



# Taking Issue

*The Sustainable Development  
Issues Network*

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A daily publication of the Sustainable Development Issues Network (SDIN) at the Eleventh Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development.

## The Road Ahead Mapping the future of the CSD

By Chee Yoke Ling, Third World Network

**T**he integrative role of the CSD is of primary importance. The aims of the CSD as a functional commission of ECOSOC remain valid and were reiterated in the WSSD: to review the implementation of sustainable development, identify policy gaps and constraints in implementation, and provide a forum to share good/best practices within an overarching framework of integrating the three pillars. While the SG's paper rightly states that sectoral issues of natural resources management are dealt with under separate tracks and institutions, as are financial and trade issues, the missing and needed dimension is integration within the UN framework and principles of sustainable development.

Making the CSD effective in integration will enable ECOSOC to strengthen its own role as the central mechanism for system-wide coordination and for integrated and coordinated conference follow-up and implementation. Then at the ECOSOC level, the interaction with the international financial institutions and the WTO can be also enhanced, within the UN framework. This is in line with the discussion on ECOSOC's role that is ongoing in the GA Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Integrated and Coordinated Implementation of and Follow-up to the Outcomes of the Major UN Conferences and Summits in the Economic and Social Fields (WG on Follow-up). That is the logic of a functional commission.

**The Joint Programme on Implementation (JPOI) is about implementation.** Many substantive work programmes have been agreed and adopted by the CSD since its inception. To a considerable extent these have been coordinated with the work programmes under the various multilateral environment agreements (MEAs). The JPOI drew in the Monterrey Consensus and to some degree attempted to ensure that the WTO agenda is coherent with (and does not undermine) the UN's sustainable development agenda. It follows logically that the future programme of work of the CSD should be about the means of implementation as set out in the 10 chapters of the JPOI. As reaffirmed in the JPOI, this would include the various MEAs and their respective work programmes.

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

**Meetings will be held in Conference Room 1 from 9:00-10:00, Tuesday April 29 and Wednesday April 30.**

**Thereafter, the venue will change to Conference Room 6, 9:00-10:00**

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



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### **Future organisation and work methods of the CSD**

The CSD as a global forum should focus on the means of implementation. The regional/subregional mechanisms (including regional commissions of the UN) can identify the cluster of sectoral issues that are a priority for countries that share common concerns and needs. The regional process identifies the means of implementation gaps and needs, and these are fed to the CSD for review. There are many sound annual decisions adopted by the CSD, while the various experts' reports (e.g. on finance) provide creative proposals.

### **Millennium Development Goals:**

Poverty eradication is more urgent than ever as a global theme, and the MDGs are a point of departure, not arrival.

### **Need for data and analysis to enhance the review work of the CSD.**

The two-year review/policy cycle can be effective only if reporting by national governments and other institutions (IFIs, WTO, MEA secretariats, UN specialised agencies, regional commissions) are streamlined and the information provided includes trends, achievement, gaps and constraints in implementation. A single SG's report is not sufficient given the breadth and depth of work needed. Thus the identification of a number of information/analytical papers in CSD 11 would be useful. The papers can be coordinated by the secretariat with inputs from various agencies and stakeholders. They may also be specific papers provided by specific agencies in the UN system where specialised information is required. This mechanism produced useful background papers for the CSD in the early years of its work.

A paper on technology, for example, would be very useful for the CSD. This should include:

- Developing endogenous technology (supporting research and development in developing countries);
- Building or strengthening capacity for technology assessment that is comprehensive, taking into account the economic, social, environmental, health and safety dimensions (e.g. CSD 1 had a work programme on technology that was quite good but was never implemented);
- Identifying the trends in technology transfer as well as the obstacles (such as intellectual property rights, and the lack of capacity to absorb technologies where these are available and accessible);

- Developing the means to monitor emerging and new technologies;
- Cooperating with other processes that are addressing technology development, assessment and transfer (such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the UNFCCC Working Group on technology, independent scientific institutions, etc.)

***Above all, the CSD needs political will.*** The lack of political will to meet commitments, especially among major developed countries, is the key obstacle to making sustainable development a reality and building a truly functioning CSD. This is a fact that was acknowledged at the WSSD. A future for sustainable development and the CSD will only exist if political will kicks in.

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## **Cash Cows**

The United Nations has finally discovered a truly positive contribution that civil society can make to its programme of work. The Johannesburg Summit developed the "Partnership". Prior CSD sessions developed the multi-stakeholder roundtable, to elicit direct policy input from the major groups. Now the UN seems to have discovered that non-governmental organisations can also be lucrative cash cows: those NGOs organising side-events or even strategy meetings are being presented with a very substantial cash bill for the use of UN facilities.

Everyone recognises that some form of financial remuneration is necessary for services rendered (such as overhead projectors, sound-engineers, translators, extra security, and overtime for cleaners). But these costs should not become prohibitive. One side-event, without any services, now costs US\$350. The SDIN groups are paying \$225 per day for the use of a conference room with no lights or sound-system. Are we paying for wear and tear on carpets?

This is ludicrous. With numerous side events each day for these 10 days, the UN is making big bucks, more than many commercial venues. Is the UN now externalising its budgetary inefficiencies onto civil society groups?

If this continues, and it should not, the next CSD will have far fewer side-events and NGO meetings, and these will be held by the wealthy few. Are these the only groups that our governments want to participate?



# Speaking from the Heart

Ministers discuss poverty, water and ways forward By Violet Matiru

The Chair of the Interactive Dialogues on the Ministerial Segment on Poverty Eradication, Vali Moosa, started yesterday afternoon's session by encouraging the ministers to speak from their hearts, and limit their reading of 'statements' that had been prepared by speechwriters. In the dialogue that ensued, in fact there was little reading of prepared statements, and some good points made "off the cuff", which were more interesting.

