



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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Implementation with vigour, urgency, and ... purpose

Rarely in the course of CSD history, has the relevance of the agenda topics struck a more resonant chord with the quest for the survival of our planet. At the beginning of the second half of the topical clusters dealing with climate change, energy for sustainable development, atmospheric pollution and industrial production, we find it pertinent to state: What was well conceived and begun a year ago, must now be brought to a successful end with a result focussed enough for all to develop a policy upon which future strategies, plans, programmes and projects for the sustainability of this world can be built.

Twenty years ago, the Brundtland Commission, headed by then-Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs. Gro Harlem Brundtland, published "Our Common Future" pointing to the urgent need for action to save our earth for future generations while providing a sustainable and acceptable present for all living humans.

"The recommendations are not a menu of options, but a whole. Each is individually vital to make the system – the UN – greater than the sum of its parts, not lesser as it has sometimes been. The recommendations should each be implemented with vigour, with urgency, and without diluting their purpose."

The SG's report, "Delivering as One" last November sent a common mes-

sage to governments of the world and to the UN: upgrade implementation and do it now!

Civil society has always been concerned with getting the philosophy, its topical challenges and policy results of the CSD out to its constituency, which in a larger context is the foundation of the UN, the "We, the peoples ...". The purpose of this outreach has always been to inspire to a reasonable, knowledge based and coherent implementation. This cannot be accomplished without the concrete support of governments and intergovernmental institutions.

Urgency must be the driving force behind this CSD. The recent report from UNFCCC is just the latest reminder of the urgency. We cannot wait, the world cannot wait, humanity cannot wait any longer for politicians and market forces to make the right decisions to safeguard the environment and ensure sustainable development, not merely as an overarching principle, but as implementable parts of every plan, every product, every project, every development. We already have enough information to make the right decisions. Now they must be made. Such decisions would restore faith in sustainable development and the UN. Twenty years after the Brundtland Commission, such decisions are the right way to commemorate its legacy. Let us not waste this opportunity.

...jgs

NGOs state: Nothing less than this at the CSD IPM.

After the alarming scientific reports on climate, everybody seems to be talking about the environment these days. Rapidly escalating fossil fuel prices demonstrate the need for a new energy paradigm. Governments and market players that earlier ignored or minimised the risks of environmental hazards are listening and willing to act. Can CSD offer an arena for solutions?

The distance from theoretical acceptance to implementing concrete action is not yet covered. CSD may as such offer the participants a unique opportunity to give the right and strong impetus to a political decision for action on climate and energy. The EU has in a number of recent statements given a clear impression that it would be willing to take strong decisions in favour of sustainable development. Even reluctant market players seem finally to be trying to face up to the new reality where environmental concerns must be integrated in product development.

We all know where the seat and the driving wheel is, but no one has come forward and strongly offered to be the driver in this seat. So far we all seem to have taken the role as reluctant passengers, and among us there are even many backseat drivers. Below is a minimum recipe for a successful outcome from this

IPM. Nothing less can and should be accepted, and everything above is a welcome initiative to save this world.

Area 1 – Financing development of sustainable energy:

The majority of financial means today used to safeguard and secure energy for the future are invested in producing more fossil fuels for consumption by industrial and emerging economies. New

initiatives need to be taken on developing 'clean energy' – a clean energy devoid of nuclear energy. Responding to the recommendations of the July G-8 Summit Plan of Action on Climate Change at Gleneagles in 2005, the then G-8 Presidency (United Kingdom) and the World Bank launched work on an Investment Framework for clean energy and sustainable development during the World Bank-IMF Annual Meetings. During March

2006, the Bank further discussed the development of an "Investment Framework for Clean Energy and Development", IFCE.

Too high reliance on fossil based energy.

Critics have pointed to the fact that 80% of the energy initiatives this investment framework promotes are fossil based energy. It does not have much to offer for the least developing countries dependent on oil imports urgently in need of support for renewable, domestic energy sources as key to developing their economies.

