



# Taking ISSUE

**The Sustainable Development Issues Network**

Volume 4, Issue 1  
Monday, April 19, 2004

A Daily publication of the Sustainable Development Issues Network (SDIN)  
at the Twelfth Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development

## STAKES ARE HIGH AT A NEW CSD

**A new CSD – a new concept, new modalities, new approaches, new understanding, - a credible reason for hope? But with the same old problems and the same deck of cards, will the new CSD suffice to get sustainable development back on the international agenda?**



There was an upbeat feeling among the responsible organisers of CSD 12 as they addressed representatives of the major groups on Sunday. So far, the response to the new CSD from the international community has been almost overwhelming. Close to a hundred ministers have said they will be attending this year's high level segment. Much thanks to the diligent and concentrated efforts by the Chair of CSD, the Norwegian Minister of Environment, Mr. Børge Brende, more than just environment ministers will be participating. Ministers of Finance, of housing, of water will also participate in this year's CSD deliberations. Several UN Chiefs will also address the CSD, and rumour has it, even the Secretary General, Kofi Annan himself might appear among the speakers.

### Governance put to the test

The new concept involves a new set of modalities as well. From day one, the approach is new. All 9 major groups will be heard during the plenary sessions, the chair might ask government officials to directly respond to statements made by the major groups. Scientists have been invited to provide the audiences with cutting edge information on the three issues of this CSD: water, sanitation and human settlements. The interactive sessions will be run on a parallel basis, and Brende emphasised that the meetings in the two conference rooms, 1 and 2 were of equal importance, and the major groups will be allowed to address the official sessions on an equal basis with the

governments. In a unique way, global governance is being tested. What was started back in Rio in 1992 where representatives of civil society negotiated directly with governments has thus been developed and further promoted by this year's CSD bureau and their Chairman, the Norwegian Minister of Environment, Børge Brende.

### Success or failure – our choice

With 80 side events, a large partnership seminar, and above all a multilateral governance experiment, the present CSD bureau has raised the stakes to a high level. This CSD is not a CSD where texts will be negotiated. The conference is a review conference, to see whether or not any progress has been made in the realm of implementation. With the MDGs and the Johannesburg Conference came time bound measures. Deadlines have been agreed upon – and the world expects to see results. Failing to reach the agreed targets warrants serious reviews. This CSD will address this serious and complex problem matter. The content and outcome of CSD 12 will outline the direction of CSD 13, and the outcome of next year's CSD will have a direct bearing on the 5-year review of the MDGs proposed to take place in September 2005.

Indeed – the stakes are high, as we all slowly move this year's CSD through uncharted waters. In two weeks we will know the result of our common efforts, and we all have a stake in making this CSD a success or failure.

- jgs

## In this Issue

1. Stakes are high at a new CSD
2. General NGO Information note

## Meeting schedule

MONDAY 19, APRIL 2004

- 9.00 - 10.00, NGO Organising Partners
- 10.00 - 11.00, NGO Steering Committee
- 11.00 - 12.00, Freshwater
- 12.00 - 1.00, Human Settlements
- 1.00 - 2.00, Indigenous Peoples
- 2.00 - 3.00, Youth
- 3.00 - 4.00, Africa
- 4.00 - 5.00, Sustainable Production and Consumption
- 5.00 - 6.00, Energy
- 6.00 - 7.00, Trade Unions
- 7.00 - 8.00, Caucus Coordination

All meetings in Conference Room B

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Visit the SDIN morning strategy meetings for reports from working groups, information sharing and strategic discussions. SDIN Morning Meetings are open to all NGOs.

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

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

*Taking Issue is published with support of the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and with the support of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)*

## GENERAL NGO INFORMATION NOTE

### Sustainable Development Issues Network

Dear friends and Colleagues,

This is to inform you of the activities of the Sustainable Development Issues Network (SDIN) during the 12th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 12). For those of you coming to CSD 12, please read this information carefully to see what is being organised especially to support you in your work during CSD 12.

SDIN is set up by the NGO issue caucusses (groupings of NGOs focussing on a particular issue) to support co-ordination between issue-caucusses and to, in general, facilitate the input of NGOs during sessions of the CSD. It is an NGO self-organised facility, that does not aim to "steer" NGO input, but aims at ensuring that the means are present for effective co-operation and input focussed on the issues that are on the agenda of the CSD. The Secretariat of the CSD (UN DESA) has asked SDIN to be the NGO major group organising partner for this CSD.

CSD 12 is the start of a new format for the Commission. During this CSD, governments, UN institutions and the 9 major groups will be reviewing progress made in implementing Agenda 21, the outcomes of the 1997 UN General Assembly Special Session and the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. The focus is on identifying progress or lack thereof, and obstacles to adequate implementation.

In order to do this effectively, major groups are given an extensive role during this session. Each major group is granted a time slot during the opening sessions of each working group, and during the closing sessions. There is also a time-slot during the High Level segment. Each Major Group is also

given a permanent seat during the formal deliberations, with the possibility to intervene from the floor. Please refer to the annotated agenda available on the CSD website for more information.

In order to ensure that the NGO input is substantial and effective, the SDIN facilitators have developed several tools. Already, a major group paper has been written in a participatory and consultative manner, and submitted to the UN (it is available online at the CSD website).

SDIN has arranged for several opportunities for NGOs to work together in order to have a substantial input in the CSD meetings.

1) **Daily: 9:00 AM to 10:00 AM in Room B of the United Nations Building.**

SDIN is organising the NGO Major Group Organising Partners' morning meetings. These are intended to strategise for the day at hand, share information and intelligence, make announcements about events and jointly discuss issues at play. They are intended for everyone to catch up with the formal process.

2) **Taking Issue:**

SDIN is producing a daily newsletter aimed at giving a platform for caucusses and NGOs present to provide all participants during the CSD with news or information in written form. NGOs participating in CSD 12 may write and submit articles to Taking Issue. Please note that these articles will be subject to editorial review.

3) **Website:**

<http://www.sdissues.net> will be the website where most up-to-date information on the work of the caucusses will be posted. In addition, general announcements for NGOs will be posted there.

We hope that these tools will be useful to your work. We urge you to use them as much as possible.

We look forward to working with you during CSD 12.

Sincerely,

THE SDIN FACILITATORS

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### Contribute to Taking Issue

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

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ANPED, The Northern Alliance for Sustainability

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*The editors reserve the right to refuse articles or edit for length and clarity*

