



Taking Issue

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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.

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WHAT CHOICES CSD?

Chernobyl. 1,4 billion people without electricity 30 years from now. Powerful storms. Raging hurricanes. Thawing Polar ice caps. It's not too late to make changes yet. But it will be soon.

This CSD Review Session will have to make a number of difficult, but hopefully brave decisions. When doing so, facts must be weighed in. To help participants, those from countries delegations, the intergovernmental systems and the major groups, we would like to present just a few of the facts behind these choices.

We all need energy that is affordable, clean, safe and sustainable. But:

Facts:

300 times more radioactive fallout than the atomic bomb of Hiroshima was released almost to the day 20 years ago, on April 26, 1986, when the world suffered the most dramatic nuclear explosion in its history. More than 30 people were immediately killed, close to 340 000 evacuated and resettled in the immediate aftermath of the Chernobyl disaster. Greenpeace has estimated that by 2056, an approximate 20 000 people may have died in Belarus only as a consequence of radiation. The WHO and IAEA estimate that more than 6,6 million people in the region around Chernobyl were exposed to high levels of radiation. Many will call nuclear energy the only clean and sustainable alternative today. Michael Gorbachov stated in a recently

published article that the Chernobyl accident was the start of the downfall of Russia.

Facts:

Josué Dioné, director at the Sustainable Development Division, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia stated during the CSD African Regional Implementation Meeting that "Only 24% of the population in this region (Africa) had access to electricity in 2002, compared to 94% for North Africa and an average of 66% for all developing countries. Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for 46% of the estimated 1.4 billion people without electricity in developing countries. And projections of the International Energy Agency (IEA) indicate that, by 2030, electrification rates will approach 100% for the Middle East, North Africa, East Asia and Latin America, while



half the population of sub-Saharan Africa will still be without electricity.”

Facts:

The Kyoto Protocol entered into legal force on Feb 16 2005. The treaty was ratified by more than 140 countries. Concentration of carbon dioxide now stands at 372 parts per million, higher than at any time in at least the past 420,000 years.

Facts:

Professor Kerry Emanuel, of the atmospheric, oceans and climate research department at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, has studied data from all the severe storms - or tropical cyclones - over the past 30 years.

He says they have been more intense and longer in duration, and have generated far more power, than computer models had predicted. Prof Emanuel, an acknowledged world expert on the thermodynamics of tropical cyclone research, told the Guardian

(article August 26, 2005) he believed the power of the storms could also effect ocean currents - particularly the Gulf Stream, which sends warm water northwards and keeps Europe’s climate milder than it otherwise would be. Prof Emanuel’s view is that at least part of this increase in ocean storms is caused by man-made climate change.

Facts:

Researchers who returned from Western Siberia in August 2005 found that an area of permafrost spanning a million square kilometres - the size of France and Germany combined - has started to melt for the first time since it formed 11,000 years ago at the end of the last ice age.

The area, which covers the entire sub-Arctic region of western Siberia, is the world’s largest frozen peat bog and scientists fear that as it thaws, it will release billions of tonnes of methane, a greenhouse gas 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide, into the atmosphere.

It is a scenario climate scientists have feared since first identifying “tipping points” - delicate thresholds where a slight rise in the Earth’s temperature can cause a dramatic change in the environment that itself triggers a far greater increase in global temperatures.

We all know this.

The tendencies in the international debate has been to say, we all know these facts and have more. Still, we need energy, we need development, we need to make all people happy and content. We agree, we know this fully well. The question remains to be answered though – with all the facts we have gathered, and with the available technology, can we not make this world both safe and stable and have content and happy people living in sustainable surroundings at the same time?

Perhaps we will know more how the world thinks politically about this at the end of CSD in two weeks ...

