



Taking ISSUE

The Sustainable Development Issues Network

Volume 4, Issue 7
Tuesday April 27, 2004

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

UNHEARD VOICES OF WOMEN IN WATER AND SANITATION



Even with the hushed tone, one could still hear the real voice of women and girls and thousands of people in the urban slums of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean in a heart-rendering presentation by young girls from Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean during a UN-Habitat side-event .

These are some of their statements.

“When I grow up I want to marry a man whose house has a toilet”. These are the aspirations voiced by young girls who face the struggle for access to safe water and sanitation every single day of their lives. While policy makers battle with numbers and statistics, women and girls all over the world have a story to tell about how lack of access to water and sanitation affects not just their health but dignity and quality of life.

QUALITY OF LIFE

“The first time I saw a toilet, I was forty years old. So when my son told me that he was going to construct a toilet I knew my life would change forever”.

“In a 3x3 metre space, I sleep next to my brother on the floor. My mum sleeps in the other corner with my young brother and sister”

“We are eight people living in a small one room shack where we have to sleep in shifts. There is a public toilet down the lane, but we have to queue for two hours. The toilet is broken, sewerage flowing everywhere.

COST

“Each 20 litre bucket of water costs 20 cents (US) and in a day I need at least two buckets (40 cents) leaving me with just 60 cents to spend on food and other needs”.

- Rehema 14 years, whose family lives on a budget of less than US\$1 per day

HEALTH

“It is impossible to use the wada in the daylight so we have to suppress our needs and learn to live with being constipated”.

VULNERABILITY

“I started my labour pains, the birth attendant gave me an enema, my stomach

In this Issue

1. Unheard Voices
2. Women in Human Settlements
4. Access to Land
5. Trade Unions
7. Side Events
8. Unheard Voices - *Comment*

Meeting schedule

TUESDAY 27, APRIL 2004

- 9.00 - 10.00, NGO Organising Partners
- 10.00 - 11.00, NGO Steering Committee
- 11.00 - 12.00, Fresh Water
- 12.00 - 1.00, Human settlements
- 1.00 - 2.00, Indigenous Peoples
- 2.00 - 3.00, Youth
- 3.00 - 4.00 Latin America
- 4.00 - 5.00, Education
- 5.00 - 6.00, Women
- 6.00 - 7.00, Trade Unions
- 6.30 - 8.30 Southern (Church Ctr 11th floor)
- 7.00 - 8.00 Caucus Coordination

All meetings in Conference Room B

This issue was produced by:

Jan Gustav Strandenaes
Senior Editor

Samuel Waweru
Journalist/Writer

Kirsten Kossen
Journalist/Writer

Anthony Mwangi
Graphic Design/Layout

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

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swelled and suddenly I had to run to a nearby courtyard, I could not run to the wada. I sat there in the courtyard without water and then ran home and immediately delivered”.

SECURITY

“Several girls have been molested there, and some even raped, in broad daylight. My sisters and mum don’t go there”. We keep our “business” for the evenings. In the dark we wrap it into plastic bags and throw it as far away as possible. These are our flying toilets and our neighbors do the same”

EDUCATION

“The problem gets worse during menstruation for us and our daughters.

Our girls cannot attend school when they have their periods as there is nowhere at school to clean themselves and dispose of their sanitary napkins”.

HEALTH

“When I had diarrhea it was painful to walk the long distances, my clothes got dirty. I was so fed up, that I sat for the whole day under a tree instead of coming home each time. The place was so dirty that I felt like vomiting but I had no choice”.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE

To achieve the Millennium Development Goals is listening to these voices with

compassion sufficient, or is the need of the hour ‘a soft heart and a clear head’. Courage and anger are necessary to be able to mainstream gender. Women leaders are critical in helping provide a platform for the ethical voices of women and helping translate goals and words into action. Questions of scale, financing and investment and integrated policies cannot be ignored as we move forward in a world where access to water and sanitation should be a fundamental right that will enable human society to live with dignity.

