



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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GENDER BALANCE MISSING AT CSD

By June Zeitlin

Executive Director, Women's Environment and Development Organization

Despite the landmark commitment governments made to gender equality as integral to sustainable development at Rio in 1992, reaffirmed in Johannesburg a decade later, and reaffirmed again as a cross cutting issue in CSD-11, we still see only words and not enough action. In the thirteen years the Commission has been meeting, there has never been a woman CSD chair.

Member states cannot fall back on the excuse that there aren't any women ministers to serve in this capacity. The number of women environment ministers has increased to over 40 and in addition there are a growing number of women ministers of water, development and other related fields.

While it may be too late for CSD-14, we are asking member states now to identify a woman to chair CSD-15. Not only is gender balance a question of fundamental fairness, but it is also about bringing a gender perspective to the policy and programs of the CSD. Unfortunately, the CSD reports— from the Secretary General, the Secretariat and the outcome documents of the member states, are too often gender blind or marginalize women as means to achieve the desired end rather than agents of change. What we seek is a chair who will bring a gender equality and women's empowerment perspective to the core of CSD activities. How many more years do we have to wait?

"In the thirteen years the Commission has been meeting, there has never been a woman CSD chair"



ENTRY POINTS FOR MAJOR GROUPS IN THE NEW CSD



A serious discussion on access to the CSD has taken place among NGOs and with delegations. As there is a new 2-year cycle, many claim that the new modalities demand new modus operandi. Some claim that this has been put in place. NGOs have been quick to point out that the earlier Multistakeholder Dialogue sessions held during the first decade of CSD has been done away with to the detriment of an overall input by major groups.

We have with the help of the always willing CSD secretariat made a tally as to the entry points during this new year cycle, and the overall picture doesn't really look that bad.

Whereas the old system functioned during three full sessions totalling 9 hours, this CSD cycle, over two years has allowed for a high number of interventions. Following this, we bring you a tally over the interventions. Using an average of two minutes per intervention, the major groups have actually spoken directly to the delegations for almost 11 hours. Whether these hours were spent equally good, with more impact or with less impact, remains to be seen.

CSD-12
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statements during the Opening Session (9) 2. Statements related to the Overall Review <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Major Groups Participation in Regional and Thematic Discussions <p style="text-align: center;">=</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Total of 86 interventions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Interactive Discussion with major groups (3 hours session) 5. High Level Segment (90 minutes, or 1 ½ hour session) 6. Statements at closing session total 10 minutes.
IPM of CSD-13
<p>Opening day: (28 February, 3.00 to 5.00 pm Conference Room 3) Major Groups outlining their views on policy options and possible actions relevant to the themes of water, sanitation and human settlements</p> <p>Interactive discussions on water, sanitation and human settlements: Approximately 35 interventions</p> <p>Closing statements</p>
CSD-13:
<p>During the 13th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the following entry points have been allocated in the programme to consider the valuable contributions of the Major Groups:</p> <p>Major groups' integrated participation maintained and supported throughout the interactive discussions on water, sanitation and human settlements Tuesday 12 and Wednesday 13 April</p>

WHO WILL BE THE CHAIR NEXT YEAR?

Rumours about next year's CSD cycle and its bureau members were just picking up towards the end of the first CSD week, and gained momentum during the weekend. Many were those who claimed to know, and could substantiate vague rumours into solid speculation.

Although the rumours differed somewhat, the many titbits seemed to correlate around a few names. A tabled discussion in the Vienna Café, late Friday afternoon, clearly showed this.

For obvious reasons the strongest views were expressed over the chair. Hungary and their minister of environment was a favoured candidate and among seasoned CSD participants rumoured to be the next chair. The likelihood of this coming through was less, when another rumour confronted this by claiming with no less certainty that the Netherlands were almost granted one of the seats on the Bureau. -You cannot have two reps from the same geographical region. If

the chair is Hungary, then the Netherlands is out and vice-versa, a veteran CSD observer claimed, sitting bent over a cappuccino at the table.