...jgs

‘THE FUTURE IS RENEWABLE’

As the Johannesburg World Summit for Sustainable Development failed to develop a global action plan to halt climate change, and there were general difficulties in climate negotiations, the network CURES – Citizens United for Renewable Energy and Sustainability – was set up. The network, which by now has over 240 member organizations, calls for ambitious programmes to promote renewable energies. Below follows six bullet points put together by Jürgen Maier of CURES. They will form a basis for a possible NGO intervention during the multi stakeholder discussions on Wednesday May 3rd:

Bullet points for an NGO Intervention at the Multi Stakeholders Discussions (MSD)

- The first CSD year, which focuses on reviews, is crucial to gain knowledge and build new consensus on new and innovative solutions. We believe that this meeting must be a starting point for fruitful reviews.
- The price escalation for fossil fuels has become a major development obstacle for the vast majority of countries that have to import most, if not all of their fossil fuels. The

present energy system is not only environmentally unsustainable, but also economically. The present energy system, with its spiralling prices for fossil energy, is unable to supply the modern energy services that the 1.6 billion people currently lacking them need, as the UNEP Environment Ministers’ Forum in February has recognized.

- The age of cheap oil is forever gone. When Africa is losing now in one year more money from the oil price escalation than it gets from ODA, we cannot pretend any longer that access to fossil fuels is a prerequisite for industrial development. Industrial development will have to be based on sustainable energy.
- The Multilateral Development Banks still channel the vast majority of their energy funds into traditional, large-scale fossil fuel extraction projects, despite the recommendation of the World Bank’s Extractive Industries Review in 2004 to quickly phase that funding out. We urgently need massive support for an energy transition to clean, renewable energies and energy efficiency and call on governments to make clear commitments to redirect these funds. In many countries, MDB lending has been a

driver for unsustainable hydro and for large increases in CO2 emissions as well as large external debt. The very governments that talk about sustainable energy in the CSD fund unsustainable energy policies in the International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

- This CSD cycle must pave the way for action programmes to implement the global transformation of energy systems based on new and ambitious policies to increase the share of renewables and energy efficiency. Too many times a handful of obstructive governments have prevented such decisions in UN for a sustainable energy future and have undermined the climate convention and Kyoto Protocol. CSD 14 and 15 must not again become hostage to these obstructive governments.
- It is clear that those countries pioneering the inevitable transformation of the global energy system will enjoy the early benefits of this transformation such as job generation, market opportunities, reduced emissions and greater energy self-reliance.

For more information check out: www.cures-network.org

Nuclear Energy is NO Alternative

**As memories fade, nuclear energy is back in vogue.
But the arguments against it still hold true.**

"If you worry about climate change then there is no other economically or environmentally stable alternative to nuclear power". Mikko Elo, MP from Finland. (BBC News, 21 October 2005)

Following the logic of the nuclear energy lobby one can only become convinced that nuclear reactors are the choice of the moment: cleaner than fossil fuels, safer than ever, and readily available for our ever energy-hungry economies. Nuclear reactors are just - in one word - inevitable.

Nuclear Renaissance Looms

This logic seems to be embraced by many governments today, as we scan future plans for energy supply in different countries: India and China hope to support their growing economies with nuclear energy. For the Ukraine and Belarus, new nuclear power stations promise to reduce dependency on Russian oil. Russia itself has four new reactors under construction and many more in the pipeline. It recently promoted itself as a champion for nuclear waste treatment and disposal, imports from Western Europe welcome. European countries might make use of this offer in future, as nuclear thinking becomes popular with their governments again. Finland is building the first new reactor in Western Europe since the beginning of the nineties. In Italy and Britain, and even in the Netherlands, expanding the nuclear power base is debated as an option. France, which gets 80 % of its electricity from nuclear reactors, never seriously considered to turn back from its nuclear path since the 1970s.

Memories of disaster fade

The Chernobyl catastrophe in 1986 was one of the events which precariously demonstrated the risks and dangers connected with atomic power. Consumers became conscious of the proven and potential risks and many governments decided to curb the expansion of nuclear

energy. In the Ukraine a moratorium on nuclear construction for four years was imposed after the disaster. However, in 2004 the Ukraine completed the construction of two new reactors and it hatches plans for 11 more by 2030 (BBC News, 26 April 2006). And as the list above shows they are not alone in their ambition.

