



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

Environment Ministers recognize obstacles to environmental progress

By Pieter van der Gaag, Executive Director, ANPED

As the 12th session of the CSD started on Monday, OECD environment ministers gathered in Paris for their OECD Environmental Policy Committee meeting at Ministerial level- an event that takes place once every three to four years. As there was little decision making to be done, the ministers had ample time to discuss, freely, issues currently on the global environmental agenda.

In discussing the difficulties in implementing the OECD Environmental Strategy, environment ministers agreed that the main problem is not their willingness to move forward, but the obstacles put up by society and other departments. Discussions centred around three areas: the fear of loss of economic welfare, competitiveness, and budgetary constraints. The ministers did approve some recommendations to be made to the OECD-Council- made up of ministers of finance, trade or economic affairs. The Council is the one that makes the decisions.

Stakeholders on the inside

For the first time in the history of OECD environment ministers meetings, stakeholders were invited not only to participate in a consultation, but also to take a seat during the official session. For that reason, WWF, the European Environment Bureau, Greenpeace International, Friends of the Earth International, the US Natural Resources Defence Council (representing the Climate Action Network), and ANPED, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability were present during the meeting.

Near official silence

Environment Minister Martin Cullen of Ireland, the chair of the ministerial meeting concluded the Monday-afternoon stakeholder consultation, by saying that it had been one of the most interesting meetings he had ever participated in. In a three-way debate, Business, Trade Unions and Environmental NGOs covered four significant subject areas: Climate Change and Energy; Globalisation, Trade and Environment; Decoupling and Resource

efficiency; and Technology Innovation to Address Environmental Challenges. Certainly minister Cullen and his vice-chair minister Somestad of Sweden, participated fully in a question and answer session with Stakeholders. The debate was interestingly enough marked by near silence on the part of the few ministers present or the civil servants that took the place of their not yet arrived bosses.

Official Session

During the official session, the ministers came and spoke. The official meeting was filled with ministers from all OECD states, who focused on implementation of the OECD's environmental strategy, as adopted in 2001. Ministers spoke extensively about increasing their commitment to combating climate change, including the need to ratify and implement Kyoto. Some ministers suggested that already states should look beyond Kyoto and focus on the next steps. NGOs and Trade Unions agreed that it was crucial to get the general public on board, and that hence the gains societies can make in combating climate change must be communicated. The OECD has provided a great deal of arguments against competitiveness concerns, and ministers agreed that fear of loss of competitiveness in a particular industry or sector is outweighed by the overall gains society makes.

Next week these same ministers will participate in the debate during the High level segment of CSD 12. Hopefully the OECD debate in Paris was an appetiser to spur on brave and resolute speeches on sustainable development at CSD the coming week.

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Meeting schedule

FRIDAY 23, APRIL 2004

- 9.00 - 10.00, NGO Organising Partners
- 10.00 - 11.00, Peace
- 11.00 - 12.00, Freshwater
- 12.00 - 1.00, Human settlements
- 1.00 - 2.00, Indigenous Peoples
- 3.00 - 4.00, Africa
- 4.00 - 5.00, Sust. Product. & Consumpt
- 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 financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and with logistical support of the World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)

“Water for Agriculture in Africa”

The Africa Caucus held its second meeting during the CSD-12 and was honoured to host high level guests, including Mr. Halifah Drammeh, Deputy Director of the UNEP Division of Policy Development and Law (DPDL) and Chair of Africa UN-Waters, Dr. Niels Ipsen from the UNEP Collaborating Centre on Water and Environment (DHI), Mrs. Isatou Gaye from the Sustainable Development Division of UNECA, and Mr. Anantha Krishnan, Civil Society Coordinator at UN-Habitat

By Fatou Ndoye, NESDA - FACS

The Africa Caucus focused on the theme “Water for agriculture in Africa”, a sector that has often been left out in discussions around water. The introductory presentation was made by Mr. Moussa Seck from *ENDA Syspro* and highlighted three basic facts:

- Generally Africa does not lack water!
- The equator divides Africa into two with temperate zones to the North and to the South, thus giving the region the possibility of producing all crops that are grown in the world and throughout all seasons of the year!
- Africa is not a problem; it is a solution to its own problems! So then, why is Africa suffering from hunger?

