



# **Making sense of CSD 16**

**Opportunities and Interaction  
during the CSD 16 Review Session,**

**- a recipe for efficiency and influence for the Nine Major Groups**

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# **Making sense of CSD 16**

## **Opportunities and Interaction during the CSD 16 Review Session, - a recipe for efficiency and influence for the Nine Major Groups<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Even though this article is written from the point of view of NGOs, the rules of engagement, the logistics, processes etc. referred to are applicable to all the Nine Major Groups as specified by Chapter 23 in Agenda 21: Youth, Women, Indigenous Peoples, Farmers, NGOs, Trade Unions, Science and Technology, Local Authorities, Business and Industry.

## **Making sense of CSD 16**

### **Opportunities and Interaction during the CSD 16 Review Session, - a recipe for efficiency and influence for the Nine Major Groups<sup>2</sup>**

#### **1.0 Introduction:**

##### **1.1 Towards a new realisation of sustainable development.**

Soon six years after Johannesburg and soon to be two and half CSD into the second decade of CSD, world opinion has given new impetus and urgency to the work on environment and sustainable development. People are heard clamouring for solutions to impending environmental issues, still political solutions to these issues seem elusive. CSD 15 is point in case. Maybe this CSD cycle can turn out to be different.

CSD offers opportunities that are often ignored to the untrained eye, or uninformed participant. With a renewed mandate from the JPOI<sup>3</sup>, and with modalities developed at CSD 11, CSD - the Commission for Sustainable Development - offers the world one of the most open and participatory intergovernmental processes on sustainability issues.

Convergence on how to push work on sustainable development forward is growing. Still many seem to be caught up in the dominant proceedings and modalities of the first decade of the CSD where negotiated outcomes were the expected results and CSD was a one year undertaking. Many still complain that a two year cycle is too drawn out, too cumbersome, and allows for too many words to be said. Still, a two-year CSD cycle, with one review year and one policy year do offer a number of opportunities not fully taken advantage of. The CSD is a web of opportunities, a complex grid of initiatives where distilling the essence of the entire process in a credible and relevant way puts a heavy demand on participants as well as the CSD staff.

Understanding the web of opportunities, or as they are referred to in UN speak – the modalities, such as the entry points of contributions and the points of engagement – is perhaps the key to being heard and to contributing to a policy solution to the complexities of sustainable development.

This document will take the reader through the CSD modalities and elucidate and highlight some of the major points.

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<sup>2</sup> Even though this article is written from the point of view of NGOs, the rules of engagement, the logistics, processes etc. referred to are applicable to all the Nine Major Groups as specified by Chapter 23 in Agenda 21: Youth, Women, Indigenous Peoples, Farmers, NGOs, Trade Unions, Science and Technology, Local Authorities, Business and Industry.

<sup>3</sup> Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, decided on at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, the WSSD in Johannesburg 2002.

## 1.2 The two-year cycle as one entity

One of the many challenges is to see the two-year cycle as one entity. The optimal strategy would be to identify what the preferred policy outcome should be at the end of the policy session at the very end of the two year cycle, and then work backwards from there. In other words after the various stakeholders have developed and defined an optimum strategic outcome from thinking about the policy session, they should sit down and decide on what they would need to focus on and highlight during national lobbying, during the various Regional Implementations Meetings (held during the first year of the new CSD two-year cycle) and bring the same priorities with them to the CSD Review Session. There these issues should be brought into focus, but within the context of a Review Session and not within the context of a negotiated policy outcome.

This does indeed represent a new mind-set for most of the players, be they from civil society, from the intergovernmental systems or from national delegations. Based on the experience from the first CSD cycle – CSD 12 and 13 – many observers seem to agree: too many of the players negotiated texts in a traditional manner during the CSD 12 Review Session, and missed opportunities to strengthen the policy outcome a year later. This seemed to have been improved considerably for the CSD 14 and 15 cycle. The CSD seem to have made this case quite clear this time around: policy statement will not be heeded and taken into consideration during a review session.

