

Outreach Issues

A daily publication of Sustainable Development Issues Network (SDIN) and Stakeholder Forum (SF)



CSD 17
Special Issue

Inside this Issue:

| | |
|---|----|
| CSD 17 Should be Labelled a Success | 1 |
| CSD: Almost "Women Proof" | 4 |
| CSD 17 Implementation through Cooperation | 6 |
| Looking back on CSD 17 from Perspective of Science and Industry Major Group | 7 |
| CSD 17 Puts Agriculture and Farmers at the Center | 9 |
| Should the 2 Billion People Living in Drylands be More Hopeful after CSD17? | 11 |
| Urban Rural Linkages - Bringing Stakeholders Together for Vibrant Markets and Food Security | 13 |
| Where's the Innovative Thinking? | 15 |
| Youth: Capable not Vulnerable | 17 |
| Business and Industry: Text is Balanced Approach | 19 |
| Food for Thought | 21 |

Outreach Issues is the civil society newsletter produced by the SDIN Group (ANPED, TWN and ELCI) and Stakeholder Forum. Outreach Issues aims to report with attitude, from the global scene of sustainability.

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SUMMING UP CSD-17



(Photos courtesy Earth Negotiations Bulletin)

We bring you a special issue on CSD 17. The editorial staff invited representatives from all the nine major groups to write about their experience at CSD 17, what was important to them, what made it a success, or what was less satisfying. This is their analysis and stories.

CSD 17 Should be Labelled a Success

By: Jan-Gustav Strandenaes,
Senior Editor, Outreach Issues

CSD 17 was not a disaster. In fact it should very well be labelled a success. Gerda Verburg, Chair for this CSD and Minister of Agriculture from the Netherlands, with obvious and active support from the EU had steered the negotiations with energy, efficiency, and

frequently with poise to a successful conclusion.

When CSD 15 in 2007 had folded and ended up as a politically bankrupt case, several ministers who were present at the closing session deplored its inconclusive outcome. They said however, that the UN and the world needed CSD, if for nothing else, than it was the only unit

within the UN with an exclusive mandate to deal with sustainable development.

The EU had been particularly critical at the closing session of CSD 15, and said they would do their best to strengthen the process. So far, they had kept their word.

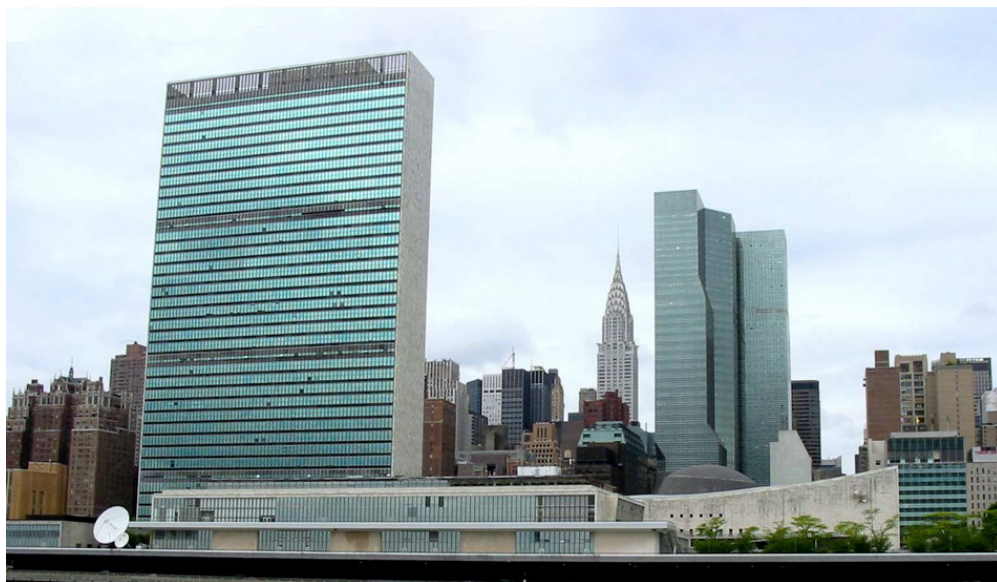
Continued on page 2...

Process understanding – key to the success.