By Teshamulwa Okioga (Kenya), Nemat Hajeebhoy (India), Doris Marealle Tanzania), and Joeit Grant Johnson (Jamaica)

Women in Human Settlements at CSD12/April, 23, 2004

The following statement was delivered on Friday April 23 during the interactive session on: Reconstruction and recovery following conflicts and natural disasters.

What happens when, after natural disasters, like earthquakes, floods or hurricanes, the emergency relief organisations leave the affected areas and the families in the communities have to pick up their lives on their own, recovering and redeveloping their communal activities.

WOMEN ARE DO-ERS

I share with you the cases of women’s groups at local level who took up the challenge and came together and organized themselves to do what was necessary, to go on with their lives, caring for their

families and communities. Women are do-ers, not talkers. They are used to take care of all who need the care.

In Maharashtra, India, women’s groups organized within Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP),

After an earthquake came together and did this important work during the reconstruction of their villages.

In Turkey after the earthquake in the Marmara region several years ago, women organized within the Foundation for the Support of Women’s Work (FSWW), organized

themselves around the same process of recovery. They undertook all kind of income generating activities and started negotiations with their local authorities on guidelines and codes of earthquake-proof constructions. In this way they tried to improve their lives and their living conditions.

Because of being related to the global network of grassroots women’s organizations: the Huairou Commission, they learned about the disaster in Turkey, women from India went

to Turkey and helped out the Turkish women's groups with their expertise. Again several years later there was the earthquake in Gujarat in India. And the women from Turkey went to that area and, with their accumulated expertise and experience gave a big hand to the women's groups in Gujarat.

When one year later the Huairou Commission member networks were together for a strategic planning meeting, they visited the Turkey post-disaster up-scaled area and discussed the women's activities. When they asked: what are your husbands and the other men in your community doing, are they involved in your activities? The women giggled and said: no, they are at home, waiting for

employment. The FSWW is now being in contact with women in BAM, Iran, to look if they can be helpful to women in that disaster area.

When hurricane Mitch came across Honduras, the Garifuna women were doing exactly the same work, restructuring and redeveloping their lives and their communities.

SHARING EXPERTISES

Within the Huairou Commission we share together these expertises and through a peer learning model, called the Grassroots Women International Academy (GWIA), we exchange this information and Our Best Practices to each other. For more detailed information visit our website: www.huairou.org.

Next September in Barcelona, Spain, in the week before the World Urban Forum (WUF), organized by UN-Habitat and the city of Barcelona, the Huairou Commission will organize a whole week of exchange of knowledge, expertise, experiences and lessons learned. Besides post-disaster practices, we also will share Our Best practices in other human settlements related areas such as local governance, HIV/Aids home based care practices, post-conflict and safer cities for women. You all are invited to take part in these meetings and peer learning exchanges.

By Lily Hutjes - (Huairou Commission)



Photo courtesy: tribuneindia.com



STRENGTHENING NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR ACCESS TO LAND

Since 1995, the International Land Coalition (ILC) and its partners around the world have worked to increase access to land by poor men and women. Through its Land Alliances for National Development initiative, or "LAND Partnerships," the ILC and its partners seek to strengthen national-level partnerships mechanisms, and provide a forum in which those affecting and those affected by decisions on land access, use and management can work together to identify a common understanding of key policy challenges, and potential solutions.

Through LAND Partnerships activities in the Philippines, stakeholders from government, civil society and inter-governmental sectors are now participating in mapping existing policies on access to land and land reform. Among other issues, this collaborative

project study will address the linkages among CARP and other access to land initiatives and challenges. This exercise will encourage common understanding of key land access challenges and in the process strengthen partnerships among institutions by working through a transparent mechanism.

Following the mapping study, the partnership will convene a series of stakeholder roundtables, culminating in a national workshop (anticipated for July 2004) to identify possible solutions that could be implemented through joint action. Land Partnerships builds on extensive work by ILC civil-society partners in the Philippines to demonstrate community-based approaches to gaining access to land and other resources that small-scale farmers need to earn a living, strengthen networks to support

collective negotiation of land rights, and engage with local and national government institutions and intergovernmental organizations.