But Iran is a definite in the Bureau, another claimed seated at the same table, only to be critically questioned about the solidity of such a statement. And showing stubborn certainty about the veracity of the claim, all seemed to believe this. So Iran is in. -But I have heard that Georgia is actually slated to be the Chair next year, they have the backing of the US, and what is worse, they are an oil country, and you know what that implies, a coffee drinker said. People nodded in silence while the cappuccino grew colder.

Then came the bombshell. You do realize the importance of next year's thematic clusters, I mean energy is oil, and climate is Kyoto, and there is one country that wants to dominate both these issues. A veteran major groups delegate claimed to have conformation from a totally reliable source.

- the US will be angling for the Chair's position during the policy segment of the next CSD cycle. And that would mean the end of CSD, the rumour claimed with diabolical authority.

But hey, claimed an optimistic NGO, quenching his thirst with a smoothie - I think that if the US moves into the Chair's position during the policy and implementation year of the climate and energy issues, it is because the present administration now wants to leave a legacy behind that they are actually committed to saving the global climate and developing sustainable energy and clean production.

The content of the assumption was so forceful that all realized it had been a hard week, and that their brains were exhausted. They left the table leaving unfounded rumours to fester alone. But all knew, that by the end of the week, we all would know who would be the chair for the next year. How about a woman?

Chair John W. Ashe:

- NGOs, give me advice!

A pensive John Ashe asked for advice from the NGOs on how to tackle the task of forming the final text of CSD-13. But although provided with many answers, the Chair was hard to please.

It wasn't as exciting as the first time, although a few cameras were still flashing as Dr. John W. Ashe came on his second visit to the NGO morning meeting in conference room B on Friday morning. As he was five minutes early, he had time to read Taking Issue before being put on the spot, and maybe the reading of the NGO reaction to the draft text on page 3 was what triggered his opening question: - Say you have been asked by 200 - 300 people to prepare a document, a short document, about 2-3 pages. Each person wants to see his or her ideas incorporated in the text, as his or her ideas are the most important on the planet. Given that perimeter, what would you do?

The advice

Happy to provide advice to the Chair, the NGOs came up with several answers and suggestions on how to tackle the difficult task:

- Boil it down to what's practical, and take the heat.
- Be specific on who, what and when. We need some deadlines to be able to hold governments accountable. The text says to increase the ODA, but when?
- There are many ways of saying the same thing, you have to find what we have in common. And don't forget what has been said before, in Rio and in Johannesburg.

- The inter-linkages and cross-cutting issues need to be made more visible in the document. Many of these apply to all of the three areas at stake.

- If we want something practical, then we're doing something very impractical in not including the what, who, why and when in the text.

- Even though major groups have had a more prominent position in discussing the text, we have not been listened to, and this is showing in the outcome.

- Somewhere in making the text, you lost us. It would be wise to bring us back in.

- Just changing a simple word can make a lot of difference. Change "access" into "right" and it will mean something. Just say **something** and we'll back you up!, and to this last statement, the more than 100 NGO representatives applauded loudly to show their support.

Not good enough

The chair however, was not happy with the answers given. When numbers and dates were suggested he referred to Monterrey, and said he didn't want to put out numbers that are not credible. NGOs pointed out that the World Bank has given out estimates on minimum numbers that are needed to reach the various goals discussed. These are agreed figures. Ashe also referred to other processes that feed into CSD, and pointed out that his text springs out from the

discussions. - But if delegates or NGOs haven't put it out there, then we can't put it in the text.

When asked to remember what has been said before, Ashe answered that the CSD-13 report needs to be its own report, and different from CSD 1,2,3 etc. He also added that the draft is just one part of the CSD-13 document. - The Matrix still remains in the overall CSD-report, he said.