Public money from the international financial institutions and UN agencies needs to be invested in decentralised energy systems catering to the needs of the developing nations, i.e. energy efficiency and renewables. This should be explored by the CSD.

Area 2 – Links energy to climate negotiations.

Links between the energy debate and the ongoing climate negotiations must be established, and agreed upon, CSD has a responsibility and an opportunity. De-

“There is no entity within the UN charged with an overall responsibility for the sustainable energy – climate nexus”.

spite recent success for an action-oriented understanding of climate issues among media and the general public, politicians and delegates at international meetings are still dragging their feet reluctant to take definite actions. The discussion on climate seems to be deadlocked by everybody waiting for somebody else to take the first steps

CSD to revisit energy in 2010 in a new mechanism for energy.

There is no entity within the UN charged with an overall responsibility for the sustainable energy – climate nexus. Responsibility for energy is too fragmented in the UN system. By the mandate given through Agenda 21 and reiterated at Johannesburg, the CSD has the overall responsibility for monitoring and developing policy on the sustainable energy-climate nexus.

A mechanism similar to the one agreed upon during CSD 13 on the water-issue, which is to be revisited during the next cycle, could be devised through the policy discussions this year. A decision should be taken by which the energy/ climate issue would be revisited at CSD 18, i.e in 2010. The overall theme during that CSD

is a review of the Ten Year Framework on Sustainable Consumption and Production,

a most suitable context through which clean and sustainable energy and its consequences on climate may be again discussed.

As there is no institution in the UN with an overall energy mandate,

“CSD should devise a new mechanism for the energy-climate nexus and revisit the issue in 2010”.



NGO training and info workshop, Sunday afternoon

CSD is in a position to call for the development of criteria for monitoring development of a sustainable energy regime.

Area 3 – criteria for bio-energy should be developed by CSD.

The issue of bio-fuels and bio-energy has surfaced in full force in the wake of the alarming reports on climate change and escalating fossil fuel prices. Still many issues

relating to this area remain to be discussed and analysed. The large-scale development of bio-energy, particularly from palm-oil monocultures, raises many serious questions about its environmental and

social impact, in particular if they are produced for a global market rather than for local consumption. More and more civil society actors, companies and governments are calling for sustainability criteria for bio-energy. In order to make these criteria binding they cannot be imposed unilaterally but need to be discussed and agreed between producer and consumer countries. FAO is developing a global bio-energy partnership, which by some is considered a semi-UN partnership, functioning under the so-called type II partnerships. CSD appears a most suited institution to launch a process to develop criteria on bio-energy, as CSD is charged with all three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

...jgs

NGO's global Policy Statement for CSD 15

After a thorough and global consultations, NGOs agreed on the following set of priorities for CSD 15. Because of unabated global reliance on fossil fuels and unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, progress in promoting sustainable development will be rendered impossible within this CSD cycle's four themes: energy for sustainable development, climate change, atmospheric pollution and industrial development. The combustion of fossil fuels is a key driver for climate change and atmospheric pollution. Fossil fuel reliance is also causing increased external indebtedness for the least developed countries. Lack of access to decentralised modern energy services, favouring renewables is a key obstacle to a just and sustainable development, including industrial development.

Based on the precautionary principle, promoting sustainable development safeguarding the environment and promoting social equity we need: ...in energy for sustainable development –

1. a just transition from fossil fuels and nuclear energy towards accessible and affordable energy alternatives including energy efficiency and energy savings to achieve real sustainable development.

2. an equitable and just access to energy services to fulfil basic needs and develop energy policies with time bound targets and commitments, as an integrated element of the PRSPs and/or NSSD, focusing on the poor to ensure greatest impacts and institutionalising citizen involvement to meet citizen and business needs in a sustainable fashion.