But all wishful thinking and planning cannot neglect the fact that the arguments against nuclear power are as valid as they were twenty years ago.

Arguments for change

Despite industry's claims, safe nuclear power is a myth, Greenpeace insists (International Herald Tribune, 15-16 April, 2006). The dangers are no less than 30 years ago, and the rise of terrorism has to be added to the threats. There is no answer to the question of nuclear waste, the "solution" right now is to store it for several thousand years in a more or less secured dump until its radioactivity decreases to a level deemed safe.

Nuclear energy is also far from economical. Once the costs for development, construction, waste disposal and decommissioning are included, nuclear power is extremely expensive and heavily dependent on subsidies

Materials to produce nuclear energy are not abundant, uranium resources worldwide will only last a couple of decades. As for gas and oil today, access to nuclear resources will become more costly in future and will be a potential source of conflict.

Positive energy is possible

We can make incredible gains by saving energy. Energy efficiency measures will go a long way to limit CO2 emissions, and should be in the foreground of energy policy today.

Subsidies and investment should be directed towards renewable energies, like wind and hydropower, solar power and the sustainable production of biomass. These techniques will also create knowledge-oriented jobs for future generations. Decentralized and small-scale solutions will support environmental consciousness and local ownership.

Sweden and Germany are on the way to phase out nuclear energy production. As Mr. Trittin from the German Green Party points out *"We will reach our Kyoto targets without having to become further entangled in the risks and burdens of nuclear power"*. (BBC News, 21 October 2005)

...claudia



ENVIRONMENT UNDER MICROSCOPE AS MAJOR UN REFORM LOOMS

The United Nations is currently in the midst of a major shake-up of the whole environment and development area, something that will determine institutional arrangements and funding flows for the foreseeable future.



Last year's World Summit - where it first appeared that environment was at risk of almost disappearing off the international agenda - produced a number of proposals for reform now filtering through the UN system.

The outcome of these sweeping reforms will change the way NGOs work, international environment and development priorities and operations, the external programs we deal with, and the priorities and policies for funding institutions or donor governments.

The proposals:

On the table at the moment are a number of radical proposals, some pre-Rio in their approach. One could force all UN development bodies, all donor funding, including the GEF, and all operational environment activities to be swallowed into one super development agency. Under this model, UN environment policy setting would sit outside, weak politically and vulnerable to accusations of talk fest only.

Another is the so called 'ones' approach where multiple UN agencies with multiple front doors in a country are pushed back, with the UN fronted by one coordinator, one funding amount, one program decision making voice. A country would go to the

coordinator, a decision about what services were needed would be made, and implementation using varying UN bodies would be parcelled out by the coordinator.

Another proposal is to collapse 38 UN bodies down to three. With some donor countries pushing strongly for reform, G77 countries are fighting to keep some of their hard fought for UN bodies such as UNCTAD, UNIFEM, UNIDO. The outcome could include various options or short, medium and long-term models.

Proposals have also been put forward to bring donor institutions and international funding bodies into line with the new system.

What are the reform processes?

First, ECOSOC, the UN's peak council in the area of development and environment, is being reformed - a resolution for the General Assembly setting out a new agreed model is expected within weeks. Second, there is the related effort under a Secretary General's mandate to seek what is know as System Wide Coherence across UN processes including those in the environment, humanitarian and development area - at this stage the major focus is development. And thirdly, there is now a serious proposal being mounted under an informal panel on International Environmental Governance to establish a UN Environment Organisation, an admission the current system isn't working which many players believe could elevate environment from its current programme to some sort of higher agency level. While this proposal appeared, then floundered during the Johannesburg WSSD summit, it has recently been revived by the EU, some say in return for a climate deal at the G8 summit in Gleneagles last year. However a strong push through the UNEP Ministerial meeting in

Dubai in February has slowed, with countries focussing on the outcome of the System Wide Coherence panel due to report in September to the GA.