- Somebody will be excluded

Compared to his first visit, Ashe's big smile had faded a little, and there seemed to be concern about how he would perform the task ahead of him. Said Ashe: - I'm sure just changing one word would make a difference, but for every change made by person x, there's a different suggestion by person y. Everyone is suggesting changes, and everyone has to be treated equally. How do I defend changing one thing, and not another?

But as much as he was open and seemed as though he was listening, he still concluded the meeting by saying that: -I still haven't gotten my answer.

- I think you got several answers, was the reply from chair of the meeting June Zeitlin. - You may not agree with the answers, but I do think we gave you several quite concrete ones.

Ending it all with a big sigh however, Ashe concluded that: - Taking leadership is not the answer to the problem. Somebody will be excluded.

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Cardoso Report and M+ 5: Civil Society Must Stay Engaged!!



The United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service (UN-NGLS) held a briefing earlier this week in which NGOs were given the latest developments regarding the follow-up to the Cardoso Panel's report and the Millennium +5 process. Background information about the Cardoso Panel follow-up and the Millennium+5 Event were provided by NGLS-NY staff Ms. Anja Kallmeyer and Mr. Ian Foucher respectively. Ms. Zehra Aydin, Chief of NGLS-NY office fielded questions from participants.

On the follow-up to the Cardoso Panel's Report, a draft resolution has been tabled by Brazil. Negotiations on the draft are ongoing and a final decision could be expected soon. Ms. Aydin mentioned that some of the Cardoso Panel's recommendations related to improving the UN's engagement with civil society at the national level have been acted upon by the Secretary-General, who has instructed the UN country offices, through the UN Development Group, to start implementation activities such as creating civil society focal points or civil

society advisory groups. She reminded participants that the Cardoso Panel follow-up process deserves stronger support from non-governmental actors, and encouraged NGOs to monitor the process closely, including those activities and initiatives at the national level.

Participants were also informed of some of the entry points for their networks and organizations in the Millennium +5 process, such as the General Assembly interactive hearings planned for 23-24 June 2005. The specific modalities for these hearings are still being formulated, and a small task force of civil society and private sector actors will be assisting the GA President with the related organizational and logistical aspects.

Ms. Aydin informed the participants that, at present, civil society participation in the September event consists of one statement slot that would convey the views of NGOs, civil society and the private sector to the General Assembly plenary. She added that while there has been talk in the corridors regarding more civil society participation,

such as in the September Event's roundtables, these ideas have not so far become part of the formal modalities under review by the General Assembly. She emphasized that civil society needed to be actively engaged in this event, not only because it is a milestone in achieving the Millennium Declaration but also because civil society is likely to be called upon to work in partnership with the UN and its Member States to assist in the implementation efforts in the post-September phase.

Participants were informed that the Secretary-general's report for the M+5 Event, entitled *In Larger Freedom*, has been launched and is being reviewed by Member States. This Report will serve as the basis for the debate and negotiations on the outcome of the September event. In-depth discussions of the recommendations made in this report will take place in the coming weeks under four issue-clusters including: development; peace and security; rule of law and protection of vulnerable peoples; and Strengthening the UN, institutional reform. NGLS will continue to monitor these processes closely and will provide updates through briefings and through its website (www.un-nxls.org)

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“Worry is interest paid on trouble before it is due”

IN LARGER FREEDOM

Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All Some highlights from the S.G's report for the millennium +5 in September

“ The United Nations must be reshaped in ways not previously imagined, and with a boldness and speed not previously shown”

With Development, Security and Human Rights as leading thread, the report offers priority areas for action in 2005 in four fields, below are the excerpts of these priority areas:

I Freedom from want

- National strategies: Each developing country with extreme poverty adopt and begin to implement a national development strategy bold enough to meet the MDG targets for 2015
- Financing for Development: Each developed country should establish a timetable to achieve the 0.7 benchmark no later than 2015
- Trade: Member States should provide duty-free and quota-free market access for all exports from the Least Developed Countries.
- Debt relief: Debt sustainability should be redefined as the level of debt that allows a

country to achieve the MDGs and to reach 2015 without an increase in debt ratio's