3. a transfer of existing and new energy technologies, excluding harmful nuclear ones, to those countries in need, while respecting and/or strengthening local and regional capacities and culture.

4. an immediate shift in energy funding and investment to phasing out subsidies to fossil fuel and nuclear industries in order to “level the playing field”. These subsidies dramatically hamper sustainable development and therefore should be redirected to renewable energy and energy efficiency funding, including access to energy for the poor.

5. to develop a comprehensive strategy on finance, redirecting the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and their funds to sustainable energy including the introduction of strengthened micro-financing for new Renewables and energy efficiency.

6. to recognize and phase out Export Credit Agencies support by 2008 for funding promoting fossil, nuclear and hydro energy produc-

tion that do not, inter alia, comply with recommendations of the World Commission on Dams and instruct all IFIs to do likewise.

7. to halt the development of nuclear facilities as they are neither safe, nor environmentally and economically sound and sustainable.

8. to set sustainability criteria for energy production and consumption, including the use of bioenergy to avoid negative effects on food security, livelihood, biodiversity and the widening of the gap between the haves and have-nots.

...in industrial development

9. to emphasise that industrial development does NOT automatically lead to sustainable development and poverty reduction, but standards of sustainable produc-

tion and consumption must be the basis upon which all industries are based. They must be set within the limits of the earth's carrying capacity, sharing equitably the burdens of the ecological footprint and internalising the external costs, respecting the polluter pays principle.

10. to stimulate sustainability reporting within the private sector, by developing clear indicators to monitor and guide sustainable industrial development. All large enterprises should utilize principles of corporate responsibility and accountability to ensure open communication and transparency, also with respect to ownership and decision making.

11. to develop short production and consumption chains to avoid unnecessary transport, with added value to manufacturer.

12. to implement the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of the JPOI by ensuring that benefits from industrial development in the South remain in the South, and by avoiding at all costs, negative consequences such as pollution, waste dumping, low salaries, bad working circumstances. Industrial development in richer countries cannot be based on the exploitation of the poorer ones.

...in air pollution and atmosphere

13. to promote clean public transport alternatives. Vehicles, particularly those driven by diesel engines, are the main cause of urban air pollution. Cities that have taken decisive steps to curb transport-related

air pollution have introduced innovative measures such as mandatory replacement of diesel with CNG or congestion fees and public transport alternatives.

14. to develop an 'indoor clean-air' health/environment policy. These policies must include access to affordable, cleaner and environment-friendly cooking and heating facilities. such as efficient, smokeless and cleaner-burning biomass stoves, biogas and solar cookers. Policies should include the promotion of simple technologies to allow for greater ventilation of smoke from indoor fires. Environmental and social impact assessments should also be used when promoting such technologies.

15. to make available an adequate technology to curb burning of garbage from local heaps and national land fills and outlaw incineration of garbage emitting toxic fumes.

...in climate change

16. to hold all member countries accountable to the commitments in the Kyoto Protocol and not allow non-members to direct progress. It is essential to promote early benefits implicit in the protocol concerning transformation of global energy systems in areas such as: job generation, market opportunities, reduced emissions and greater energy self-reliance.

17. to stabilize the climate by keeping man-made climate change well below 2°C as a global average. Hence no country can claim post 2012 Kyoto negotiation privileges, but allocation of emission rights

should be based on equitable principles. Action is needed immediately to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases while simultaneously meet the demands of the MDGs.

18. to support most vulnerable and poor communities in their efforts to adapt to climate change.

19. to prevent the transfer of costs for mitigation to developing countries through the Clean Development Mechanisms, supporting the development of socially and environmentally sound CDM projects that respect the 'gold standard'.

...in interlinkages

20. to achieve Good Governance, including respect for social justice, human rights, gender equality, democratic institutions and sustainable policies.

21. to make financial instruments of governments more effective in promoting sustainable policies and inter alia, implement Environmental Fiscal Reforms (EFR), as suggested by OECD guidelines.