The simple question is then: how do we highlight issues during the review session to fit a negotiated policy outcome a year later? Which are our tools?

## 2.0 Modalities

### 2.1 CSD 11 created the modalities for Stakeholder involvement

The following extracts from the final CSD 11 outcome document <sup>4</sup> from CSD 11 outlines the official thinking on the modalities for the involvement of all civil society stakeholders. By reading this, the rules of procedures and opportunities for engagement should become relatively clear. But, like any rules and guidelines, they are subject to interpretation. Allow us to give a few interpretations:

The modalities also seem to make the roles of the various stakeholders reasonably clear: The **bolding of words and sections** have been deliberately made to draw your attention to key elements in the rules of engagement as drawn up by CSD 11.

First – a few extracts from the CSD 11 document: (note, the bolding is done by the author of this article.)

§ 2...

(d) **The Review Session evaluation should enable an improved understanding of priority concerns in the implementation of the selected thematic cluster of issues and pave the way for an effective policy discussion in the course of the Policy Year, with a view to strengthening implementation in these areas;**

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<sup>4</sup> Commission on Sustainable Development: Report on the eleventh session (27 January 2003 and 28 April – 9 May 2003) Economic and Social Council, Official Records, 2003, Supplement No.9

(e) **The outcome of the Review Session will be a report including a Chairperson’s Summary containing identified constraints and obstacles and possible approaches and best practices** for implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

(f) In the Policy Year the Commission will convene an Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, for one week in New York in February/March to discuss policy options and possible actions **to address the constraints and obstacles in the process of implementation identified during the Review Year.**

(g) **The discussions of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting will be based on the outcome of the Review Session,** SGs reports as well as other relevant inputs. Based on these discussions the Chair will prepare a draft negotiating document for consideration at the Policy Session.

.....

(i) **The Review Sessions and the Policy Sessions should mobilise further action by all implementation actors to overcome obstacles and constraints in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and address new challenges and opportunities, and share lessons learned and best practice.**

§ 3....

(iii) Provide input to the Secretary-General’s reports and the Sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. These inputs may include identification of obstacles and constraints, new challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and sharing of lessons learned and best practices.

(iv) Provide for contributions from major groups, taking into account paragraphs 139(g) and 149(c) and (d) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

.....

§ 5.

Invites governments, as well as organizations at all levels and major groups, to undertake results-oriented initiatives and activities that support the Commission’s programme of work and promote and facilitate the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The results of such initiatives and activities should be an input to the Commission, as appropriate.

.....

§ 12.

Encourages countries to present, on a voluntary basis, national reports, in particular to the Commission’s Review Session, focusing on concrete progress in implementation, including achievements, constraints, challenges and opportunities.

.....

**Reading paragraph 14** allows for a further understanding of how the reporting may be executed and underscores that reporting to the Commission on Sustainable Development should be guided by the following considerations:

**§14:**

(a) Reporting should reflect the overall progress made on the three dimensions of sustainable development, focusing on the thematic cluster of issues for the cycle, and include inputs from all

levels, as appropriate, including national, sub-regional, regional and global levels, and drawing on those sources listed in paragraph 2(c)(ii- iv).

(b) The existing reporting systems should be used to the fullest extent possible and are expected to provide the bulk of information required;

(c) Reporting should focus on concrete progress in implementation, taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development and their integration, including information sharing, lessons learned, progress made and best practices, identifying actions taken, constraints, challenges and opportunities.

(d) The effective use of indicators, as described in paragraph 13.

(e) Country reporting should provide information on the status of national strategies for sustainable development.

#### § 15.

Requests the Secretariat of the Commission, working in close cooperation with other organisations of the United Nations system, to:

(a) Take measures to streamline reporting in order to avoid duplication and unnecessary burden on states including in accordance with the Secretary General's report on United Nations reform;

(b) Provide focused information that highlights relevant trends, constraints, challenges and emerging issues;

(c) Provide technical assistance to countries, upon their request, in national reporting through regular and extra-budgetary sources.