The reform we had to have?

Developing countries report they don't have the capacity, money or the technology to implement commitments, despite heavy expectations. They report a plethora of UN agencies domestically; these are competing for funding and resources and, too often, trying to fix the same problems. The Systemwide Coherence taskforce is calling for case studies and examples of UN processes which aren't working, and they are pouring in. While mostly focussed on development so far, it is clear these parallel processes, paralysed processes or unfair and unworkable processes, have meant implementation of Multilateral Environment Agreements or Millennium Development Goals are stagnating. The three taskforces will attempt to address these problems - but no-one knows what the outcome will be. Resolutions on each were set to go to the UN General Assembly in September but insiders believe it could take longer.

Member countries and civil society hunt for synergies or new frameworks in UN environment and development management. They also look for new and better ways to meet environment and development targets. Still some environment NGOs will be calling on countries and management agencies to approach these reform processes from a context which pushes sustainable development rather than just development, which builds on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, which maximizes the potential of financing mechanisms to support the environment, which integrates environment and development work domestically, regionally and globally and which assists countries to have the capacity to meet environmental treaty obligations.

'Green gap' fears alarm conservationists

Fears of a widening green gulf between two similar processes have surfaced after the first two weeks of informal consultations on UN environment reform.

The World Summit 2005 negotiations produced a set of major reform proposals. One, a General Assembly process, relates to environmental governance, the informal consultations on section 169 of the outcome document, and is co-chaired by Switzerland and Mexico.

Its sibling is a reform process on System Wide Coherence (SWC), commissioned by the UN Secretary General. Front of house, this somnolent sounding name is code for a major shake up of the development, environment and humanitarian arms of the UN. It will be executed with the backing of a high level advisory panel of 15 including Prime Ministers, an ex President and other assorted luminaries.

Overlapping

Fearing a G77 revolt against any attempt to propel UNEP too fast towards a UNEO (UN Environment Organisation), the EU had slowed down this new push, which had gained momentum in the UNEP Ministerial Council in February in Dubai. Initially, in the first 169 hearing on April 19th, country missions were asked merely to state problems with the existing UN environment system, something they enthusiastically did.

However, they also pointed to an overlap between the 169 and SWC processes, saying it was confusing. Both appeared set to examine coherence in environmental work through the UN system and both were expected to finish by the end of General Assembly 60 in September.

Hearing this, director of the System Wide Coherence panel, Adnan Amin addressed the meeting tugging the processes apart with a clarification statement. He pointed out the 169 consultations were a General Assembly process, and the SWC was an expert outsider's report to the Secretary General. He noted there would be the odd informal link made to share information.

And then the environment got lost...

It wasn't announced, but behind the scenes a minor 're-profiling' of the SWC emphasis had also taken place after bow waves from the first high level panel meeting in March.

Instead of an examination of each area of the UN listed in the terms of reference, it is understood both G77 and donor countries insisted the panel spend the majority of their time on the development section, analysing environment and humanitarian issues only where they cross development, and then mainly in an operational sense.

In the corridors behind the 169 consultations by week 2 on April 25, it was clear a major shift had happened in country thinking. Now they were saying the environment consultations could take a few years, probably being rolled over by resolution through the next assembly, GA 61. A number of countries were saying privately they would hold fire on models, ideas, solutions and intensive work on the 169 environment consultations while they waited for a signal on the importance of the environment work and solutions which they expected would be suggested by the high level panel of the SWC.

"You won't find this information on the web. The panel are being highly discreet, intending to publish very little."

However, countries involved closely with the high level panel were warning others to reduce their expectations for a set of comprehensive environment solutions as the panel would only be looking at the operational side of UN environment work where it crossed the development work.

A green gap

Fears of a green gap have surfaced, where one outcome could be a frenzy of work sorting out the development arm of the UN, while an examination of the totality of environment work and environment country needs languish somewhere between the two processes.

So far the environment hearings have thrown up a number of problems with countries calling for urgent relief, not least because environmental indicators are heading south as rapidly as they are.