There was an appreciation of the magnitude of the problem of eradicating poverty, especially due to its many root causes. The Secretary-General of WSSD pointed out that in order to achieve the targets that governments committed to through the Millennium Development Goals, to improve the living conditions and remedy the global imbalances by 2015, we should be rescuing 100,000 people every day from their conditions of absolute poverty and providing 200,000 people daily with access to clean water and sanitation. Clearly, this can only be done if national capacities are strengthened. Poverty eradication programmes alone will not achieve these goals.

It was highlighted that in the past, poverty eradication efforts were bedeviled by the belief that there is a conflict between sustainable development and environmental conservation. In later years, all stakeholders have realised that there is really no conflict between the two. Instead, there is a cyclical linkage, in that environmental degradation results in increased poverty, and vice-versa.

The major challenge lies in the approaches towards poverty eradication. Some proposals centered

around the need to base these approaches on a common set of values. Solidarity and improved communication between the rich and the poor to address poverty eradication were suggested as being some key elements for success.

Poverty eradication should be guided by the goals and priorities of individual countries, which would then form the basis for developing a coherent international policy. This was illustrated by ministerial contributions on the issue of water. The Minister from Australia informed the meeting that their national experiences, coming from the driest continent in the world, highlight the important role governance plays in water management. Developing agreements across state boundaries on water can be challenging, requiring a catchment approach. Landowners also require entitlement to water resources, in order to create an incentive for them to manage water resources more efficiently.

The delegate from South Africa clarified that the Third World Water Forum in Kyoto did not endorse the privatisation of water as the only option for promoting sustainable water management. Instead, Kyoto proposed that a broad range of partnership arrangements should be considered, ranging from the total population of users to the private sector. The emphasis should be in promoting good governance at all levels, from regions down to households. The management of water should be done as close to the users as possible and involve an iterative process that combines both top-to-bottom and bottom-up approaches.

Other challenges that were identified in achieving sustainable development included practical questions, such as who will be involved in different aspects of poverty eradication programmes, how responsibilities will be shared, and where

the resources will come from. There were brief discussions about the Global Poverty Fund and the Solidarity Fund. UNDP is in the process of preparing proposals on the Solidarity Fund. The trade unions representative pointed to the need for job creation, so that communities are not totally dependent on governments to provide them with basic goods and services. Trade unions have demonstrated innovative approaches for financing poverty eradication projects through job creation through workers donating a portion of their salaries towards such programmes.

Priorities and strategies for poverty eradication tend to be country- and region-specific. While some countries need to develop their water resources, such as rivers, for hydro-electric power generation and fisheries, the indigenous peoples' felt that the construction of large dams in culturally insensitive ways could result in further marginalisation, especially through re-settlement programmes that would force indigenous peoples into cities, resulting in the loss of their cultural values and social structures. Partnerships with the private sector must be carefully considered, especially in countries where millions of citizens cannot afford to pay for water.

**Suggested future roles for the CSD**  
Some recommended roles for the CSD included:

- to monitor the political will of governments to deliver on their commitment towards the achievement of targets set for sustainable development;
- to facilitate the sharing of information and experiences among stakeholders on good governance structures on water and other aspects of sustainable development; and
- to facilitate the development of a coherent international policy position on sustainable development.



To publish 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 Centre International  
TWN, Third World Network

Or send an e-mail to:  
barbarag@elci.org

Deadline daily at 3pm

Editors reserve the right to refuse articles or edit for length and clarity.

**We're on the Web:**

**www.sdissues.net**

### What is the Sustainable Development Issues Network (SDIN)?

The Sustainable Development Issues Network 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 follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

The Issues Network is not meant to compete with or replace the networking and organising 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 is hopefully a useful tool of NGO networks.

## Meeting Announcements

**SDIN morning meetings**, see first page

### SDIN Issue Caucus Coordination Meetings:

Monday, 28 April  
7 - 8 pm

Wednesday, 30 April  
7 - 8 pm

Thursday, 1 May  
6 - 7 pm

Monday, 5 May  
6 - 7 pm

Wednesday, 7 May  
6 - 7 pm

Thursday, 8 May  
6 - 7 pm

Conference Room D

**Energy caucus**, see below left

### Human Rights and Sustainable Development caucus

Tuesdays and Thursdays,  
1:00 pm

Conference room D

### Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Caucus

Tuesday and Thursday,  
3:00 pm

Conference Room D  
Monday May 5, 1:00  
Conference Room D

### Energy Caucus News

Energy caucus meetings for CSD11 are as follows:

- Wednesday, 30 April, 1-2 pm
- Friday, 2 May, 12-1 pm
- Monday, 5 May, 3-4 pm
- Wednesday, 7 May, 1-2 pm
- Friday, 9 May, 1-2 pm

All meetings in UN Conference Room D.

#### PERMANENT SECRETARIAT

GRACE (Global Resource Action Center for the Environment) has graciously agreed to serve as the new "permanent" secretariat of the Caucus. Please note the new address for the Caucus:

NGO Energy Caucus, GRACE  
215 Lexington Avenue, 10th Floor

New York, NY 10016 (USA)

#### WEBSITE

Our website from the WSSD period is still active and being kindly maintained by GRACE: [www.energywssd.org](http://www.energywssd.org)

However, we would like to establish a new Energy Caucus website, and are looking for volunteers to design the new site. Please let us know if you can help on this project. We would like a new site up before the end of CSD 11.

#### ELECTIONS FOR NEW COORDINATORS/CO-CHAIRS

Nominations for new coordinators or co-chairs of the Energy Caucus will take place at the Caucus meeting on Friday, 2 May, and elections will take place at the meeting on Monday, 5 May.