II Freedom from Fear

- Preventing catastrophic terrorism: States should commit to a comprehensive anti-terrorism strategy and conclude a comprehensive convention on terrorism
- Nuclear, chemical and biological weapons: Progress on both disarmament and non-proliferation are essential
- Reducing the prevalence and risk of war: Member States should create an inter-governmental Peacebuilding Commission as well as as Peacebuilding Support Office within the UN Secretariat.
- Use of force: The Security Council should adopt a resolution setting out the principles to be applied in decisions relating to the use of force.

III Freedom to live in dignity

- Rule of law: The international community should embrace the “responsibility to protect”, as a basis for collective action against genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

- Human Rights: The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights should be strengthened with more resources and staff.
- Democracy: A democracy Fund should be created at the UN

IV Strengthening the United Nations

- General Assembly: The General Assembly should take bold measures to streamline its Agenda
- Security Council: The Security Council should be broadly representative of the realities of power in today's world
- Economic and Social Council: The Economic and Social Council should be reformed.
- Proposed Human Rights Council: The Commission on Human Rights needs to be replaced by a smaller standing Human Rights Council.
- The Secretariat: The SG will take steps to realign the Secretariat's structure to match the priorities outlined in the report.

To download the report: www.un.org/largerfreedom

MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS/WATER, SANITATION AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

The current cycle of the Commission on Sustainable Development deals with Water, Sanitation and Human Settlements. This cycle corresponds to target 10 and 11 of Millennium Development Goal 7.

- Goal 7: Ensure Environmental Sustainability
 Target 10: Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation
 Target 11: Achieve significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, by 2020

So, how is the world doing in achieving these ambitious goals?

The chart below, which is taken from 'Millennium Development Goals: Progress Report, from the United Nations (the full chart for all goals is available at: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/mdg2004chart.pdf>), shows progress up to September 2004 on target 10 and 11.

Goals and Targets	Africa 840 million (Population 2002)			Asia 3,738 million			Oceania 8 million	Latin America & Caribbean 538 million	Commonwealth of Independent States (former republics of the Soviet Union) 281 million	
	Northern	Sub-Saharan	Eastern	Southeastern	Southern	Western			Europe	Asia
Halve proportion without improved drinking water in urban areas	met	no change	decline in access	high access but no change	met	met	high access but no change	met	met	met
Halve proportion without improved drinking water in rural areas	high access but little change	progress but lagging	progress but lagging	progress but lagging	on track	progress but lagging	low access, no change	progress but lagging	high access but limited change	high access but limited change
Halve proportion without sanitation in urban areas	on track	low access, no change	progress but lagging	on track	on track	met	high access but no change	high access but no change	high access but no change	high access but no change
Halve proportion without sanitation in rural areas	progress but lagging	no significant change	progress but lagging	progress but lagging	progress but lagging	no significant change	no significant change	progress but lagging	no significant change	no significant change
Improve the lives of slum-dwellers	on track	rising number & proportion of slum-dwellers	progress but lagging	on track	some progress	rising number & proportion of slum-dwellers	--	progress but lagging	low but no change	low but no change

THE CARDOSO REPORT

Some highlights from the S.G's report on civil society

'Public opinion has become a key factor influencing intergovernmental and governmental policies and actions. The involvement of a diverse range of actors, including those from civil society and the private sector, as well as local authorities and parliamentarians, is not only essential for effective action on global priorities but is also a protection against further erosion of multilateralism. This presents an opportunity as well as a challenge to the United Nations: the opportunity to harness new capacities and diverse experience to address some of the most exacting challenges the world faces today and the challenge of balancing its unique intergovernmental characteristic with being open to work with new actors in a profound way.' (quote from Cardoso report).