It had been in many ways a difficult CSD, not only for its content, but more for what had appeared as a lack of understanding and serious commitments from many participating delegations. For a seasoned observer, having spent many years at CSD, the fact that many delegates seemed totally oblivious to agreed process came as a surprise. CSD 11 in 2003 spelled out the process of the ‘new’ CSD as it was conceived during the Johannesburg summit in 2002: a refurbished mandate outlining a two year cycle and more streamlined rules of procedure: First year a review year, react to the Secretary General’s report for the themes, bring the thematic issues that the regions prioritise to the agenda, raise the issues at the Regional Implementation Meetings, the RIMs, and do not go for a declaration or a negotiated outcome at the RIMs. Bring the issues from the RIMs including, new and old concerns to the Review Session, and then use the subsequent Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, the IPM, to distil and synthesise the issues, take the issues to the capitals and prioritise them, and finally use the CSD in May to sharpen the language, and negotiate the final outcome. Above all, the CSD at the end of the two year cycle should not allow new issues to be brought into the equation.

Delegates show disregard for process

When the May session started this year, the Chair’s text comprised about 20 pages. Two days before the closing of CSD 17, the document had swelled to almost 80 pages. The fact that the Chair and her Bureau managed to reduce it to some twenty pages at the conclusion of CSD 17 is in itself proof of astute and efficient negotiations. But why had the document swelled? Why did so many delegates keep adding new text constantly? And what was added? At one time the text contained the erratic outcome of a long, arduous and reasonably unfocussed discussion of what sustainable development was all about, (was that not settled in 1992 at UNCED?); reference to and language about trade and market access was in the text; the content



of climate issues; the demand for more development money and so on. Listening in on parts of the debate in plenary sessions left you wondering if the themes discussed were really on sustainable agriculture, land, droughts and Africa. Not that all the other themes mentioned were unimportant, far from it. But as the chair repeatedly kept elucidating delegates – the UN has a system for dealing with all the other issues, and trade, climate, development finance should be dealt with in their proper foras mandated to deal with those issues. This is the Commission on Sustainable Development, and we should deal with the issues as they relate to sustainability, she was heard constantly repeating.

Attempts to derail CSD

The debate in the rooms appeared at times erratic and unfocussed, and gave vent to speculations – why did some delegates keep adding text? Why did other delegates keep adding themes that did not belong? Was it a deliberate effort to undermine CSD itself? Was it an effort to make the issue of sustainable development into a non issue? Or did many delegates just display an uncanny amount of ignorance and lack of discipline including an abrasive disregard for due process?

ENB in its sum up issue writes: “The CSD 16/17 cycle will probably be remembered

as a difficult one, but also, perhaps by pure coincidence, responsive to the current crises. At the last hour of the last day, agreement on the Chair’s text was reached, although mere hours before delegates were still speculating whether there would even be an agreed text.”¹

Leading or following

Chair Verburg closed CSD 17 around nine pm on May 15th, some three hours after normal CSD closing time. She congratulated the delegates of CSD 17 on having adopted a policy document, even though some said the document resembled more an instruction manual raising a number of highly relevant and pointed issues on the themes of agriculture, land and drought.

Reflecting on the misgivings many delegates had over the CSD process, many thought CSD had been turned into a follower and had ceased to be a leader on global sustainability. And that reflection might lead us to the pertinent question being asked – why has this happened? ENB quotes discussions among delegates overheard in the corridors around Café Vienna: “Has its (CSD) original design and intent been superseded by events? Is it useful for the generalist negotiators to debate political language every year? Or is it the way the CSD sessions are organized? ... As one delegate warned, thought should be given “to the way we conduct the CSD, and the way we

negotiate.”² The last comment illustrates perhaps a bit of rare and honest personal insight into lack of will or lack of competence, or as some have seriously speculated – a calculated effort by some to dislodge the entire process of sustainability at the UN.

CSD – most interactive

The CSD process is still recognized as the most interactive and inclusive process within the UN system, allowing for active civil society interaction. The nine Major Groups, as civil society is correctly referred to at CSD perform an important function in bringing the voice of its constituency to the intergovernmental system, often backed by expert research. Up towards a thousand major group representatives are preregistered almost to every CSD, and several hundreds participate actively in the process. Some countries always object to democratising the intergovernmental system, and seem to have problems with the presence of the Major Groups. But over the past few years, the Major Groups have been referred to both in plenary as well as at side events in positive terms. This process as well speaks to the success of the CSD process.

2012 – a new summit

But as often is the case at intergovernmental meetings, what takes place outside the plenaries can be as important. Side events are frequently used to bring new issues onto the radar screen, and this CSD was no exception.

