



Taking Issue

*The Sustainable
Development Issues
Network*

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A daily publication of the Sustainable Development Issues Network (SDIN) at the Bali Fourth PrepCom for the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development.

LET'S BE HONEST IN JOHANNESBURG

At the closing plenary of the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue, the NGOs delivered the following statement

Ten years ago, seeds of a vision were already planted in Rio. A most vital North-South partnership, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities was promised by heads of governments. The need for equity between and within countries was recognised. The conceptual link was made between environment and development, today repeatedly talked about as the 3 pillars: environment, social and economics. The precautionary principle, compromised to the precautionary approach was nevertheless accepted, a central principle for sustainability. The rights of communities and peoples were to be expanded. These and many other principles and elements are in the NGO Dialogue Paper for the MSD and we will continue to work with delegations over the next days to press our points.

We were reminded by Mr. Nitin Desai at the end of the partnerships discussion that the real decisions are made in the negotiating rooms. Thus, while the MSD is useful for lively exchanges and expression of views, there is also frustration among many Major Groups that these sessions have little impact on the outcome of the negotiations.

Hard work produced the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, various UN Summit action plans and agreements over 10 years. But in the WSSD process everyone including governments have admitted that there is a crisis in implementation. Everyone openly laments the lack of political will to implement sustainable development. There is a struggle to agree to time frames and targets for concrete actions. But many NGOs see strong political will in other parts of the international system.

There is political will in the World Trade Organisation to set specific time frames and obligations, and failure to comply

triggers a powerful enforcement machinery that comes with sanctions. Member States are obliged to change national laws and policies, even their constitutions in some cases, with developing countries being the net losers, and within them the small farmers and producers, in particular women, being the biggest losers.

There is political will to enforce decades of repayment in debt servicing by indebted countries where interest payments far exceed the original sum

(Continued on page 2)



NGOs in deliberation on the dismal state of affairs of the current negotiation. Photo JGS

Also in this Issue

Land Access: A Strategic Ingredient for Sustainable Development..... **page 3**

Youth Speak out on Type II Partnerships**page 4**

Calendar of NGO events**page 6**

Opinion Poll.....**page 5**

Results Yesterday's Poll..**page 5**

The chairman's text glossary**page 6**

Visit the SDIN Morning Strategy Meetings for reports from working groups, information sharing, and strategic discussions. SDIN Morning Meetings are open to all NGOs.

9 AM, Mon-Fri, Nusantara 3

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Articles reflect the opinions of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SDIN network.

(Continued from page 1)

borrowed. The debt burden continues and even worsens, while middle income countries are now drawn into the debt trap, too, as economic liberalisation contributes to new vulnerabilities. But there is no political will to resolve the debt crisis. Just as there is no political will by rich countries to make the much needed reforms to the international financial system. NGOs had hoped for the inadequacies of the diluted Monterrey Consensus to be addressed by the WSSD, but some countries are adamant that this will not be done.

Many NGOs call for debt cancellation on the basis of the ecological debt owed to the South, and reparations for centuries of colonialism, slavery, exploitation and contamination of natural resources. But there is only weak language on debt-for-nature swaps in the Chair's text.

At the same time, there is waning political will to ratify multilateral environment treaties, especially among developed countries, but there is political will to dilute and to subvert treaties from their original intent and objectives, and even reject treaties. This we see in the Kyoto Protocol.

These are some of the deep contradictions that paralyse the WSSD negotiations. There seems to be almost a fear now to embark on the political declaration because in this current climate where economic liberalisation reigns over sustainable development, there may be no consensus on any such declaration. Perhaps other ways need to be explored rather than the usual negotiations if there is to be any meaningful document.

Meanwhile, there is a great deal of talk about "local" and "grassroots", and even big business here in this MSD extols its role at the local level. Yet it is this same big business

that exerts tremendous influence over the formulation of laws and policies at the global level, especially in the economics sphere. The rights of transnational corporations have expanded steadily (including as in NAFTA the right to sue national governments for loss of opportunity when environmental standards are applied to hazardous products) while the communities' rights to resources have been severely weakened in many ways, especially in developing countries. Environmental racism is deep as dumping of toxic wastes and dirty industries plague poor and minority communities in rich countries and poor developing countries.