The set of reforms that is proposed in the report "We the Peoples: Civil Society, the United Nations and Global Governance" also known as 'the Cardoso report' is based on four main principles – or paradigms:

- Become an outward-looking organization. The changing nature of multilateralism to mean multiple constituencies entails the United Nations giving more emphasis to convening and facilitating rather than "doing" and putting the issues, not the institution, at the centre.
- Embrace a plurality of constituencies. Many actors may be relevant to an issue, and new partnerships are needed to tackle global challenges.
- Connect the local with the global. The deliberative and operational spheres of the United Nations are separated by a wide gulf, which hampers both in all areas from development to security. A closer two-way connection between them is imperative so that local operational work truly helps to realize the global goals and that global deliberations are informed by local reality. Civil society is vital for both directions. Hence the country level should be the starting point for engagement in both the operational and deliberative processes.
- Help strengthen democracy for the twenty-first century. The United Nations should accept a more explicit role in strengthening global governance and tackling the democratic deficits it is prone to, emphasizing participatory democracy and deeper accountability of institutions to the global public.

WESTERN DELEGATIONS MEET WITH MAJOR GROUPS

The US delegation met with Major Groups on Thursday. The format of the meeting was in response to Major Group concerns after a similar meeting at the IPM when US representatives presented their views; but the format of the meeting prohibited a full and open exchange of views through dialogue.

Major Groups underlined the importance of holding both Multi Stakeholder as well as Interactive Dialogues at CSD sessions, underlining that Multi Stakeholder Dialogues were an important opportunity for many Groups to express their views and bring experience to the table. There were also calls for stakeholder involvement throughout the entire CSD cycle. It was also underlined that there is a need for a stronger emphasis in the Chair's text for IWRM to take an ecosystem-based approach.

The EU delegation met with Major Groups on Friday. All Major Groups represented, supported a call for a clearer definition of responsibilities and timeline in the text as proposed by the chair.

The EU made it clear this had their attention and that they would be in touch with the G77 on this. The EU also made it clear that they are sympathetic to a rights-based approach and find this a crucial issue but that they are currently looking into what this might mean in terms of practical implementation, e.g. consequences for ODA and delivery of MDGs. Reference was made to the fact that a number of countries have the provision of free drinking water arranged by law whereas cost recovery is a principle of the (EU) water framework. In response, it was highlighted by a NGO Major Group representative, that a rights-based approach is not (necessarily) equal to free water.

Respective Major Groups stressed the need for a clearer reference to farmers, workers, youth and indigenous people in the Chair's text. Local Government and Trade Unions/Workers underlined the need for recognition of the role local government plays in the provision of services with regard to water and sanitation and the danger of unfunded mandates. Clear reference to decentralization (inclusive of financial arrangements) was called for.

The EU indicated that they would want to see the Pro Poor Approach (underlining the linkages between the themes) covered in the 'chapeau' of the Chair's text. In response to a question on institutional arrangements for follow-up it was stated that the EU would recommend national follow-up with broad stakeholder involvement.



Hopefully they will listen...

Among the comforts of New York it may be hard to grasp the sanitation problems faced by people throughout the world. Flying toilets is not a reality. Clean water is taken for granted. Not so for Belita Katela, resident of the famous Nairobi-slum Kibera:

Belita Katela moved to Kibera outside Nairobi in 1972. Her husband and his family were not treating her well, she was not from what they considered to be a good tribe, and she'd finally had it. Only 20 years old and with five kids, she made her way from Changamwe in Mombasa, to Kibera, Nairobi. But not the Kibera we know today: the largest slum in sub-saharan Africa. A Kibera that pretty much looked like what Kibera means in Nubian: Bushes/forest. – There used to be just a few houses here and there. It was cleaner then. We had trees and grass and plantations in between the scattered houses. The Nairobi dam was also cleaner.

- It was too filthy.

Katela started up a business selling charcoal and vegetables at the market, and although as she says it's not the best business, it fed her kids. In 1983 however, the masses started flocking to Nairobi, from all over the country, looking for a better life in the city, for better jobs. Between 1985 – 1987 Kibera became a slum, says Katela. – Sanitation was getting messed up.