Brazil took the opportunity to further its work on the proposed UN Summit on Sustainable Development, the Rio Plus 20 process. With more than 150 persons having decided to skip lunch, Brazil hosted a side event in conference room 2 at the end of CSD 17 at lunch time. Four points were raised by Brazil that needed to be developed and discussed, its outcome deemed key to the success of such a summit: Looking at implementation of sustainable development since Rio, and how much had really been accomplished; review International Governance to see how the present IEG system could be

improved rather than building new structures; dive into and develop the idea of a green economy to kick start the world’s economic system, and finally review water and global water reserves, and consider the water issue under the Rio principles. The preparation process was mentioned as key to a successful outcome, the existing CSD process should not be touched or derailed in any way. With two more speakers following the Brazilian introduction, and participants invited to take part in the discussion, many stated that taking stock of the dominating policies to see if we were on the right track was of paramount importance to the future of sustainability. Even though a decision has been made to thoroughly review the CSD process in 2017, many called for an earlier review to be had in 2012, in particular as the CSD would need to be integrated into the proposed summit. Many also called for having an independent secretariat to prepare a summit in 2012, saying an independent secretariat was needed to make this into a globally successful summit with a global agenda on environment and development and not merely an expanded CSD agenda.

CSD is over, and CSD has begun.

Chair Verburg closed the CSD 17 session a little after nine pm. on May 15, and in line with due process immediately opened the CSD 18 session. A new Chair was elected, the Minister of Environment and Natural Resources from Guatemala, Mr. Luis Alberto Ferrate. Conference room 4 filled with applause and laughter, a hundred voices filling the air: ‘CSD does not deliver – it has become a frustrating process’, ‘this was not as bad, we made it’ - comments that perhaps reflect more a delegate’s personal routine experience with the process than the reality behind the politics.

CSD 15 back in 2007 dealing with climate and atmosphere, sustainable energy and industry failed because CSD could not agree on a common outcome. But that CSD failed and delivered! It showed how the coal and oil nations in a callous way disrespected the scientific warnings of climate change, ignored sustainable development, disregarded good governance and put profit and short-sightedness up front

as a global goal. Events a year later with the global financial meltdown and growing global concern over climate change proved the outcome wrong. Still, much of the content in the debates at CSD 15 pointed to what happened a year later, and agreement was in fact reached on 90 % of the text.

Process and a UN Council on Sustainable Development

This time agreement was reached on important issues – the sustainability of food production, land issues, drought, and more. By reaching consensus at the last minute, it demonstrated clearly that process was and is needed to guide and focus content. Understanding and respecting process are basic and paramount elements in any intergovernmental system: it avails accountability, participation, transparency and focus on issues. So maybe CSD 17 delivered more than met the eyes at fist sight. How do we carry that lesson forward – that a successful outcome must be based on understanding, respecting and using process to guide and develop content? A strong and able chair understood that lesson. That message and that lesson is a hopeful one and needs to be spelled out to the tired and self proclaimed disillusioned delegates and other stakeholders? How do we infuse the newcomers, delegates and other stakeholders with that particular understanding of process? How do we make CSD a leader and not a follower and give it the political weight, clout and understanding that sustainable development deserves? After all, CSD is the only global forum in the world to deal exclusively with sustainable development which science says is the foundation for everybody’s well being. Perhaps by elevating CSD to a UN Council, on par with ECOSOC, the Security Council and recently the Human Rights Council will give CSD new life, clout and political respect? Maybe that should be a central outcome from the proposed new Summit on Sustainable Development in 2012 - an SD Council! ❖

1 ENB, Vol. 5, no 281, Monday, May 18, 2009

2 ENB, Vol. 5, no 281, Monday, May 18, 2009

CSD Almost “Women Proof”

By: Lesha Witmer, Women Major Group

Let’s start with some facts and “statistics”, sometimes they speak louder than words:

- For the first time in history, CSD had a female chair;
- For the first time in history, the Bureau was gender balanced;
- (coincidence or not) a lot of negotiators were women (which also shows the differences / diversity within the women major group by the way).

Did it make a difference:

- Throughout the document “women”, “women farmers” and the role if women is mentioned 40 times;
- More importantly, in most cases women are referred to as actors, not as victims – finally! – although they still do not get the difference with “other vulnerable groups” (sic);
- Bottom-up approaches are in the text;
- Capacity development and empowerment of women and small holders gets a lot of attention;
- “Promote and enable women’s equitable role in decision-making” is stated several times;
- Ecosystem services got on the agenda regardless of still fierce opposition; (it’s a start: during CSD8 some countries were still of the opinion it was a “market distortion idea”);
- Even the “hot potato” of land rights is there within the text...
- Women and other major groups got to speak in almost every session.