22. to improve system-wide coherence (within and outside the UN system) and achieve compatibility within international institutions in line with Agenda 21 and JPOI.

23. to include education for sustainable development in all curricula, as sustainable development is not possible without awareness and contribution of current and future generations.

TOWARDS EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In January, some 30 European NGOs and NGO networks met to discuss the present CSD issues. Having heard presentations from governments and expert statements dealing with the CSD cluster issues, these NGOs agreed on the following statement highlighting their concerns on the present CSD issues.

Europe has a special responsibility for issues of climate change and industrial development. European nations are amongst the wealthiest in the world, and have some of the highest CO₂ emission levels. But Europe also has the resources to play a key role in delivering solutions to these problems. We call on European leaders show the political determination to deliver Europe's obligations under the "common but differentiated responsibilities" framework for global sustainable development.

Climate change

There are important links between CSD and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its implementation framework, the Kyoto Protocol. A global agreement for a much more ambitious second phase of the Kyoto Protocol is vitally important. The CSD should work to ensure early agreement on the development of the 'second Commitment Period' for the Protocol commencing in 2013. This second period should include much more ambitious targets for all nations involved and particularly for European countries. We need to ensure that the rise in global average surface temperature is slowed, stopped and finally reversed, peaking well below an increase of 2°C over pre-industrial levels. The recently proposed EU Energy Action Plan shows signs that the EU is preparing to turn its rhetoric on leadership on sustainable development and climate change into action. If the EU really wishes to lead on these issues then the proposed actions need to be linked to binding energy and climate policy targets for the EU and its member States. The EU has committed to cut its

emissions of greenhouse gases by 20% below 1990 emissions by 2020, and to raise this ambition to a cut of 30% if part of an overall global agreement to reduce emissions. The lower ambition of 20% is inadequate and the EU should make an unconditional offer of a greenhouse gas reduction target for the EU as a whole of at least 30% by 2020. This short-term target should be the start of a longer-term plan for the EU to reduce its emissions by at least 70% by 2050.

Energy for sustainable development

Access to basic, clean and affordable energy services is essential for sustainable development and poverty eradication and can provide major benefits in the areas of health, literacy, job creation, income generation, economic empowerment and equity. Many poorer communities in rural areas have either limited or no access to clean energy. Furthermore, due to the gender bias of energy poverty, women bear a disproportional amount of the negative social, economic, health and environmental impacts of traditional energy sources. New renewable energies are the only way to give access to modern energy services to the two billion people currently excluded from them. European nations should provide more support for developing countries and EECCA countries in moves towards using renewable energies to help build decentralised energy supply systems, which can strengthen local economies while also providing positive social benefits. The EU also has a particular responsibility to build the capacity of Eastern Europe, Caucasus and Central Asia to move from dependence on fossil and nuclear fuels and towards sustainable energy systems.

Financing for clean development

Huge amounts of the funds spent by national and international financial institutions in support of energy services are still strongly biased towards fossil fuel energy systems that are a core cause of climate change. It is imperative that the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) develop a comprehensive strategy to re-direct their funds to sustainable energy including the introduction of strengthened micro-financing schemes for new renewables and energy efficiency and saving.

Bio fuels

New generation Bio-fuels could provide major opportunities for reducing CO₂ emissions but there are many environmental and social problems linked to bio energy. The UN CSD and the EU should support a consultative process for a global agreement on sustainability criteria for bio energy to develop a mandatory certification system.

Spatial planning

Good spatial planning is an essential part of tackling climate change. The EU, national and local governments need to work to transform current spatial planning systems which are often contributing to continuing rises in CO₂ emissions from transport. Clear policies are needed to ensure that emerging good practice becomes official standard practice.