They called for coherence between the normative/policy setting and operational arms of programs dealing with environment, integration and mainstreaming of environment into development, regular and appropriate financing, full implementation of the Bali Plan and Cartagena Protocol, closer ties with the work of financing institutions and in country assistance to strengthen the arm of the environment ministry against the traditionally more powerful finance and infrastructure ministries. Also too, they called for a clustering of Multilateral Environment Agreement (MEA) secretariats but warned against an attempt to actually merge MEAs.

Not available on the web...

From here both processes go global. The Swiss co-chair of the 169 committee will travel to Nairobi this week with the Mexican co-chair off to Geneva for a consultation in a fortnight. Meanwhile the SWC panel are off in groups to Nairobi (the May 5 date is the same as the 169 consultation), Vienna, Geneva, Mozambique and Pakistan for consultations through May. They meet again in full in Geneva, probably in July.

You won't find this information on the web. The panel are being highly discreet, intending to publish very little, if anything before their report goes to the Secretary General, while their meetings are strictly closed with high security enforcing the no go zone.

Over at the 169 consultations it is a little more open. The chairs have said they will ask a further set of questions, then publish an update in June, together with their suggestion for further work. If it is published in time, the SWC panel will be able to use it in their deliberations. Whether it makes a difference with the informal re-profiling of the terms of reference of the SWC on environment, development and humanitarian issues to be development with a bit on the side, is anyone's guess.

Issues at CSD – 14

Committing is easy, achieving results is hard...

A critical look at the UN Secretary General's Report for CSD – 14 and the 'Trends in Sustainable Development' report.

By: Saradha Iyer and Neth Dano, Third World Network

This CSD Review Session opens the Second Cycle of the 'new CSD' and is going to focus on Energy for Sustainable Development, Industrial Development, Air Pollution/Atmosphere and Climate Change. These are issues of tremendous significance to every one of us in our daily lives. We are at a historic juncture in assessing our relationship with the planet. We have a deep responsibility to ourselves and to future generations and we must exercise that responsibility wisely and judiciously. Several compilations of data and assessments of the situation have been published recently to guide us in this common quest towards a sustainable path forward.

In February/March 2006, the UN Secretary General published a series of Reports in preparation for CSD 14. The SG's Reports provide an overview of progress achieved in implementing commitments made under Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and look at the interlinkages among the four sub-themes in an integrated manner.

On 11 April 2006, "Trends in Sustainable Development" was launched by the Under Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, Jose Antonio Ocampo. This is a data-laden and visually striking presentation of useful statistics on the themes of CSD-14.

As we have come to expect of most UN secretariat – originating reports the assessment is decidedly "mixed" and that is the good news. The predominance of 'on the one hand' and 'on the other hand' with a generous sprinkling of 'buts' and 'yets' is a clear indication that we have a long way to go and that the path ahead can be expected to be rough and tough.

ACCESS TO ENERGY

The current high price of fossil fuels is expected to worsen the existing disparity in access to electricity within developing countries. The poorest segment of the world's population depend on traditional

biomass energy sources that cause indoor pollution, respiratory illnesses and add burdens to women and children in many developing countries.

The SG's Report estimates that the number of people without access to modern energy services actually increased since WSSD due to increased population and persistent poverty. With continued reliance on expensive conventional fuel sources, the poor are not surprisingly hurt the most.

Inevitably therefore, the bones of contention at this CSD session are likely to be around methodologies for meeting the growing needs for energy services and securing access to affordable, safe and environmentally friendly renewable energy sources for the vast majority of the world's people.

The development and dissemination of energy efficiency and energy conservation measures will be crucial to achieve this. Also one cannot stress the importance of sustainable production and consumption patterns to tackle this problem head on. The role of business and industry in this regard is vital. The unprecedented invitation to several CEOs to present on various panels during CSD 14 attests to this. The evaluation of WSSD Type 11 Partnerships will also come under severe scrutiny.

