



A Daily publication of the Sustainable Development Issues Network (SDIN)
Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-13) Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting

IN THIS ISSUE

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Daily Meeting schedule

9.00 - 10.00 AM Strategy Session

10.00 - 11.00 AM Fresh Water Caucus

5.00 - 6.00 PM Fresh Water Caucus

6.30 - 8.30 PM Indigenous Peoples

All meetings in Conference Room C

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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 are held in Conference Room B at the United Nations Building.

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

Taking Issue is published with financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)

NGO statement negotiated by more than 1000 NGOs world-wide.

Containing a will to meet their responsibilities for practical commitments, the NGO statement is based on sound analysis, with necessary policy statements.

1000 NGOs involved in the statement

Some 30 NGOs met during Sunday to fine-tune the NGO statement to be presented to CSD 13 Monday afternoon. A decision was taken at the outset of the meeting to uphold the major content of the NGO statement having been negotiated earlier in November 2004. Some 9 global NGO network and more than 30 national networks from all continents totalling a possible 1000 Non Governmental Organisations made input into the statement.

Policy and commitments at odds

Several governments had criticised many of the major groups' statements, including the one from the NGOs for not being action oriented, and for having been written like a 'normal' major group statement. This is a reformed and New CSD and according to the modalities drawn up at CSD 11, the second year statements having been based on the outcome of the review session, should contain specific commitments to action. Governments obviously had a feeling this was not what the major groups had done. The NGOs and other major groups however, referred back to earlier years and pointed out that text coming from major groups did not always end up in official texts. Thus both their analysis and suggestions for action were often weakened or totally buried by the official negotiations.

NGOs are practically oriented

NGOs were quick to emphasise their role as being out in the field working practically on

solving problems and developing projects. They also emphasised that as long as major obstacles and constraints remained, they would continue to point to these problems and continue to make the policy statements. While going through the NGO document, the NGOs discovered that one major sentence had failed to appear in the final official NGO statement being distributed through the UN system: "that the human rights to adequate, affordable water, housing and sanitation are not respected." The new and refined NGO statement which Taking Issue presents in its entirety, made sure this sentence was being included.

This CSD heralds a new era

More than 230 NGOs have pre-registered for this CSD session, and even though only a handful showed up for Sunday's session, the commitment of the NGOs were strongly felt in Sunday's work. And with many new entry points into the process available for the major groups this time around, this Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting might prove just what is need on the sustainability scene: a renewed commitment to action. And let it be known – whereas large population groups often have felt that governments have moved at a slow pace, often also in the wrong direction, NGOs have always been actively pushing for concrete and action oriented programmes. And if policy and analysis will be right, both governments and NGOs may now proceed in the right direction. We will perhaps see the direction after this IPM.

- jgs

NGO Statement

The NGO major group reaffirms that NGOs are working with communities all over the world who are successfully managing their own resources, and actions on water sanitation and habitat. **We are willing and able to do more, but our commitment requires action and support by governments.**

Agendas and action programmes on water, sanitation and human settlements have been accepted in various international forums. In practice, however...:

- 1 The human rights to adequate, affordable water, housing and sanitation are not respected
- 2 Participation although accepted is not adequately implemented
- 3 Fragmentation of responsibilities between government agencies is very problematic
- 4 Prioritisation for the poor rarely occurs
- 5 Impacts on the environment are not considered
- 6 Over consumption of resources continue to be problematic
- 7 IWRM plans are missing in most countries
- 8 There is insufficient consideration of cultural diversity and gender;
- 9 Objectives don't link to local financing structures and capacities;

Thus NGOs prioritise the following actions:

Safe, affordable, sufficient housing and water are recognized human rights under international law. We will therefore strongly support, within our means, that these principles, including inter alia, Rio Principle 10, are recognized and incorporated into national laws and regulations, backed by measurable implementation plans, including for the millions of people living in unplanned settlements.

An integrated sector wide approach, involving all relevant ministries and stakeholders, needs to be the basis for planning and implementation. Considering the lack of progress on the 2005 IWRM target, **CSD 13 should agree to a common framework for drafting and implementation of IWRM and water efficiency plans, that should:**

- 1 Ensure a fair and equitable allocation of water.
- 2 Adopt an ecosystem and river basin approach to achieve full scale sustainable water resource management.
- 3 Ensure integration of sanitation.
- 4 Evaluate the allocation of water to agricultural production and put in place incentives to improve water use efficiency.
- 5 Incorporate environmental impact assessment and social economic gender cultural impact assessment as standard policy and practice.