To illustrate here are some selected Quotes from the 65 pages documents that give me hope:

“Convinced that national implementation strategies should enhance the participation of all stakeholders including women, youth,



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indigenous people, rural and other local communities, through, inter alia, the use of bottom-up approaches in decision-making and stressing the need for involvement particularly of women in decision making,”

“(e) Empower rural women and promote land ownership and secure land tenure for women farmers; target capacity building strategies at women farmers and women-headed households”

“Adopt policies and implement laws that promote secure and equitable access to land, and land tenure, particularly to the poor, through the recognition of equitable land rights and guarantee enforceable and secure land rights, in particular for women, indigenous people and other vulnerable groups;”

“Mindful that measures and actions recommended at CSD-17 and their implementation should be consistent with international obligations”

“Mindful that the following recommendations should be consistently implemented, taking into account national strategies, legislation and relevant international obligations”.

Now that last quote, I thought was a “find” after all the discussions during the two weeks –The major groups asked this question to the Chair during the MS dialogue: “To our minds a multi-lateral agreement or international treaty is on its own a recognized independent source of law. Making reference to customary or national law adds ambiguity and weakens general consensus already reached. Looking at the mandate of CSD, we are wondering how the Bureau can play a positive role in keeping the focus of delegations on implementation and policy guidance for future activities. We would suggest that the Bureau chair and vice chairs can actually give guidance to delegates not to discuss sentences and phrases that go back on earlier commitments but on implementing recommendations and commitments already made into their national laws and policies. We would like to hear your views on this.”.

We did not get an answer then – but some “little bird” must have told the Bureau that there was a text like that in the WSSD document (article 45 of the Health paragraph, if you are interested).

Two other “finds”- literally – are the texts on occupied territories and on financing: both examples of how important it is to have a

“collective” memory and know about and appreciate the work of your colleagues, done before in other CSD cycles or other international (UN) conferences. That’s real integration and interlinkages “stuff” for you.

There was a real breakthrough on sustainable biofuels / biomass production; knowing the huge resistance of countries to even discuss this during CSD 15 and in other fora, the adopted text is a “small step, but a huge step for mankind”. However it is a small step and there is still a long way to go. One hopeful bit of progress is the agreement within the EU to come up with an agreed certification system of biomass production which will include social considerations.

Thanks to a lot of lobbying by the major groups and the “water caucus” a lot of (constructive) attention was given to water issues. It is a huge pity about the trans-boundary issues though: what is the big problem of talking to your neighbors and who is against it?

Now that was the good news, and while there is some there is also some areas I am not so happy with. Women are very disappointed about the lack of attention for the downside of and recommendations on GMOs; you would have thought that people at least know about the Convention and its protocol on biodiversity? It gets us very worried – also in the light of the food production discussions, when there appears to be a lack of understanding of these conventions among numerous delegates.

Finances in general were again a problem: the two totally different world views within the G77 (guild or investment?) again lent to a long “wish list” and the rest of the world saying they are not Santa Claus!