Sustainable Production and Consumption (SPAC)

Developing more sustainable patterns of production and consumption is one of the main ways for the developed world and especially Europe to cut pollution

and climate change, but there is not enough focus on the development and implementation of strategies and policies to bring this about. SPAC is and should be a main focus of the CSD, and the CSD should promote the key elements of such an approach:

- Ecological fiscal reform involving the removal of all perverse subsidies, the use of ecotaxes to internalise external costs and other relevant measures and mechanisms;
- Cleaner production supported by innovative design, better standards and labelling programmes, and environmentally sound public procurement rules and practices;
- Development of education and lifelong learning for sustainable consumption;
- The use of corporate responsibility and accountability as a legally binding framework;
- Effective public participation in this work with a broader 'right to know', the increased involvement of stakeholders and transparent and verifiable consumer information tools.

National governments and the EU should lead by example in changing their consumption and procurement policies in all appropriate ways including:

- Developing shorter production and consumption supply chains;
- Maximising the use of financial instruments, such as tax reforms, to promote SPAC;
- Setting mandatory performance standards for appliances, buildings and other products;
- Awareness-raising building on local cultural values to change consumer behaviour.

The EU and national governments should lead this work through increased support for the UN Marrakech Process on Sustainable Consumption and Production and for the Task Force on Education for Sustainable Consumption linking to the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

Renewable energy: A pillar for the CSD

As the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) opens, we wish to remind delegates of the endless potential of renewable energy to address the barriers and constraints expressed in the four issues currently addressed by this Commission. The technological advances, declining cost, and growing political support for renewable energy technologies makes the targets Agenda 21 and the JPOI reachable. Renewable energy technologies foster win-win scenarios because they:

- contribute to environmental sustainability
- generate low- to non-existent greenhouse emissions
- can be produced locally
- are suitable solution to off-grid needs
- contribute to achieving the MDGs through improved access for the poor

Investing in renewable energy technologies is a long-term investment, investment that pays back through savings in operation, economies of scale, and cost-effectiveness in relationship to traditional energy sources. Although there is a generalized perception that the high cost of these technologies makes them inaccessible to both public and private sector, investment in renewable technologies has been growing speedily. Government and international financial institutions can en-

hance investment in renewable energy technologies through financial support for project development, adequate regulatory frameworks, and taxation schemes—the same support that is currently used to promote fossil-fuel-based energy.

Renewable energy must be integrated into rural development, poverty alleviation, and social welfare programs to disseminate new technologies improving health, reducing labor, and securing income. These technologies can spur micro-enterprise, promote economic development, and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. Governments have subsidized grid extension and fossil fuels to increase access in rural areas for decades—those subsidies can now deliver the promises of renewable energy in the 21st century.

We have come to New York to advance sustainable development in the spirit of Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration, and following the steps outlined in the JPOI. The CSD offers an opportunity to create a policy framework, not just partnerships, to allow poor countries to benefit from the development in energy technologies and to make long-term choices for a sustainable future.

jh



Question of the day

What are your expectations for the upcoming week?



Er. Raymond Myles
Regional Coordinator INFORSE, South Asia

My expectations are really big. We need to have a policy document, which reflects the need of poor people; not only a policy but also an action plan on how to implement it. Policies should take poor people into account as they are the one who don't have access to energy.



Emmanuel Korbla Edudzie
Country Coordinator, South Youth Caucus, Ghana

I think the IPM should serve as channel to connect into the CSD. I think we should concentrate on more action rather than on talk. On Friday when we are leaving, we would see an action oriented, result oriented and time bound target, instead of the usual talk show. I hope government delegates will be very receptive to NGOs, especially to the youth caucus, which is going to push very hard. The success of this IPM will be measured along the lines of which the governments accept the inputs of the major groups.



Elenita C. Dano "Neth"
Third World Network

I don't have any expectations. I just come with contributions, I will follow the discussions and do some analysis for "Taking Issue". I would see what IPM would do for us. For me, I have my expectations for CSD but not much for IPM.

CONTRIBUTE TO TAKING ISSUE:

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