SUSTAINABLE RENEWABLE ENERGY

The world's continued reliance on fossil fuels is likely to remain THE trend, with oil accounting for more than one-third of the total primary energy source. A mere 4 percent of the world's total energy supply comes from modern renewable sources.

The SG's Report acknowledges that renewable energy has been widely proven to be more efficient, less expensive and more accessible to the poor, but there are key deterrents to its widespread adoption in developing countries such as the relatively high capital costs of projects, high upfront costs for consumers, low consumer awareness, perceived high risks involved in renewable energy investments, lack of technical capacities at the local level, and lack of incentives to investors.

Both Trends and the SG Report noted that as people's income increases, access to modern and cleaner energy sources improve. But until this happens, the role of governments and multilateral institutions are crucial. Governments should not just regard renewable energy as mere showcases, but as the mainstream approach in energy production and use. Multilateral institutions should put their money not just in improving the efficiency of conventional energy sources, but more on up scaling renewable energy, which is more accessible to the poor.

The realities, however, show a different direction. Multilateral institutions continue to fund capital-intensive energy infrastructures such as big dams in many developing countries, primarily meant to supply industry and cities with energy.

Governments and multilateral institutions should adopt national and international measures to overcome these obstacles and focus their interventions in bringing the capital costs of renewable energy down to make these technologies accessible to developing countries to benefit the poor population. More urgently, governments should stop extending subsidies to conventional energy which is regarded as the biggest obstacle to the wide adoption of renewable energy. Rather than depending on FDIs, ODAs for energy projects, specifically for renewable energy, should substantially increase from the current 5 percent of total ODA level

One hopes the debate at CSD will revolve around technologies for sustainable renewable energy sources and concerted efforts to finance further research into development and dissemination of renewable energy.

ENERGY SECURITY

The SG's Report highlighted the current efforts in the development and adoption of energy-efficient technologies but still largely limited to conventional, fossil fuel-based energy sources. While many

countries during the RIMs called for security of supply and market transparency in oil due to the unprecedented increases in oil prices, the Report barely touched on the vulnerability of countries that are dependent on oil for their energy needs. It talked about corporate social responsibility, but did not mention the immoral profits reaped by major oil companies last year while the world's poor reeled from historic oil price increases.

Energy for transportation should not just be limited to energy efficiency and mass transportation in the urban areas and cities where vehicles in any given country are concentrated, but making transportation accessible and affordable for the rural poor that comprise the majority of the world's poor.

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Both documents trumpet the rate of industrial development in many developing countries and the benefits in employment, education and even in gender equity, without discussing the accompanying costs in the same areas.

Industrial development should not come at the expense of constricting the policy space for governments in developing countries to decide and implement their own models and approaches of development rather than merely following the paradigm prescribed by the developed countries and multilateral agencies.

The problems that come with the "one-size-fits-all" model prescribed by institutions like the WTO and the international financial institutions should be exposed, along with the use of regional and bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs) that even go beyond the commitments agreed in multilateral platforms as the backdoor by some highly developed countries to go around the increasing collective negotiating power of developing countries in the multilateral arena to impose their specific model of industrial development.

The push for privatization of basic energy services and facilities due to trade pressures, especially under the GATS in the WTO should be identified as basic obstacles to the attainment of industrial development in developing countries that serve the interest of their people.

The most glaring gap in both documents is notably on the discussion of sustainable

production and consumption which could provide the strategic linkages among the themes of the current CSD cycle.

CLIMATE CHANGE CHALLENGE

On this highly divisive issue, challenges remain and adverse impacts could affect not only eco-systems but social and economic systems and together they will undermine sustainable development. The SIDS face particularly trying times ahead. While there is some progress in mitigation activities, providing adequate funding to support adaptation activities is way off the mark.

World Bank Indicators show that the US' per capita CO2 emission in 2002 was more than seven times than China's and 17 times than India's. The SG's Report highlights that "it is essential to control anthropogenic GHG emissions which contribute to climate change". The issue before CSD is to try to address this problem in a fair, balanced and holistic manner that results in the stabilization of GHGs in the atmosphere at a level that prevents their interference with climate systems.