.....

#### **On national reporting:**

Inspiration for developing a programme with relevance for each country and each region can be taken from the so-called 'official CSD reporting system':

"The Commission on Sustainable Development, at its eleventh session, encouraged countries to provide national reports, on a voluntary basis, in particular to the Commission's review sessions. In doing so, the Commission underscored that the reporting should:

1. reflect the overall progress in all three dimensions of sustainable development, focussing on the thematic cluster of issues for the cycle;
2. focus on concrete progress in implementation;
3. include lessons learned and best practices;
4. identify actions taken
5. highlight relevant trends, constraints, challenges and emerging issues
6. incorporate, where relevant, the effective use of indicators for sustainable development.

The present Guidelines request information for the third implementation cycle of the CSD, that is, for sessions 16 and 17 (2008-2009), where the focus will be on the following: Africa, agriculture, drought, desertification, land and rural development, in addition to the cross-cutting issues."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> (Quoted from the CSD demands on National Reporting)

(See the end of the article for a more complete excerpt of the CSD 11 decisions)

This year, there is an added element, having been decided on at CSD 13 – a so-called ‘revisit issue’:

“In addition, a review will be undertaken in 2008 of the implementation of WSSD target on Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). Countries are also being asked to provide updated information on national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) and national programmes on indicators for sustainable development.”<sup>6</sup>

## **2.2 The Review Session Buzz words.**

So, what does all this mean in practical terms? Which are the key words, and how can they be interpreted? Although the interaction between the various elements within the CSD is still an evolving process, the key words and their contexts can probably not be interpreted in too many and diverging ways. Let’s gather up and focus on a few elements from the rules of procedure. They are:

- an improved understanding of priority concerns in the implementation of the selected thematic cluster of issues and pave the way for an effective policy discussion;
- strengthening implementation in these areas;
- to address the constraints and obstacles in the process of implementation identified during the Review Year;
- mobilise further action;
- address new challenges and opportunities, and share lessons learned and best practice;

and the important §14 a indicates which direction this might take:

*“(a) Reporting should reflect the overall progress made on the three dimensions of sustainable development, focusing on the thematic cluster of issues for the cycle, and include inputs from all levels, as appropriate, including national, sub-regional, regional and global levels, and drawing on those sources listed in paragraph 2(c)(ii- iv)”.*

## **3.0 Influencing the process.**

### **3.1 The output or chief product of the Review Session.**

We look for influence, where can our voice, our concerns make a difference. Where should we take the message we have with us from our constituencies? The document found on the CSD web called “Organisation of work for CSD 16” gives most of the answer to this central question. In summary – this can be said:

The outputs of CSD-16<sup>7</sup> will include:

An action oriented Chairman’s summary based on discussions during:

- The opening session and general statements

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<sup>6</sup> Quoted from the official CSD website on National Reporting.

<sup>7</sup> from “Organization of Work for CSD” -16 by the UN CSD Secretariat ( Draft proposal, February 2008)

- The thematic and regional discussions
- The SIDS day
- The review of CSD 13 Water and Sanitation decisions
- The High Level Segment

These will provide guidance and priority areas for focussing on during the IPM – next year – 2009 - end of February/ beginning of March and subsequently the CSD policy session in May.

Other outputs are:

- Records of the Partnerships Fair
- The Learning Centre
- The Multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions

### **3.2 The primary end product at CSD – the Chair’s report - content.**

The composition of the major CSD Review Session product follows a set of formal rules and procedures agreed on at CSD 11.