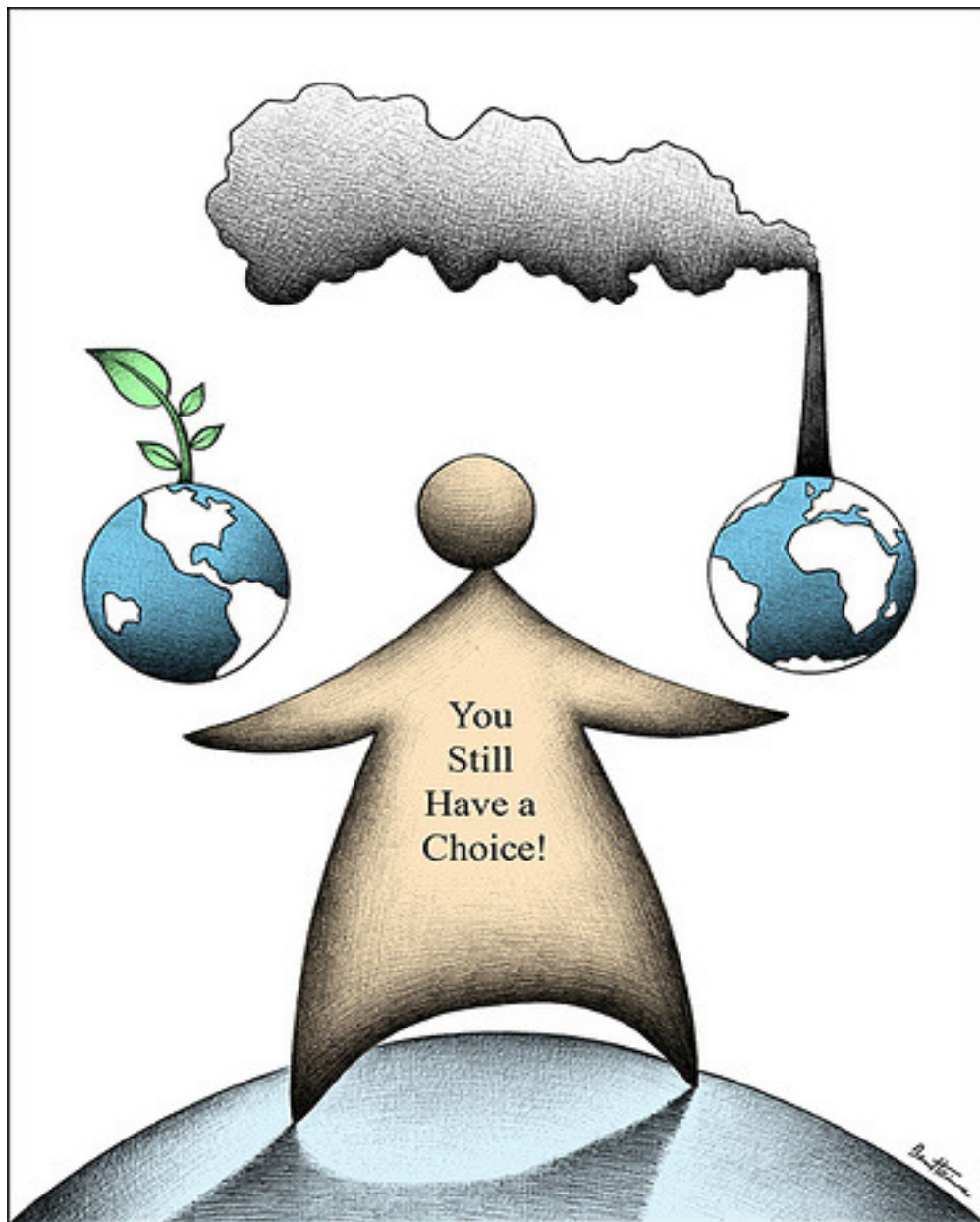
An issue that was not discussed at all at the CSD and which should have been is the Criteria of funding bodies, they often include strong requirements for proof of legal status and proven track-records. However, a large number of women’s organizations cannot comply because many are unable to obtain legal recognition due to a lack of resources or complicated legal processes. Therefore, a paradigm shift and creative solutions by policy makers are needed. Resource flows and funding mechanisms that benefit poor

women farmers must be devised at the national level and disseminated to the communities and individuals who require them to make a difference.

The fact that the world seems to be in a state of permanent crises (food, energy, climate, economic) and talking about it in different high level meetings through out the year, made a lot of countries hesitant to commit. Let’s hope that the few recommendations that got into the final document will find their way to the different fora. It also makes you wonder how the CSD can more effectively play its role of integrator in sustainable development if negotiators are

told beforehand that they should not “distort” negotiations elsewhere!!

Will it ultimately make a difference? I hope so but this requires us to act: To hold countries accountable for what they stated and “help” them implement.. And this requires all CSO and Major Groups to be there in a few months when we discuss food security in Rome, Water in Durban and Climate in Copenhagen and so forth: We have to be there saying remember us? We were there (also) in New York...did you talk to your colleagues? Do you know what was agreed? ❖



Ben Havers (published under Creative Commons license)

CSD-17: Implementation through Cooperation

By: Anabella Roseberg, International Trade Union Confederation

First, a few words about history...

The Commission on Sustainable Development is part of the heritage of an exemplary international negotiating process: a multi-lateral governance process which started in Rio and aimed at putting international politics to the service of the people and the planet.

Some can think Rio was probably too special ... it was such a particular moment for decision-making, for multilateralism, democracy and civil society's participation. Political will was there, coherence and integration of social, environmental and economic aspects seemed possible. It was and is a remarkable document and process.