The "rights-based" approach is strongly endorsed by almost all Major Groups and reiterated here. But instead of rights, there is now the concept of "stakeholders" that assumes equality among all parties. The MSD discussions on partnerships have stressed these unequal power relations. In an era where corporate rights are expanding disproportionately to peoples' rights, many NGOs are thus insisting on legally binding corporate accountability and liability, and not partnerships with big business.

Trade unions here have warned of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) that is now driving more liberalisation and privatisation. The Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of IPRs (TRIPs) is entangled in controversy with its resulting prohibitive drug prices, and the patenting of life forms. Yet the pressure continues to liberalise and to negotiate new agreements on government procurement, investment and competition policy that will take the WTO even further beyond trade into every aspect of our lives. Essential tools needed by national governments to make national policies, with the democratic participation of civil society, are reduced and even removed.

The WTO is spreading its tentacles into the heart of national development policy, and this threatens attempts to shift to sustainable development.

It is thus not surprising at all that the negotiations in this process are excruciating and frustrating. The precautionary approach, agreed in the Rio Declaration in highly compromised language, is contentious. The United States refuses to have any language that portrays globalisation as negative, and refuses to have the Kyoto Protocol or Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety mentioned explicitly in the negotiating text. Some countries seek to enshrine IPRs and refuse to allow for any other form of knowledge protection centred on the rights of communities and indigenous peoples. Even the "s" in indigenous peoples is a battle in the negotiating room.

Meanwhile, a huge piece of the Antarctica has broken away just a few months away. Food shortages threaten many countries as drought, floods and a host of climate disasters aggravated by global warming hit them. Citizens' groups in the US are suing the Bush Administration to get information on the role of Enron and other oil corporations in influencing the country's energy policy. That is the reality that faces us as we plough through the torturous negotiations in this building.

We in the NGO community are committed to continue working for the rest of this meeting and over the next few months but we are frustrated, as are the negotiators and UN colleagues.

Perhaps we should not view Johannesburg as an event for grand outcomes, but rather a moment for a frank assessment of the fundamental obstacles that have led to the crisis in implementation of sustainable development. Let us please have an honest appraisal.

Chee Yoke Ling (TWN)



Emil Salim to open workshop on ACCESS TO LAND

A Strategic Ingredient for Sustainable Development

By Bruce Moore, The Popular Coalition to Eradicate Hunger and Poverty

No choice for survival

In their quest for food security, the rural poor often have little choice but to use their limited resources extensively. Their negligible natural and capital assets compel them to adopt survival strategies with short-time horizons. They become excluded from productive opportunities by ill-defined or non-existent property rights, limited access to financial services and markets, inadequate security against natural disasters, lack of education and training, and very little power in decision-making. Understandably, when access to land and water is lacking or insecure, farmers cannot be sure they will receive the benefits, and therefore, lack the incentives to make investments for the longer term. Instead, they mine the soil and then move deeper into the forest.

For the rural poor, secure access to land provides the most realistic opportunity to improve their livelihoods and develop assets that can reduce their vulnerabilities. Secure access to land provides the most powerful incentive for the sustainable management of natural resources.

Access to land a must

It is fortunate that the poverty-sustainable development nexus is emerging as an essential element in the preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development. It is increasingly being recognised that access to land and related productive assets is an essential foundation for building of national programmes for sustainable human development and long lasting management of natural resources. As difficult as this issue

can be the emerging political consensus to work toward improved access is an encouraging signal to development practitioners and rural communities

Tools for improved access

Toward this goal, the Popular Coalition is conducting a world wide process of consultation toward a Common Platform on Access to Land and the development of Land Alliances for National Development (LAND Partnerships). These are two related tools for improving access to productive assets and land management. The Platform will be a resource to governments and civil society in the consideration of land policy and the LAND partnerships will be practical ways for implementation at the country level. This is one of the ways in which the Popular Coalition hopes to contribute to

the outcomes of the WSSD.