Seck observed that the main constraint in water availability in Africa is in its control, management and distribution. He lamented the fact that although the continent receives substantial amounts of rainwater, most of it goes to waste when it drains into the sea. Water is not harnessed effectively for agriculture, leaving the continent to wallow in poverty and hunger. In his opinion, Africa was capable of being self-sufficient in food production and could easily feed the rest of the world because of its geographical advantage. However, lack of effective regional integration has jeopardised effective water resources management and agro-pastoral land use. Africa has failed to take

advantage of its rivers and lake basins, as only 12% of its water resources are used.

According to Seck Africa suffers from poor leadership. There is lack of political dynamism and leadership in the continent today like that exhibited by past visionary leaders like Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and King Hassan II of Morocco who transformed their countries into economic giants by investing in irrigation agriculture. Seck believes that the solution lies with African leadership who should show greater political will, adoption of modern technology and investments in agriculture and water infrastructure, that will lead to significant increases in yields per hectare under cultivation.

There was consensus at the meeting that among the challenges facing Africa, governance was key, as Africa has to deal both with water scarcity and abundance, and hence has to focus on policy options, development patterns and regional integration. In addition, participants saw the misuse of financial and technological resources as well as flight of intellectual

capital and environmental degradation as major concerns that require serious attention.

The meeting also called for concerted efforts by the CSOs in Africa to contribute to policy review in an organised manner and through regional platforms like the Forum of African Civil Society Organisations for Sustainable Development (FACS-SD, convener of the Africa Caucus meeting). The CSOs role should focus on looking into the policies at the regional level and come up with responses in terms of advocacy strategies as they relate to bodies such as the African Ministerial Conference on Water (AMCOW), the African Ministers of Environment Conference (AMCEN) and UN-Waters. Where governments have dragged their feet, the caucus proposed that this gap be filled by CSOs. Participants suggested that unlike governments, CSOs should refrain from “talking the talk” and begin to “walk the talk”.



Statement by THE WORLD FORUM OF FISHER PEOPLES (WFFP)

NOTING that throughout the world poor fisher and coastal communities are dependent on marine and coastal ecosystems for their food security and livelihoods, and that these ecosystems are inextricably linked to freshwater sources whether through groundwater, rivers, streams or dams;

NOTING that land based pollution is the cause of over 80% of the global pollution of marine water;

NOTING that land based pollution and unchecked tourist development, often in the guise of 'eco-tourism', has caused extensive damage to marine and coastal waters, threatening the livelihoods of millions of coastal dwellers; and in the light of the fact that the FAO has recognised that small scale and artisanal fishing is more sustainable than large scale fishing due to the fact that it supports local livelihoods, uses less destructive fishing gear and is labour intensive;

and that Agenda 21 amongst several other United Nations instruments requires that member states recognise the need to protect and promote the rights of small scale, artisanal and indigenous coastal dwellers

We call on the Commission on Sustainable Development, all the governments present at this 12th Session of the Commission, together with representatives from Civil Society Organisations to ensure that

This meeting of the Commission recognises the critical interdependence of freshwater systems with those of marine and coastal ecosystems;

Commits the international community to integrated water management systems that address the flows of water from land to sea and addresses the resultant impact of these flows and land based pollution on fisher and coastal communities;

Recognises the rights of fisher and coastal communities to sustainable development, food security and livelihoods;

Ensures that fisher and indigenous coastal communities participate in decision-making regarding water and coastal management, and that

International programmes to address poverty and food security recognise the interdependence of these issues with the economic policies and fishing policies pursued by member states and that they therefore adopt a holistic approach to these problems by outlawing fishing policies that lead to the destruction of the livelihoods of fisher and indigenous coastal communities.



INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE, CSD12, 20TH APRIL 2004. PRESENTATION BY WOMEN AS A MAJOR GROUP

Water has a woman's face, and it is through women's hands that households, families, communities and whole economies are sustained.



There are many challenges ahead of us. We wish to commend the efforts by all stakeholders to safeguard our precious water resources for the future. In this respect, we point to the recognition of the human right to water in the Secretary-General's reports for CSD12. However, as we have documented in many regions, the commodification of water makes it an unaffordable resource for many. Privatization processes have proved to take water resources out of the hands of poor women.

It is women living in crisis and complex emergencies, such as conflict, war, natural disasters and environmental change, that need our special attention. They bear the burden of scarcity of water resources, sanitation and shelter. And violence towards women and children is prevalent. Such a situation is right now occurring in Darfur, Sudan, where armed forces driving out the local population have clogged up the wells with

dead animals and where women and young girls are subjected to rape, when trying to gain access to water.