Founded as a result of the 1995 Conference on Hunger and Poverty, the International Land Coalition is a global alliance of intergovernmental, governmental and civil-society organisations. The ILC works together with the rural poor to increase their secure access to natural resources, especially land, and to enable them to participate directly in the policy and decision-making processes that affect their livelihoods at local, national, regional and international levels. LAND Partnerships was launched at the WSSD in 2002.

By Andrew Fuys, ILC Secretariat

Trade Unions:

COUNTRIES BOUND BY ILO "FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS AT WORK"

Trade unions at CSD 2004 have made "employment" a focus for the social dimension, equality, access, and poverty eradication as they relate to sustainable development.

In a hand-delivered letter to each country delegation, trade union delegates asked delegates to help link two key reports from the International Labour Organisation to the CSD's programme of action on sustainable development. Both **WORKING OUT OF POVERTY**, agreed to at the ILO 91st Session in 2003, and the **GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT AGENDA**, adopted in 2001 speak directly to the social dimension of sustainable development which the trade unions have been highlighting at the United Nations.

The trade union delegation at the CSD will continue its work at the UN CSD until the end of this week, asking countries to focus on the role the world of work, workplaces and workers in implementing change for problems associated with water, sanitation and human settlements.

"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", says the letter.

It goes on to remind delegations that their governments are bound by the **ILO FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES AND RIGHTS AT WORK**, as referenced in the paragraph 25 of the WSSD Declaration and paragraph 9(b) of the

Johannesburg Plan of Implementation which speak to the Social Dimension. The letter accompanies a profile report which shows how each country has performed thus far in implementing the ILO Principles through appropriate instruments and programmes.

Country delegations are informed 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 they have ratified other ILO Instruments relating to these principles.

By Lucien Royer

Trade Unions:

UN 'CANDLE OF HOPE' FOR DECENT WORK & SUSTAINABLE WORKPLACES

Trade unionists from over 100 countries have announced plans for special events on April 28 to commemorate workers who are killed, injured or become ill due to unsustainable forms of production. This is expected to inject new strength into calls by trade union representatives at the United Nations for decent work, more and better forms of worker protection, and participation in workplace decision-making. Every year, over 2.2 million workers die in over 270 million occupational accidents, or from 160 million new cases of reported occupational diseases. Many more are injured or incapacitated because of their work.

Latest reports say commemoration events or ceremonies will be held in



thousands of workplaces and public venues around the world – 10,000 in Italy alone – and millions of workers will observe the April 28 International

Day of Commemoration. This unprecedented level of activity will coincide with the official opening of the High Level segment of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) session in New York, in which government ministers and other high-ranking officials will review the implementation of agreements from the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development as they apply to water, sanitation and human settlements.

Trade union delegations from 12 countries have been playing a prominent role in this CSD session, carrying the message that government and employer plans to implement sustainable development plans can only achieve limited success unless they are prepared to involve workers and trade unions in joint workplace, assessment, planning and action.

Prior to the High Level session, trade unionists will meet with representatives of the CSD, to bring them up to date on the actions taking place around the world, and to confirm the resolve of trade unions to work toward more sustainable workplaces. A summary of world-wide activities for 28 April can be viewed at:

<http://www.icftu.org/displaydocument.asp?Index=99121908SLanguage=EN>

Trade Unions:

WORKPLACE ASSESSMENTS & COUNTRY PROFILING

Two weeks ago, at an OECD Environmental Ministerial meeting in Paris, a delegation of the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC) began lobbying for a WORKPLACE/ASSESSMENT & ACTION process that would encourage workers, trade unions and employers to set common targets at the workplace level and engage in joint programmes to monitor and report on progress and to work toward change.

This lobbying effort has now been carried over into the Annual Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development in New York, where trade union delegates have unveiled a programme of “country profiling” for sustainable development. In this first-ever attempt to provide a summary review for each country, the leader of each government delegation, or its UN Mission office, has been handed-delivered a profile of their performance according to selected environmental, social and workplace indicators.