Paragraph 2e sets the direction of the work for this chief end product:

*“The outcome of the Review Session will be **a report** including a Chairperson’s Summary containing identified constraints and obstacles and possible approaches and best practices.”*

And a bit further down in the same paragraph:

*“(f) In the Policy Year the Commission will convene an Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, for one week in New York in February/March to discuss policy options and possible actions to address the constraints and obstacles in the process of implementation **identified during the Review Year.**”*

*(g) The discussions of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting will be based on the **outcome of the Review Session**, SGs reports as well as other relevant inputs. Based on these discussions the Chair will prepare a draft negotiating document for consideration at the Policy Session.*

.....

*(i) **The Review Sessions** and the Policy Sessions should mobilise further action by all implementation actors to overcome obstacles and constraints in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and address new challenges and opportunities, and share lessons learned and best practice.*

The outcome of the Review Session including, we would say, the Regional Implementation Meetings, is a Report, upon which the negotiated policy outcome (to be discussed during the IPM, February next year) will rest. Paragraph 2 (i) gives the desired outcome of this report:

*“..... The Review Sessions and the Policy Sessions should **mobilise further action** by all implementation actors to **overcome obstacles and constraints in the implementation....**”*

The importance of the Review Session becomes clear as we take the content of these paragraphs to heart.

The questions we need to ask us then, is the following:

- Have we been able through the Review Session and the RIMs to identify the obstacles and constraints?
- Are we aware of what the RIMs brought out during their discussions?
- Have we been able to show through our good practices what we think the possibilities and options are to move forward in a sustainable manner?
- Have we been able to convince delegations that these are the constraints, that these are the obvious obstacles?

### **3.3 - The Chair's report, Parts I and Part II.**

According to the proposed agenda, the Chairs summary report Part One will be handed out on Tuesday May 13 in Conference room 4 at 17:00. The Chair will then give a brief intro at 17:30 and allow for a few factual statements within the half hour that remains of the plenary – from 17:30 until 18:00-

The second part of the Chair's report will be handed out to the plenary on Friday May 16 at 15:00 again in conference room 4 at 15:00. Delegations will then be given half an hour to read it through, and there will be a discussion and summing up session from 15:30 until 18:00.

If the Chair's report does not reflect § 14 a, including the other formal demands listed above, there is high time to comment on the lack of such performance. If some of the major points raised by civil society are not reflected, it is high time to act. If on the other hand, civil society seems satisfied with the outcome, it would be high time for civil society to express that feeling as well.

When we, the civil society stakeholders, have taken our identified and well analysed understanding of the challenges within the scope of the CSD thematic clusters, and we have chosen our words reflecting a scientific and political understanding of the meaning of the "CSD buzz words" (referred to in the above), - what then?

### **3.4 - The Matrix Revisited – a highly useful tool!**

It is important to be aware of the nature of the Chair's Report from the Review Session – it is not going to be a negotiated report, as all reports were in the old CSD days (before the Johannesburg Summit in 2002 and CSD 11 in 2003). A negotiated report is the prerogative of the policy year. The content of the report of the Review Year is the prerogative of the Chair of the Bureau of CSD.

The new CSD as decided by CSD 11 came with several new modalities and subsequently saw the birth of a new and interesting instrument – the Matrix. Introduced by the Chair of CSD from CSD 13, Minister John Ash of Barbuda, it represented a new way of harnessing information emerging throughout the CSD process: "The Matrix " he said to the Nine O'clock Morning Meeting where all civil society was represented, " is an evolving process, an organic report gaining substance as the CSD proceeds".

The Matrix for CSD 16 to be found on the web site for the CSD where the formal context of that tool the chief characteristics of the Matrix are given:

- The Matrix is an information tool developed by the secretariat;
- It provides user friendly information on practical experiences in implementing the thematic areas of CSD;
- It is based on information submitted by national governments including through national reports, by UN agencies and Major Groups;
- It takes into account information contained in the Secretary General's report and partnerships for Sustainable Development registered with the CSD secretariat as well as with information emerging from the RIMs;
- The Matrix is not an official document of the CSD;
- As an information tool it is a work in progress and is continually updated by the secretariat;
- Governments, UN agencies as well as Major Groups and relevant regional and international organisations are welcome to submit comments and inputs.