Still in the water, sanitation and housing sector gender inequality is prevalent. However, we'd like to recall that most countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Yet in many of these countries it has not been used as a crosscutting instrument to link the elimination of discrimination with access to and ownership of resources in the areas of water, sanitation and human settlements. An interesting initiative has been taken by the United Republic of Tanzania, which has used the convention to expand constitutional guarantees of equality to access land and other natural resources.

The specific involvement of women as local and global actors in water, sanitation and human settlements is essential. It will result in gender

equity and gender equality, as well as sustainable development.

- We are disappointed that at CSD12 women represent only 15% of the invited panel experts, versus 85% male representation.
- It is not only an issue of numbers, but of quality. Representation of women's perspectives and expertise can be raised if the Secretary General's High-level Expert Panel on Water and Sanitation incorporates local women's and civil society's perspectives.
- We recommend that in all the Integrated Water Resources Management and Water Efficiency Plans due in 2005, the women's perspective is incorporated and equal representation is guaranteed in its implementation.

There are already many examples of effective gender mainstreaming in water, sanitation and human settlements. They are well documented in our discussion paper which has been distributed by the CSD. There are also several side-events organized by women's groups that demonstrate women's successful initiatives. They illustrate how women are a powerful force for change. We invite all of you here at the CSD, governments, U.N. Agencies and other Major Groups to keep women at the center of your approaches and out of the margins.

Widespread Support for Global Review of Private Sector Participation in Water and Sanitation

By Penny Urquhart

While private sector representatives involved in the delivery of water services and civil society groupings that have been fighting “privatisation” of water may seem to have little common ground, there is one thing they do agree on: the need for a global review of past performance. This conclusion became increasingly apparent as the Global Water Scoping Process unfolded over the past six months. This was an independent process guided by a multistakeholder Working Group composed of organisations with widely differing perspectives on private sector participation (PSP) in water. The organisations are:

- ASSEMAE (Brazilian association of municipal water and sanitation public operators);
- Consumers International (International federation of consumer advocacy NGOs);
- Environmental Monitoring Group (South African NGO);
- Public Services International (International labour federation);
- RWE Thames Water (Multinational water services corporation); and
- WaterAid (International development NGO).

Broad range of actors

The Global Water Scoping Process has systematically interviewed the broad range of actors in the water community over the past six months. Approximately 300 organisations and individuals, from different groupings in the water sector, agree that a global review of the impact of private sector participation is needed to help meet the UN’s Millennium Development Goals for water and sanitation. Thus the vision is in line with the CSD 12 focus on meeting the MDGs. Participants in the Scoping Process

included members of poor communities, bankers and corporate managers; pro-poor and slum dweller advocates; NGOs focused on development or environment, unions, consumer groups, public utilities, representatives of the donor community, politicians, and government officials and regulators. While there was a diversity of perspectives about the specific impacts of private sector participation in water and sanitation, there was widespread agreement about the positive impact of organising a multistakeholder review of the issues. The final report of the Scoping Process, containing the call for such a review, was presented at a press conference on 20 April at the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in New York City.

Global Review of PSP

People interviewed feel that a Global Review of PSP is urgently needed to shed new light on an issue that is dividing the international water community and deflecting attention away from meeting the water and sanitation needs of the poor. The involvement of private companies in water supply services ignites controversy around the world. Privatisation, commodification, corporate control, commercialisation, conditionalities, pre-paid water meters – these can and have sparked protests and

demonstrations throughout the world, and have even led to the downfall of governments. Yet the private sector does make a significant contribution to reducing the large number of people in developing countries who lack access to safe water and effective sanitation. Participants in the Scoping Process feel that an independent, balanced assessment of past experience with both the large- and small-scale private sector is needed in order to make more sustainable decisions about delivery of water and sanitation services.

The Global Water Scoping Process originated at the 2001 Bonn International Conference on Freshwater, where there was much discussion on the merits of holding a global review of PSP. The Scoping Process was supported by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), with support channelled via German Technical Cooperation (GTZ).

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Trade Unions Deliver Sustainable Development Performance Profiles to each CSD Government Delegation at UN in New York.

By Lucien Royer, ICFTU/TUAC

The leader of each government delegation at the UN meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) in New York this week is being hand-delivered an evaluation profile of their country's performance along selected environmental, social and workplace indicators.

A trade union delegation at the CSD is making contact with every government delegation or NY Mission office to invite the country's involvement in creating a sustainable development evaluation process with their trade unions back home.