Again the solutions cannot all be voluntary and/or market based and we must squarely face the issue of linking climate change to the broader development agenda and addressing sustainable consumption and production patterns and other cross cutting themes. In addition the inter-linkages to other multilateral environmental agreements and their impact on each other are also very important. It is the role of the CSD as an integration mechanism to look at possible inconsistencies between various MEAs and provide guidance in resolving conflicting issues.

AIR POLLUTION/ATMOSPHERE

In this area both reports suggest that major advances in air pollution controls and new technologies have somewhat mitigated the problem. International cooperation in

reducing ozone depleting substances and the gradual phasing out of leaded gasoline are together touted as major successes. The problem of indoor air pollution and the danger from new chemicals in the atmosphere are not mentioned in either reports.

The major problem for developing countries is their dependence on coal for electricity generation and continued heavy reliance on old biogas for stoves and indoor heating. Another headache for both developed and developing countries is pollution generated by cars.

Here again the need for an integrated approach cannot be stressed enough. This includes looking at provisions in the International Convention on Chemicals Management and the Strategic Approach in Chemical Management (SAICM) and how they could impact upon air quality and the atmosphere generally.

CONCLUSION

There is strength in data, charts and statistics and valuable reviews in both Reports. But the point remains that people cannot light up their homes with World Bank Indicators or feed their children with chewable statistics, colorful charts and assorted assessments.

It is the task of all of us to translate these figures into actionable programs that will in fact light up lives, provide food on the table, and ensure that there will still be a viable world to live in for present and future generations.

The SG's Reports are a sober reminder of the fact that we are adept at making commitments but painfully slow at showing results through our actions. Can we hope this CSD will signal a change in that trend?



Question of the day

What are the most important issues to be raised at this years CSD according to you?



Jin Lee – Youth Delegate to the UN CSD-14

“I think the current investment practices on energy and industry will have a tremendous impact on the next 30 years. As youth we have to step up, considering that what the world is going to look like is being decided by the leaders of today. We want to be partaking in the decision-making that will have such an impact on our future. To me, it’s important to look at climate change impact and the need to curb the warming – today! Impacts will last forever. Youth is not going to just let people make the decisions without our input. We’re the ones who will have to fix it up later, when the rising sea levels are causing problems.”



Dulce Fernandes – GRACE Policy Institute

“Energy is a major issue at this point, connecting with global climate, energy prices, growing energy demands and so on. The energy topic is a convergence of all these issues that are so pressing at this moment in time globally.”



Roque Pedace – Friends of the Earth Argentina, CURES/CAN Network

“The urgency of the energy transition. The fact that you will have a climate constraint, and there is only a short window of opportunity here, 10 – 15 years. There needs to be a commitment to reduction of CO2 emissions. Renewables and efficiency are the only way to deal with fazing out both fossils and nuclear energy.”



Tom Goldtooth – Indigenous Environmental Network

“The issues are multi-layered and very complex. The priority is to find a way to make a transition from a fossil fuel economy to sustainable energy that will accommodate issues of poverty eradication, building sustainable communities and addressing global warming.”



Hal Turton – IIASA, International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis

“This CSD session deals with energy. The main challenge is integrating the competing objectives and addressing them simultaneously. Poverty, environment, security, investment, the chronic under-investment in energy. The key challenge is to address them all together in a coherent way. It’s a challenge that goes beyond the CSD, that needs the involvement of all elements of society.”



Tanya Imola – ICLEI, Local Governments for Sustainability

“We want to showcase some of the successes local governments have made in promoting energy efficiency and mitigating climate change at the local level. This CSD should help us to gain political momentum, to enhance our movement and to discuss further opportunities for decentralized smaller projects on sustainability. I’m also really looking forward to the visit of the vice mayor of Kyoto who instigated the ‘World Mayors Council on Climate Change’.”