### **3.5 - the structure of the Matrix:**

The Matrix seeks to provide the user with a convenient overview of concrete experiences in addressing barriers and constraints identified in the areas of sustainable development, as specified by the cluster themes. It consists of four columns and is structured as follows:

- Barriers and/ or Constraints – Information in this column is based on the Secretary-General's Reports, national reports, reports of Regional Implementation Meetings, and inputs from Major Groups and CSD Partnerships.
- Case studies – Case studies are drawn from the Secretary-General's (SG's) Reports, national reports, Reports from Regional Implementation Meetings, and inputs from Major Groups, CSD Partnerships, and case studies submitted at CSD-14.
- Lessons learned - best practices or results – This column provides a snapshot overview of the lessons learned, best practices or results of the particular case study.
- Key implementation actors – This column indicates key implementation actors, based on information contained in the case studies.

### **3.6 - The Matrix – a key to understanding how themes are organised**

The matrix follows a set structure as shown above. The thematic content of this structure however is directed by two major documents, 'Agenda 21' from the UNCED<sup>8</sup> conference in 1992 and the 'JPOI' from the 2002 WSSD<sup>9</sup> Johannesburg Conference.

All the themes discussed at CSD originate in Agenda 21. The themes were further developed by what was said in the JPOI. CSD needs to capture this as well as see how implementing the identified challenges are progressing. That is of course why the Matrix talks about constraints, barriers, lessons learned etc. But these variables need to be directly linked to the CSD themes. Looking closely at the Matrix, the reader will find at the top of each of the identified theme a reference to the said Agenda 21/ JPOI documents. It is well

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<sup>8</sup> UNCED – The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, which produced Agenda 21 as the outcome document,

<sup>9</sup> WSSD – the World Summit on Sustainable Development, which produced the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, the JPOI as the outcome document.

worth the reader's while to look at what is said in these two large plans of action concerning the present CSD themes, as it will further deepen the understanding of what is taking place at CSD. It will also help create a sense of direction as to how all the themes are interlinked.

Think of it this way: At an ideal CSD, every statement in the plenary, every conclusion from a parallel session, every issue raised at the roundtables and side events, every showcase at the partnership fair and every analysis given at the learning centre should have a direct bearing on these references.

This is a summary of what you find at the intro level of the Matrix:

<b><u>CSD 16 Theme</u></b>	<b><u>Reference, Agenda 21</u></b>	<b><u>Reference JPOI</u></b>
<b><u>I - Agriculture</u></b>		
Food security	Chapter 19 A	Paragraph 40
Sustainable agriculture	Chapter 14	Paragraph 40
<b><u>II - Rural Development</u></b>		
Rural development and Poverty reduction	Chapter 14	Paragraph 40
Natural resource management	No reference	Chapter 4
Rural Infrastructure and Social services	No reference	Chapter 4
Access to local markets	No reference	Chapter 4
<b><u>III - Land</u></b>		
Land and water resources	Chapter 10	Paragraph 40
Sustainable land management	Chapter 10	Paragraph 40
Information systems and tools for land use planning	Chapter 10	Paragraph 40
Access to and distribution of land	Chapter 10	Paragraph 40
<b><u>IV - Draught</u></b>		
Drought preparedness	Chapter 12	Paragraph 30
Drought management	Chapter 12	Paragraph 30
<b><u>V - Desertification</u></b>		
Land management and livelihoods	Chapter 14	Paragraph 41
Conservation of the natural vegetation	Chapter 11	Paragraph 44
Means of implementation	Chapter 33	Chapter X
Institutional and legal arrangements	Chapter 29	Paragraph 105
<b><u>VI - Africa</u></b>		
Sustainable development for Africa		Chapter VIII

**Note:**

The astute reader will of course have noticed that the two additional CSD themes Water and Sanitation are not included in the Matrix. These two themes are so-called 'revisit'

themes and are dealt with as such. This CSD is the first one to deal with such a construction and the outcome of this will have bearings on how future CSD conferences will deal with revisit themes. CSD 15 on sustainable energy and climate issues agreed in principle on revisiting the theme of sustainable energy in 2010. If the process this time on revising water and sanitation is a good one, then future revisits may also make a lot of sense. If not...