On the financing gap..... all governments must significantly increase their political and financial commitment to the sector taking a poverty eradication and rights-based approach

Mobilising resources for long-term investment in the sector will require actions at all levels, but investments must always respect the needs and desires of local users. Don't make them pay for a service they can't afford or need.

Developed country governments should commit during 2005 to reverse declining levels of ODA to the sector and focus on countries most in need, particularly sub Saharan Africa. They should also agree on a concrete timetable to implement the Monterrey consensus and coordinate their multilateral and bilateral programmes working on the same target group, and/or region.

We strongly support the initiative of the UK government as presidency of the G8 to cancel all debts of poor countries at the 2005 G8 summit and to use debt swaps through endowment funds to finance the MDGs, particularly MDG 7.

Governments should prioritise the needs of the poorest in national budgets, set up tariff structures for water use, including rising block tariffs for high consumers of water, but without preventing poor people's access to affordable water and sanitation. "In kind" contribution by communities and NGOs is already widely in practice, and now must be matched by governments.

Private sector participation is not in itself the solution to the financial gap and must never be imposed as a condition of grants or loans. Water is a public good, therefore regulation of and control over water must always remain with the public sector. Water must never be traded as a commodity.

Decentralization is an important principle for water management, but must include the decentralization of fiscal powers to local authorities.

The goals of CSD13 can only be delivered by governance structures that allow local communities and marginalized people to participate as equal partners with women, farmers, trade unions, business, municipalities, in a multi-stakeholder framework where different interests and responsibilities are acknowledged from the outset.

We need to strengthen institutional capacities that can result in changing behaviour, optimal use of traditional knowledge and technologies from the local level, that promote self reliance. Major groups have the capabilities to bring this about.

Monitoring and reporting should always distinguish between impacts according to gender, ethnicity and cultures.

Regarding human settlements, we must emphasize that MDG Target 11 of reducing the number of slum dwellers by 100 million is overshadowed by the fact that the number of slum dwellers will actually increase by five times that number over the same period. The CSD process should address the root causes of rural/urban migration as well as the destruction of human habitat caused by military operations, political violence, forced evictions and related criminal acts.

Sanitation and hygiene promotion is lagging behind and a true commitment is required by governments such as is happening in Senegal and Bangladesh. There are many good examples to be adopted including city wide sanitation strategies, eco sanitation, social marketing of hygiene practices. This is an area that requires a cultural and gender sensitive approach: coordination between local authorities NGOs and community groups.

Mr Chairman, we are committed to bringing all this about. It would be an utter shame if something so "utterly affordable" is left unfulfilled in our lifetimes.



NGO's hard at work during Sunday's session

Table 1: Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting Organization of Work

	Monday 28 February	Tuesday 1 March	Wednesday 2 March	Thursday 3 March	Friday 4 March
AM		Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions	
10:00 - 1:00	Plenary • Chair's Introduction • Regional Commissions • Introduction of SGs Reports • Intersessional meeting reports	Conference Room 3 Water Sanitation	Conference Room 3 Water Human Settlements	Conference Room 3 Human Settlements Water/Sanitation	Plenary 10:00 – 12:00 • Interactive discussion to consolidate policy options and possible actions related to the three themes. • Final statements
PM		Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions	Parallel sessions	
3:00- 5:00	Continued • Intersessional meeting reports cont'd. • Major Groups	Conference Room 3 Water Sanitation	Conference Room 3 Sanitation Human Settlements	Conference Room 3 Water, sanitation and human settlements: interlinkages and cross-cutting issues	Plenary 3:30 pm Distribute Chair's Text
5:00- 6:00	Plenary Water and Sanitation Panel Introduction and Interactive Discussion	Plenary Human Settlements Panel Introduction and Interactive Discussion			Plenary • Introduce Chair's text and invite factual comments • adoption of the report of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting

To publish articles in this newsletter, please submit your text before 5.00 p.m. to one of the SDIN facilitating organisations' staff.

SDIN Facilitating Organisations:

ANPED, The Northern Alliance for Sustainability, TWN, Third World Network, ELCI, Environment Liaison Centre International
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