Both Guy Ryder, General Secretary of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and John Evans, General Secretary of the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) have signed an individually addressed letter to each country delegation inviting their feedback on the results of their analysis. A copy of each country letter is available upon request but profiles can be viewed (for each or all countries) at: <http://www.tuac.org/statemen/communiq/kit-Count-profile.pdf>

A Sustainable Development Profile for Each Country

"We will be developing this process with other Major Groups at the CSD", says the letter, pointing to the inclusion of the WWF "Footprint" ranking for their country's capita consumption rating. However they say the focus will be on indicators that will help workers and trade unions implement sustainable development at the workplace level. The summary profile indicates measures the country has or has not

taken with respect to Occupational Health and Safety, including the performance on chemical issues (including asbestos that trade unions want banned), as well as industrial accidents, HIV/AIDS, cancer prevention and sickness compensation issues, which they say are issues central to sustainable development.

"Workplace Assessments" Issues For Sustainable Development

The letter also highlights what CSD should do about implementing a WSSD call to strengthen the link between occupational and public health and encourages the country to become involved in activities back home for the 28 April International Commemoration Day for Dead and Injured Workers.

Country profiling

"The main purpose of our country profiling exercise is to seek your support for engaging workers, trade unions and employers in your country in joint workplace actions for change", the letter says. "We advocate Workplace Assessments, which apply to all production and consumption issues and can facilitate change in peoples work and daily lives". Trade unions at CSD have planned a special presentation about their partnership with ILO, UNEP and a Swedish Development TCO development Group about workplace tools for facilitating such a process: 3pm Tuesday 27 April at CSD.

Rights at work

CSD Countries are bound to ILO's "Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work", "The ability of workers to participate in workplace decision-making and actions depends upon whether your Government

fosters a climate of engagement and cooperation at the workplace”, the letter says reminding the delegation that its government is bound by the ILO Fundamental Principles & Rights to Work, in compliance with the WSSD declaration par. 25 and JPOI par. 9b for the Social Dimension.

The letter reminds the delegation that their governments have agreed to uphold the principles of: a) freedom of association and effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; b) the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; c) the effective abolition of child labour and d) the elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation (whether or not the country has ratified other Instruments pursuant to these principles).

The trade union CSD letter is being hand-delivered along with a kit containing background information,

which includes a copy the ILO Fundamental Principles and other materials.

The social dimension

“Employment” must be a focus for promoting the social dimension, equality in access & resources, services, as well as poverty eradication.

The letter invites CSD delegations to help link two key ILO employment reports (which their government has agreed to at the ILO) to the CSD’s programme of action for the social dimension of sustainable development: 1) Working Out of Poverty, ILO 91st Session 2003 and 2) Global Employment Agenda, ILO 2001.

A trade union delegation from twelve countries at the CSD continue their work until 30 April to focus on the role the world of work, workplaces and workers in implementing change for problems associated with water, sanitation and human settlements.



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SIDE EVENTS

“ Community Action, Water Governance and the MDG’s”

A lunch seminar organised by the Community Based Initiatives on progress towards the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, for local water management, sanitation, and human settlement issues.

WHEN: Friday April 23, 2004
WHERE: FF 10th floor, Norway Room
 (304 E 45th Street)
Time: 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM

The seminar features:

DAVID SATTHERTHWAITE (IIED),
author of: “Local processes towards the Millennium Development Goals”

FRANCIS CHACHU GANYA
 of PISP, an Equator Prize 2004 finalist project working with pastoralists in Kenya:

RON SAWYER:
 Sarar Transformacion “Mexico”, Tepoztlan Urban Ecological Sanitation Program

CAREERS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

An exploration of the sustainable development job sector with leaders in industry, civil society, education, science, and government.

WHEN: Friday, April 23
 1:00-6:00 p.m.

WHERE: UN Church Center
 777 UN Plaza, E 44th St./1st. Ave., 2nd floor

More information: www.sustainus.org/careers

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ENCUESTRO

A gathering and information exchange surrounding environmental sustainability, created to honor the diverse knowledge of the attendees.

Youth and adult guests will present for 25 minutes on their areas of expertise and share their own knowledge, views, and experiences. Facilitated by Jay Golden, Costa Rican Adventures.

When: Saturday, April 24
 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

WHERE: Columbia University
 W 115 St./Broadway, W503 Alfred Lerner Hall OR
 Nearby Furnald Lawn.

More information: www.sustainus.org/encuentro.html

When SIGNS don't count at CSD-12



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.

SDIN Facilitating Organisations:

ANPED, The Northern Alliance for Sustainability

TWN, Third World Network

ELCI, Environment Liaison Centre International

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