It got to the point where Katela and her neighbors in the slum couldn't take it anymore. It was too much, it was too filthy. – Everybody was using flying toilets. You know, you do your business in a plastic bag, and then you just throw it away. A poor soul walking by your house could get it in the face! It was too bad. People were also getting sick, recalls Katela. Water borne diseases, diarrhea, problems with their digestive systems, malaria due to all the mosquitoes, it was a mess. – After the rain, all the filth would be taken to the Nairobi dam, and you can just imagine how that looks today. The final drop was the plastic water pipelines. The plastic was not sturdy, and the pipes would be full of holes. As the drinking water in the pipelines was mixed with sewage the situation worsened to an unimaginable, and to Katela an unacceptable state.

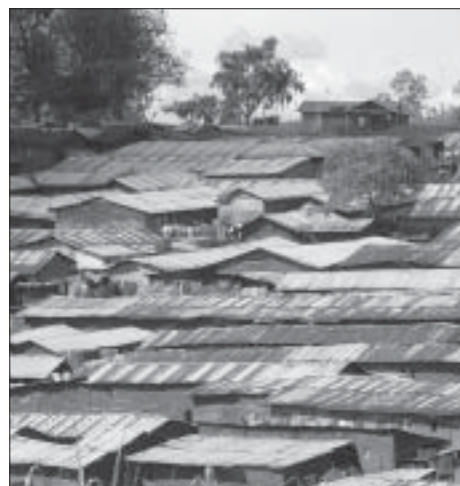
High tech!

It was 1995 when Katela and 9 other friends started up their Community Based Sanitation Organization "Ushirika Wa Usafi, Kibera Laini Saba". The organization set out to find donors to help them deal with their problems, and

found valuable allies in "Water Aid", Maji na Ufanisi (Water and Development), AMREF (African Medical Research Foundations) and UN-Habitat. Together they changed the pipelines, and acquired four large water tanks. The clean water from the tanks is not only used as drinking water for the people of Laini Saba, one of the Kibera regions, it is also sold by them, for the affordable price of 2 Kenya shillings for a full jerry can of 20 liters. – It's business as usual, smiles Katela, adding that the market price for clean water lies around 5 Kenya shillings or more for the same amount.

Katela and her organization also got 3 community toilets. – They're high tech, smiles Katela, comparing them to the more usual latrines, basic holes in the ground that most homes in Kibera use today. The "high-tech" toilets cost around one million Kenya shillings and are known as the million toilets. Using the toilet costs 2 Kenya Shillings, while showering costs 3 Kenya Shillings. – People can afford that, assures Katela. – The money goes to keeping the toilets clean. And according to Katela, people in Laini Saba, maybe even in regions surrounding this area, prefer to use the community shower, rather than using their own. – You know, it's high-tech. Water is coming from above and everything. At home they may just have a bucket.

And adding with a big smile: - A woman that comes from Kibera, the first thing she will find out when getting married, is if the man has a toilet. He doesn't need to have a lot of money, as long as he has a toilet!



- Don't move us!

Life in Kibera is better now. The flying toilets are not as frequent as they used to be, at least not in Laini Saba where Katela lives, still with her five kids, all but one married. And Katela's CBO and their work has inspired other people to do the same in other regions of Kibera. But just as the sanitation situation is being dealt with, the hot news on the street is that the government wants to upgrade the large slum. Word has it people are to be moved an hour away from the present area to a place called Athi River. – This is not good because being moved will affect jobs, many people work in Nairobi, they will not be able to get to work. People have grown up here, it's their home, it's our home! And we have done so much to improve the conditions, if they move us we have to start all over again. A lot of money and effort has been put into our projects.

Katela's suggestion is that the upgrade be done in phases. As one area is finished, the people who lived there get to move in. – Just don't move us, she repeats.