### **3.7 - Major Groups/ Civil Society participation in the official output process.**

The above are the tools we need to work on and make sure our opinions as much as possible are reflected in these documents. There are a number of opportunities available to us for doing just that:

#### **In general:**

During the course of CSD-16 Major Groups will be invited to participate as follows:

- Participation in Opening and Closing sessions
- Thematic and Regional discussions
- SIDS Day
- Review of CSD-13 decisions on water and sanitation
- Multi-stakeholder dialogues (including one at the Ministerial segment)
- Ministerial Roundtables
- Partnerships Fair
- Learning Centre
- Side events

**More specifically**, and these are the opportunities the Major Groups should look out for as reporting from these events will enter the CSD outcome document.

- Multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions.
  - CSD 16 will organise three one and a half hour dialogues in plenary with delegates. Each of the nine Major Groups will be allowed to make a short statement on the designated issue, and following this opening session will engage in a dialogue with delegates. The report from the dialogue sessions are official outcomes.
- A Ministerial dialogue with the Major Groups.
  - CSD 16 will allow for a dialogue with Ministers. This is a new element for civil society, and is one of the three dialogue sessions.
- Participation in the Thematic and Regional Discussions
- The SIDS day
- The Review of the CSD 13 decisions on water and sanitation
- The partnerships fair
- The learning centre
- Final plenary session.
  - The Major Groups are each invited to come with short and concluding statement to the CSD closing session. The statement is no more than a couple of minutes (time is specified at the end of the CSD session), and shall address how the Major Groups will initiate action in implementation in relation to the thematic clusters of issues.

### **3.8 - Interacting with governments within the plenaries:**

The plenary debate at intergovernmental sessions such as at the UN, is the prerogative of governments. Formally speaking members of civil society or the Major Groups cannot participate actively in these debates unless a plenary session should allow for such procedure. The formally correct and somewhat traditionalist and conservative view of a plenary debate at an intergovernmental session is precisely that – a session between governments. The International Architecture on Governance is however constantly evolving, and the UN as well as participating governments have often seen the value of bringing civil society into their discussions. Various systems have been devised to allow for an interaction between civil society and governments at UN conferences. The secretariat at the UN CSD has devised a way in which the Major Group representatives can be heard during the plenaries. This is explained under the heading Major Groups on the CSD website. Allow us however to explain this a bit further.

Ideally, the morning meeting (09:00 to 10:00) should have been able to outline the contentious issues of the day, and give the interested participant an understanding of which issues would be on the agendas (there are often parallel meetings) for that particular day. A person – or persons should be selected by each of the Major Groups to sit in the chair and observe for that specific Major Group. The Major Group at its special meeting may also have identified a number of issues they would like to raise at the plenary.

But as experience has shown, an increasing number of civil society organisations now participate in the CSD processes. Some of these have a large constituency to speak for, their views may warrant a presentation, their knowledge and background may warrant a specific question.

Provided these issues are thought through, identified and well formulated, they do stand a change of being heard. And if they are heard in the plenary, the issue may stand a good chance of ending up in the Chair's report.

The system through which these issues may be recognised is through the so-called 'Request Slips'. These are simple slips, where the person, organisation and question will be stated. In the event this system is being used during that specific session a 'Request Slip' may be acquired from the CSD Major Group Team, filled out and collected by the CSD Major groups' Team staff. They will then bring the request to the attention of the Chair of the session and the possibility exists of being recognized by the Chairperson based on the submission of the comment/question.