A unique initiative

This initiative is unique in that the Popular Coalition is an alliance of civil society, intergovernmental and governmental organisations that have been working together since 1995 to merge their concerns for sustainable development into improving the access by the rural poor to productive assets. The Coalition is unique in being a consortium of farmers, indigenous peoples women's organisations, landless peoples and NGOs who are joined in the coalition by international agencies including IFAD (the host of the coalition), FAO, WFP, the European Commission, the World Bank and governments in order to work toward a common direction of improving access to

(Continued on page 5)



Youth speak out on Type II Partnerships

Youth from all over the world had long and intense deliberations before they arrived at the following statement which was delivered to delegates, NGOs and other representatives from the 9 major groups during the Multistakeholder Dialogue Session at the Fourth WSSD Prep Com in Bali.

Concerns

We, the youth major stakeholder group, reiterates the need for binding Type I agreements, supported and implemented by national governments.

As a major group, youth are divided on the issue of Type II initiatives. Some youth fear that partnerships serve to benefit multinational corporations and international financial institutions at the expense of sustainable development goals. Others feel that, under a framework of strong governmental commitments, partnerships hold potential to effectively involve all stakeholders in the implementation of type I agreements.

Overall, we seek to prevent "youth-washing" by corporations and governments who wish to profit from the images of youth and sustainable development without true commitment to addressing the challenges we face for the future.

We stress the need for the following prerequisites to the approval of any type II initiative:

- Strong commitments by government partners to binding Type I outcomes, including clear, time-bound implementation plans
- Corporate participation is contingent upon commitment to the adoption of a binding UN Convention on Corporate Accountability
- Participation of national governments, including the United States and Australia, in partnership initiatives must be contingent upon the ratification of UN

Conventions such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Kyoto Protocol, Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination and Violence against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, based on the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

Principles

As the only transitory major group, we hold a variety of principles as essential to a just framework for partnerships.

- Inter-generational equity: partnerships must consider both short and long term impacts
- Self-determination: partnerships must respect the sovereignty of nations and native and indigenous peoples.
- Accountability: all partners must maintain transparency and responsibility to affected stakeholders and communities, through integrated participation and continuous consultation
- Justice: partnerships should enforce principles of social, environmental and economic justice
- Equity: partnerships must promote all levels of equity, including gender, ethnic, racial, and economic
- Equality: partnerships should strive to reduce the inequalities between partners

Framework

- Partnerships must fall under the authority of a UN body, such as the CSD, and governed by the framework for corporate accountability

- The framework for partnership initiatives must be designed as a flexible, continuous process
- Approval of partnership initiatives must be based upon a clear criteria for selection, including:
 - Strengthening Type I outcomes
 - Multilateral scope
 - A unique contribution to sustainable development, the success of which relies upon UN facilitation
 - Adherence to the UN Millennium Development Goals
 - Well-defined policies and plans at local, national and international levels
 - Clear timeframe for implementation with verifiable indicators
 - Guidelines for continued monitoring and evaluation at all levels
 - Review of partners (with acceptance based on fulfillment of prior partnership commitments)
- Approval of partnership initiatives must take into account geographical and issue-based balances

Means of Implementation

- Partnership funding must be identified at the time of approval, including funds for monitoring and administration
- A consultation and dialogue process for stakeholders and affected communities must be incorporated into partnership plans
- Multi-national corporations seeking to enter partnerships

(Continued on page 5)



(Continued from page 4)

must commit to a binding framework for corporate accountability

Areas for Youth Partnerships

Education:

- Peer education (youth-youth)
- Science and technology – youth partnership for education and training

Youth incorporation into decision-making

- National, regional and international youth strategies for sustainable development (youth-government).

Employment and poverty reduction

- Internship and apprenticeship programs (sustainable business council-youth)

Sustainable production and consumption

- Creation of advertising free zones (local authorities, NGOs and youth organizations)
- Sustainable agriculture and rural development (youth-farmers)

Health

- Sexual health education (local and national governments, NGOs and youth organizations)

Polling your positions

Dear delegates, we want to know what you are thinking? Let us know! Drop off your answers in the SDIN box, Nusantara Room 3. Results in tomorrow's issue.

By 2015 we want to achieve:

- A 50% reduction in the lack of access to sanitation
- A 10% increase in the use of renewable energy forms
- Are you trying to trick me to committing to a target?

Did you understand the above questions?

- Yes, and am ashamed to admit it.
- No, I was not aware that we were here to discuss these things, where's the beach?

We will support binding rules to achieve Corporate Accountability:

- Yes, sign me on...
- No, **they** won't let me (don't worry we expected your answer)

RESULTS YESTERDAY'S POLL

What is it about this place?