Another concern however, is whether the new and upgraded houses would actually be given to the former slum dwellers, or if they would fall into the hands of people with more money to spend. – It is very important to make sure we get the houses, states Katela.

Full of hope

Getting from Kibera to New York to participate in the CSD-13 was not easy for the charcoal and vegetable seller Belita Katela. According to the embassy in Nairobi, a woman from the Kibera slum has nothing to do in New York. But Katela made it. She had to take two months off work and shut down her business to get it all done, but she made it to New York, she's here to tell her story. And as much as she doesn't always know all that goes on at the CSD, Katela only speaks Kikuyu and Swahili, she is full of hope when it comes to what can be achieved. – Understandably, everybody has come from some place. Everybody knows about life. So even if people have not been to Kibera, they know. Our ministers are coming next week, and hopefully our concerns about Kibera will be voiced. Hopefully, they will listen.

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CENTRAL AMERICAN AND MEXICO ORGANIZATIONS IN ACTION FOR FRESHWATER

By: Jorge Mora Portuguese M.Sc. and Alejandra Salazar M.Sc.

Central American and Mexico organisations are promoting the transformation of the legal and institutional framework of water and pushing to make more visible local experiences, as feasible management alternatives that could contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in the region

Regional Water Resources Strategy

The Ministries of Environment, Health and Agriculture of Central America have been working for more than two years on a regional strategy for water management that includes the definition of policies, guidelines and common programs for all countries of the region.

The Central American social organizations have joined this process, actively participating through multi-stakeholder dialogues with representatives of the three Ministries, of the National Congresses and other Governmental Agencies.

One of the main outcomes of this significant process has been the elaboration and validation of a document of principles on which the development of this Regional Strategy is based.

Amongst these principles, the explicit recognition of access to water as a human right stands out. Other important principles contained in this document are the recognition of water as a public good; public participation in the decision-making processes; the incorporation of an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) vision; a River Basin approach; and the decentralization of water management.

New Water Laws in Central America

Four countries in the Central American Region (Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica) are in the process of establishing new water laws, to bring up



to date the normative framework for the management of this resource.

The social organizations linked to FANCA (Freshwater Action Network Central America) have made an effort to participate in these processes, by incorporating themselves in the Technical Committees that are drafting the new laws, by creating new proposals, participating and organizing workshops, meetings and public hearings, to contribute proactively to the drafting of these new legal instruments.

For this, the social organizations linked to this process, defined a series of principles and common objectives to be achieved with the new laws, such as the incorporation in

each of their countries of the principles contained in the Regional Water Resources Strategy on water as a human right and a public good, citizen participation, IWRM, decentralized water management, to name just a few.

Successful Local Experiences in Water Management

Approximately 20% of the population in Central America (more than 10 million people) is supplied with potable water through Communal Water Boards; who do an extraordinary job in spite of the deficient technical and economic resources and materials with which they have to work with.

The Central American social organizations feel that these types of management experiences should be promoted in the region, based on the accumulated knowledge of local actors, who operate with lower costs than large companies or state institutions and provide a service many times more efficient.

Such experiences are an extraordinary alternative to the privatization processes that the incursions of multinational companies in the water management of the region promote and which put at risk the 'public good' character of the resource.

Towards the 4th World Water Forum

The social organizations of the Network in Central America and Mexico are actively preparing themselves to participate in the 4th World Water Forum taking place in Mexico in 2006. At the moment, FANCA is a member of the Operative Committee of the Americas; the latter has the purpose of preparing the participation of the American continent in the Forum and to take part in the selection of the case studies that will be presented therein.

HOUSING RIGHTS, PRIVATIZATION AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS

An Underdeveloped Debate in CSD 13

Neither sustainable development nor sustainable human settlements are possible without respect, protection, fulfillment, promotion and monitoring of all human rights by their primary and subsidiary duty holders.

This statement is taken from an invitation to a side event organized by HIC, the Habitat International Coalition. Throughout an almost two-hour long discussion, several points were made. What follows is a resume of the major points.