In an individually-addressed and personalised letter accompanying each country report, 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) invite feedback on the results of their analysis. A copy of each country’s letter



and profile is available upon request, and all country profiles are available for viewing at:

<http://www.tuac.org/statemen/communiq/kit-Count-profile.pdf>
<<http://www.tuac.org/statemen/communiq/kit-Count-profile.pdf>>

Countries bound By ILO “Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work”

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By Lucien Royer



SIDE EVENTS

LAUNCH OF THE WORLD YOUTH REPORT

Learn about the latest information on the global situation of young people!

The launch will be opened by MR. JOHAN SCHÖLVINCK, Director, Division for Social Policy and Development and will be addressed by the GOVERNMENT OF FINLAND and CATHERINE KAMPING, Chair of the CSD Youth Caucus.



ALSO: CREATIVE PERFORMANCES BY YOUNG PEOPLE

WHEN:
Tuesday 27 April
2004 at 1:15 p.m.

WHERE:
Dag Hammarskjöld
Library Auditorium

ENGAGING DEBATE AND DEBATING ENGAGEMENT - YOU ARE INVITED

Education Caucus Notes:

There are several opportunities this week to attend side events and bring your knowledge to bear on the topics at hand. Please note we have **three evening sessions**, 6:15-7:45 pm on the CSD education agenda. **Monday night a special reception** is being held in the Church Center to learn more about the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. **Wednesday evening the Hellenic Ministry** will profile what is happening regarding the DESD. **Tuesday afternoon the UN University** will be holding a workshop on educators, centers of excellence, and education for sustainable development.

Education Caucus side event:

“Engaging people in sustainability: water, sanitation, and human settlements”

Tuesday, April 27th, 6:15-7:45 p.m., Conference Room 2

(Sponsored by the Canadian Government and GYAN and co-sponsored by WSSCC, Earth Force, and MIO-ECSDE.)

Be sure to check the daily schedule for room changes and other details.

CIVIL SOCIETY AND THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ON DISK

A vast array of materials was generated by civil society organizations around the world during the preparations for Johannesburg. NGOs, Women’s organizations, Youth groups, Trade unions, Business associations,



and many others produced policy statements, records of their own activities, critiques of their government’s performance, information briefings and so on.

All this valuable information was collected and put on disk by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) and the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED). The CD-ROM brings together the broad range of ideas and information developed as a result of the Johannesburg Summit, information which would otherwise be lost.

How to obtain a free CD-ROM?

The disk will be distributed at this CSD during the NGO morning meetings and in the corridors.

THE UNHEARD VOICES

A PERSONAL COMMENT BY SAYIDA VANENBURG

Monday afternoon a side event took place focusing on the voices of women in the slums of major cities all over the world. Being present at this side event resulted in a struggle with the following questions: Why is it that there still are “unheard” voices? Is this Review CSD not the arena to echo these voices in the central discussions instead of during a side event? Shouldn’t we learn from the voices of these women?

The voices were brought to us through an impressive documentary interviewing the women in their own environment. Seeing this local context made the whole conference room realizing once again the severe circumstances we should be reviewing at this CSD as well as the urgent need for implementation. In my opinion this should have been the type of confrontation with reality, from the beginning of CSD 12. I am very grateful for all the identified obstacles and lessons learned so far, however resolving the grass-root level obstacles and



sharing of the grass-root level lessons learned will bring us closer to reaching the Millennium Development Goals. Therefore I urge governments, major groups and other stakeholders to enrich their representatives to review CSDs with experts from the grass-root level in order to avoid having unheard voices.

APOLOGY: Taking Issue would like to acknowledge the great in-put by **Fatou Ndoye, NESDA-FACS** in authoring the article “Water for Agriculture in Africa (Page 2 Volume 4, Issue 5, Friday April 23, 2004). We apologize most sincerely for accidentally omitting her name in the by-line. Corrections have already been made on Taking Issue’s web version.

CSD HUMOUR

SO THE WORLD IS FILTHY!
WHAT THE HECK!
LET’S CALL THIS SESSION
TO ORDER!



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

Or send an e-mail to:
kirstenkossen@yahoo.com

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