You answered, and now we share the results of our tabulations. (Thank you to the three people that answered, you deduce from what sector they were Non or Gov)

Are you getting a headache from the negative vibes in the BICC???

- Yes very much : 33.33 %
- Absolutely : 33.33 %
- No doubt about it :33.33 %

Are you upset about the prices of food in the delegate's lounge?

\$7.50US is perfectly acceptable for coffee and a bad sandwich! : 100 % (must have been funded)

This issue should be included in the chairman's text : 0%

Did security let you use the electric up-escalators?

Yes when I flashed my delegate pass! : 0%

It only bothers me because I know the money will end up with Sheraton shareholders in North America : 0%

How are you coping with the airco inside/ humid tropics outside?

No and they made me walk around the building in 40°C as well.... : 100%

My perspiration freezes : 50%

I have frostbite and a suntan at the same time : 50%

(Continued from page 3)

land, water and common property resources.

Emil Salim opens work-shop

Building alliances on access to land is at the heart of this initiative. To learn more (wssd.coalition@ifad.org) you are encouraged to attend the PrepCom IV side event on this subject at 1815h on Friday 31 May 2002 in Conference

Room 2 of the Bali Convention Centre. The session will be opened by Chairman Emil Salim and involve speakers from the Indonesia Peoples Forum, Governments, IFAD, the Popular Coalition, Women's organisations, Indigenous Leaders and Civil Society from South Africa.

"The reason why the world is becoming a living hell, is that so many are trying to turn it into a paradise." — Holderlin, German poet (1770-1843)



For publication of your articles in this newsletter, please submit your text before 3 pm to one of the SDIN facilitating Organisations' staff.

SDIN Facilitating organisations:
ANPED, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability
ELCI, Environment Liaison Service International
Third World Network

Or send an e-mail to:
SDIntakingissue@hotmail.com
Or
Takingissue@sdissues.net

Deadline daily at 3 pm

Editors reserve the right to refuse articles or edit for size and spelling.

We're on the Web:
www.sdissues.net

What is the Sustainable Development Issues Network (SDIN)?

The Sustainable Development Issues Network for 2002 is a collaborative effort among civil society networks and non-governmental issue caucuses. SDIN aims to improve communications and access to information on sustainable development issues, and improve communications among NGOs engaging in the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The Issues Network is not meant to compete with or replace the networking and organizing efforts of other NGO bodies, but to assist and promote the efforts of civil society networks working on sustainable development issues. In this sense, SDIN is not another "network" *per se* but hopefully a useful tool of NGO networks.

Calendar of NGO Events Today

Time	Event	Venue
8-9:00	Ecumenical Team Meeting	N3
9-10:00	SDIN Morning Meeting	N3
10-11:00	Peace Caucus	N3
10-11:00	Women Caucus	N2
11-12:00	Youth Caucus	N3
11-12:00	Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Caucus	N2
12-13:00	Energy and Climate Caucus	N3
12-13:00	Intern'l Taskforce on Legal and Institutional Matters	N2
13-14:00		N3
13-14:00		N2
14-15:00		N3
15-14:00	Asia Caucus	N3
15-16:00	Latin America Caucus	N2
16-17:00		N3
16-17:00	Indigenous Peoples Caucus	N2
17-18:00	Corporate Accountability Caucus	N3
17-18:00	Human Rights, Env. And Sust. Development Caucus	N2
18-19:00	Trade Unions Meeting	N3
18-19:00		N2

The WSSD Chairman's text glossary

...or the Layman's guide to the use of diplomatic language

Section 1

How to make language non-committing.

2) Insert 'Promote'. The word promote is probably the most powerful word to steer away from strong decisions, especially if you do not specify how this encouragement is to take place. Should we 'promote tax reform' or should we 'implement tax reform'. Delegates usually prefer to promote.

Readers that paid attention, will have seen the remarkable similarity between the words encourage (see issue 1) and promote. We would like to promote the encouragement of delegates to read texts they once agreed again, so that we don't have to repeat ourselves endlessly

The Motto for our delegates:

"I used to be indecisive, but now I am not so sure"

N3 = Nusaterra 3
N2 = Nusaterra 2

Times and locations subject to change