Concerns in Africa

- Large water companies have a monopoly in the water sector, while there are thousands of smaller companies in the water sector that do not have access to the market nor to the public funds.
- There is a need for better handling of Official Development Assistance and better management of public funds.
- A lot of pollution is caused by Industry near water resources, while Industry is not

contributing to cleaning up this water nor do they contribute to the needed infrastructure for freshwater resources.

- The market is corrupted at all levels

Concerns of UN-Habitat

- In the Universal Declaration on Human Right from 1948, the right to adequate housing was already stated. Yet, a large number of people are forcefully evicted in many countries, secure tenure is not discussed sufficiently at CSD 13
- There is an urgent need to review MDG target 11. At present there are 970 million people living in slums, this figure is expected to rise to 1.6 billion people by the year 2020. The target to improve the lives of merely 100 million slum dwellers is clearly inadequate and not in harmony with the other targets
- Getting the language of a rights-based approach in the text is only half the battle, the implementation of that language remains the major challenge.

Concerns in richer countries

The issue of Human Settlements is not only an issue of concern for the poor countries. There also exist severe problems in richer countries such as in Europe or the US.

- Not only in the US, but also on a global level the supply of affordable housing is decreasing rapidly as a result of corporate development and privatisation. The same trend is visible in the water sector.
- The cuts in subsidized housing lead to 'forced evictions'. For example, in the US cuts in subsidies for housing results in a tripling in the rent that cannot be afforded by people that rely on those subsidies.

Weakening level of integration

- If you compare this CSD with the Habitat II conference that took place in 1996 in Istanbul, the level of integration is growing weaker. How can there be any progress on sustainable development if the governments are not building on the agreements that were already made, what is then the added value of this conference?
- A strategy is needed on how to achieve the right to housing and move beyond Human Rights just being principles. A strategy needs to be found with the participation of those people that need these rights the most.

kk

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." (article 25(1))

On Friday April 15, a breakthrough on one important issue emerged when members of the EU delegation proposed to "clarify" that MDG Target 11 calls for a net addition to reversing the rapid growth of slum conditions which would affect another 500 million people by 2020. Calling for "clarification rather than "revision" of the target avoids renegotiating the MDG Target.

The Habitat International Coalition (HIC) proposes the following amendments to the CSD Chair's April 13 Draft Report to achieve this objective:

Insert after Section D. (w) in the April CSD-13 Draft Report the following:

"Clarify that MDG-7, Target 11 refers to reversing the growth of populations living under slum conditions as defined by UN Habitat, in addition to significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers, and to specify national targets for both aspects of Target 11"

The Habitat International Coalition is the leading global network of more than 400 social movements and NGO's working on housing rights and human settlements issues. HIC proposes the following amendment to the CSD Chair's April 13 Draft Report to achieve this objective.



QUESTION OF THE DAY



We are at the end of the first week, has anything been accomplished?

Yunia Musaazi, Wateraid, Uganda

- I think we are half way there. Most recommendations have been incorporated in the Chair's draft. Now it is up to the Chair to incorporate the plea for deadlines, and the plea for who is responsible for the commitments made.



June Zeitlin, WEDO, United States

- On the plus side, Major Groups have had the opportunity to present their views in a number of sessions; we are very pleased about this. Unfortunately the comments made by the Major Groups did not seem to be heard because the Chair's summary is even more reductionist than the document we started with and does not explicitly address or incorporate the basic Human Right to water, gender equality or linkage to achieving the MDG's.



Jeremiah Johnson, Human Rights Advocates, United States

- Yes, the first week the process has been accomplished. Another thing that has been accomplished is the gathering of all the NGOs. I think that what the NGO's do and how they work together should be recognized as an accomplishment. It is very important to be here. However, what came out of the conference room can not be seen as an accomplishment.

... and the Chair's TEXT arrives ...



Contribute to Taking Issue

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