The Matrix will also be activated through the plenaries. As was stated earlier in this document, the Matrix will be **a work in progress** and will be continuously refined and updated throughout the two-year cycle as information from national reports/case studies becomes available. During CSD-16's discussions, the Matrix will be updated on the basis of interventions and panel discussions on barriers and constraints, practical measures and success stories. The Matrix is developed in the overall context of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

### **3.9 Do side events and NGO input matter?**

On the side-events, such a common and integral element of CSD, the Bureau writes: “Side events, sponsored by Governments, UN organizations, IGOs and Major Groups, will be organized as a complementary part of the programme to generate informal opportunities for exchange of experience and lessons learned.”

Reflecting the plethora of views in the final outcome reports, within bounds of reason, has been the ambition of previous CSD Chairs and their Bureaus. To a large extent they have succeeded. Still, there are no easy solutions as to how the views of civil society may be ‘transported’ across and into the final report.

Reading the above information from the Bureau, the quick conclusion might be that the side events do not matter except for being interesting foras to exchange all sorts of ideas. Still judging from the last few years of CSD, a surprising amount of issues and elements from side events ended up both in the matrix as well as being referred to in the final reports. Consequently – participating in and paying attention to what is presented, the discussions and the outcomes from the side-events are really worth while.

How do we make the input from NGOs and civil society practicable for the final CSD report including the Matrix? And how can we help upgrade the importance of the messages from the side events carried out by civil society?

It is important to remember the formal context in which the side events exist: they are seen as complementary elements of the CSD programme, foras for informal and thought provoking discussions. Very few, if any try to write a report from what takes place at these events, try to sum them up, and take the content and the main message back to the plenaries in a more organised way. Having a one page sum up of the main points being discussed or highlighted during the side-event could be a start. But such a report should have no more than four or five main points and the report should be written in such a way that the content could for instance easily be incorporated into the Matrix under one of its headings.

During the last Review Sessions, (CSD 12and CSD 14) members of civil society were called upon a number of times during the official plenaries to speak and respond to the discussion in addition to the panellists and the delegations. We would be justified in thinking that this would be the case this time as well. Consequently – paying close attention to the agenda of the different days is of high importance.

### **3.10 - NSDS – the missing link in the evolution of CSD?**

Chapter 8 of Agenda 21, adopted in 1992, calls on countries to adopt National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSDS). Five years later, the 1997 Special Session of the General Assembly again noted the importance of NSDS and set a target of 2002 for their formulation and elaboration.

The work for NSDS was again in focus in 2002 during the WSSD, and 2005 was set as a target for all nations to develop and implement NSDS. Reports show that this target is not being met, and many countries have a long way to go have an NSDS in operation.

NSDS is found on the CSD website complete with interesting and developed indicators. The CSD process is not well known among people and organisations outside the CSD

stakeholder networks. We have earlier identified lack of relevance to national politics and concrete solutions to problems as a 'credibility problem' for CSD. We should therefore look at the connection between what we are doing at the UN CSD in New York and our national concerns as an important element in our deliberations during the CSD processes. The NSDS represents such a connection, and could perhaps be said to be the 'Missing Link' of the CSD world.

#### **4.0 - Now what?**

Outside the plenaries and the panel discussions, in the corridors and at coffee tables our approach will be much the same as before: lobbying to convince. But the result of the lobby endeavours this time is not a policy statement, but a sombre, factual and analytical overview of obstacles, constraints, new factors that will find their ways into the chair's report.

How do we bring these messages into the official thinking, the outcome report? Can we use the old and common NGO devise: Shaming and blaming? Being traditional is probably not surprising or offending anyone. But if we chose this approach – only, we will probably miss out a number of opportunities that the CSD has created, opportunities not properly tried out, because perhaps to use them requires a slightly different mindset from stakeholders within civil society. Are we ready for that!?

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For more detailed information about the CSD, background papers, organization of work etc, please look up the official CSD web-site, at: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/review.htm>