and international levels. Preceding the WSSD, three PrepComs took place at UN Headquarters in New York, from 31 January - 11 February 1994, 24-28 October 1994, and 6-12 March 1995.

Despite difficult debates during the PrepComs and periodic retreats from language agreed on at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, the 1993 Human Rights Conference in Vienna and 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, Social Summit delegates managed to reach consensus on several important issues in the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Programme of Action (POA) of the World Summit for Social Development.

The WSSD was one of the international community's first clear commitments to eradicating absolute poverty. While the Earth Summit legitimized the participation of NGOs in UN negotiating processes, the WSSD highlighted the fact that the empowerment of civil society is a *sine qua non* for sound social development policy. In addition, it addressed the need for socially responsible structural adjustment and for increased cooperation between the Bretton Woods

institutions and the UN system. Moreover, the Social Summit made clear statements on the external debt question plaguing Africa, the least developed countries and countries with economies in transition. Finally, the Social Summit brought together the largest gathering ever of world leaders pledged to the following overriding objectives for social development: eradication of poverty, full productive employment and social integration.

The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development assessed the current social situation and reasons for convening the Social Summit, listed principles and goals, and spelled out ten commitments. These call for enhancing the enabling environment for social development, and for promoting further initiatives for: poverty eradication; full employment; social integration; equality and equity between women and men; universal and equitable access to quality education and health services; accelerated development in Africa and the least developed countries; inclusion of social development goals in structural adjustment programmes; increased resources for social development and international cooperation for social development. The POA outlined actions to be achieved in each area.

Although the WSSD has come and gone, much work remains to be done to implement these actions. The POA called on the GA to hold a special session in the year 2000 for an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the Social Summit, and to consider further actions. Governments will reconvene in Geneva, from 26-30 June 2000, to affirm the principles of the Social Summit, review achievements and commit to new initiatives.

In setting out the preparatory process for the Special Session, the GA established a PrepCom in 1997 open to the participation of all member States of the United Nations and the specialized agencies. The PrepCom held its first organizational session in May 1998 and its first substantive session in May 1999. It initiated discussions on preliminary assessment of the implementation of the ten commitments and on further initiatives, and adopted a decision on the role of the UN system, which invited all relevant organs and specialized agencies of the UN system and other concerned organizations to

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submit reviews and proposals for further action and initiatives. The PrepCom also decided on further procedures and preparations for the Special Session, including the convening of open-ended, intersessional informal consultations from 30 August - 3 September 1999 and 21-25 February 2000. Modalities for accreditation of NGOs at the Special Session were also decided.

EVENTS LEADING UP TO WSSD +5

Three sets of documents will be forwarded to the June Special Session. Part I, a reaffirmation of the WSSD, will include a short political declaration and will be discussed by the PrepCom during the next two weeks. Part II, a review and assessment of implementation, was undertaken by the Commission for Social Development (CSD) at its 38th session last February. Part III, further initiatives for inclusion in the outcome of the Special Session, will also be debated by the PrepCom in its current session.

At its May 1998 session, the PrepCom invited the CSD to meet from 8-17 February 2000 to consider the Overall review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development: Draft agreed conclusions submitted by the Vice-Chair of the Commission, Luis Carranza-Cifuentes (Guatemala), on the basis of informal consultations (E/CN.5/2000/L.8). The 46-member Commission was led by Chair Zola Skweyiya (South Africa) and four Vice-Chairs: Jaminska Dinic (Croatia), Luis Fernando Carranza-Cifuentes (Guatemala), Asith Kumar Bhattacharjee (India, and Didier Le Bret (France).

The review document contains seven parts: an introduction detailing developments, challenges and priorities since the WSSD; poverty eradication; full employment; social integration; Africa and the least developed countries; mobilization of resources for social development; and capacity building to implement social policies and programmes. The document states that the goals of development are to improve living conditions and to empower people to participate fully in economic, political and social arenas. It concludes that while efforts have been made, progress has been uneven and further attention is required.

The document also affirms that since the WSSD, national and international actors, including the UN system, have placed greater emphasis on social development in the form of new policies and programmes. However, lack of access to education, persistent poverty and unemployment, and inequitable access to opportunities and resources have caused social exclusion and marginalization. Discrimination causes women and girls to suffer particular disadvantages.

The review document further highlights inequalities between States; excessive debt servicing that constrains social development and basic services; and the increasing debt burdens of the most indebted countries as one of the principle obstacles to progress in people-centred sustainable development and poverty eradication. Noting that national governments are increasingly affected by global influences beyond their control, the document lists primary impediments to social development, including, *inter alia*, chronic hunger, organized crime, corruption, foreign occupation, armed conflicts, ethnic hatreds and HIV/AIDS.

CSD-38 was unable to conclude its negotiations within its original schedule, and extra sessions were held from 21-25 February and on 6, 9 and 17 March 2000. A primary sticking point was a reference to economic sanctions and unilateral measures not in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The final text concludes that sanctions and unilateral measures can impede social development. There was also disagreement over three paragraphs related to resource mobilization, with final text acknowledging that ODA has continued to decline and only four countries now meet the WSSD's agreed target of 0.7 percent of GNP. The text also notes that ODA has been found to be more effective when countries are committed to growth-oriented strategies combined with poverty eradication goals and strategies.

CSD-38 also took note of the Secretary General's "Comprehensive report on the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development" (A/AC.253/13-E/CN.5/2000/2) and a report entitled "Symposium on States, markets and social progress: roles and cooperation of the public and private sectors" (A/AC.253.14-E/CN.5/2000/5).

Much of the extra work of CSD-38 took place during the week originally scheduled for the PrepCom to meet intersessionally and to consider an integrated Chair's working draft text of the further actions and initiatives document. During 21-25 February, the PrepCom, chaired by Christian Maquiera (Chile) met as a whole for only one and a half days. It spent much of its time debating the length and style of the negotiation document. After deciding to work with the Chair's draft, the PrepCom gave an initial reading of the first nine paragraphs of the document. Structured around the ten commitments contained within the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, it is based in part on a set of 26 reports submitted to the Secretariat by organs and specialized agencies of the UN system and other concerned organizations and integrated in the Compilation of the summaries and proposals for further action provided by the United Nations System.

The Secretariat has proposed dividing the PrepCom's work between three Working Groups, with no more than two groups scheduled to meet simultaneously. Working Groups I and II will discuss the further actions and initiatives, with Working Group I negotiating Commitments 1, 7, 8 and 9 and Working Group II negotiating 2-6 and 10. Working Group III will discuss the draft political declaration.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

The WSSD+5 PrepCom will convene at 10:00 am in Conference Room 2 to adopt its provisional agenda, approve its organization of work and hear the introduction of documents. Informal consultations will begin immediately after introductory statements. Working Groups I and II are scheduled to meet in Conference Room 2 and Working Group III in Conference Room 5.