This heritage makes difficult the task to evaluate the CSD... Political will is not there anymore, multilateralism is questioned, North-South divisions are growing more and more, but most importantly, rhetoric is now the main actor of international discussions, far from what is actually being decided or implemented on the ground or bilaterally.

The pressure to reach an agreement

The frustrating and sad outcome of the previous CSD cycle on energy, industrial development, air pollution and climate change, where governments did not succeed in reaching an agreement set a worrying precedent. And this year, fears of repeating the same result where in everybody's' minds, in particular when we saw the discussions more and more focused on trade subsidies and financing for development. A proposal by the Chair made a last minute agreement possible, without a debate in the evening of the last day. At least we had an outcome.

An agreement was obtained... will it suffice to save the CSD?

“If CSD wants to remain a space for decision-making and not just for debate, there is a real need for implementing decisions following the CSD-model, which is one of cooperation with the major groups.”

The general tendency to move backwards on agreed conclusions was unfortunately repeated this time (even mentions to “sustainable agriculture” were bracketed!!) and labour issues were not the exception. Every year, we have the feeling of fighting for the same basic elements to appear in the text, to remain in the surface of discussions as our role is not even recognized in the draft documents.

However, Trade Unions evaluate positively several aspects of the CSD decision:

- The inclusion in the final text of two full sections dedicated to stimulating new jobs and creating income opportunities in rural areas and the need of providing secure access to food and social safety nets;
- The recognition of agricultural workers as key actors of a sustainable agriculture, (-in addition to the employers, represented by farmers and business groups!) The very existence of agricultural workers was ignored in previous discussions (last year and in the IPM), so is very much welcomed;
- The need for creating decent employment as a means for providing decent work for all;
- The rural job creation potential in agro-processing, rural industry, rural infrastructure, sustainable management of natural resources;
- The importance of supporting the creation of green and decent jobs; and

- The promotion of strong urban and rural job creation as a means for addressing the issue of urban-rural migration.

Unfortunately, the need for protecting workers' and communities' health through the sustainable management of chemical substances, in particular pesticides, disappeared in the last version of the text.

But above all, unions welcomed the recognition of the right to food, key these days where unemployment is attaining 239 million unemployed worldwide in 2009, with its consequent effects on hunger amongst the most vulnerable in our societies (in the Global South, and also in developed countries)

The challenge of implementation

At the end, the agreement is somewhat satisfactory and managed to overcome a very complicated situation, where governments do not trust each other anymore, and where the “sustainable development” agenda has lost ground in terms of implementation at the country level.

For us, a question remains: Will the decisions made at this CSD cycle be followed by governments when they will go back home? If CSD wants to remain a space for decision-making and not just for debate, there is a real need for implementing decisions following the CSD-model, which is one of cooperation with the major groups.

Rio principles and agreement deserve a good follow up. The painful crisis we are all living, the need to tackle them coherently, make the need for a proper follow-up more necessary than ever. Let's work on making this CSD, the CSD we need, the CSD we want. ❖

Looking Back at CSD-17 from the Perspective of the Science and Technology Major Group

By: Gisbert Glaser,
International Council for Science (ICSU)

The Scientific and Technological Community (STC) Major Group had two overarching objectives for its participation in the 2-year CSD cycle 2008-09 which came to an end at CSD-17: (i) to help injecting sound scientific and technological knowledge into both the review session (CSD-16) and the policy session (CSD-17) on agriculture, land, rural development, drought and desertification, as well as Africa; and (ii) to ensure that the advancement and application of knowledge, science, engineering and technology be placed at the centre of policy recommendations addressing the sustainable development challenges in these topical areas.

Being fully aware that science and technology alone will not bring about the solutions needed, our STC Major Group also championed a focus on integrated and collaborative approaches creating close interactions between farmers and pastoralists, farm workers, government, academia, business and civil society.

The “Policy Options and Practical Measures to expedite implementation in agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa” agreed upon at CSD-17 meet to a considerable extent these objectives of the STC Major Group. Sustainable agriculture and land management, rural development, drought preparedness and mitigation, and combating desertification have been recognized as knowledge-intensive implementation areas. The CSD-17 outcome puts emphasis on recommendations to increase significantly investments in the advancement, sharing and application of relevant knowledge, science and technology, following two decades of declining investments.

CSD-17 acknowledged that at the heart of the solutions are farmers and pastoralists. Policy options must be farmers centred. Knowledge, science and technology often do



not reach those most in need, notably the small-scale farmers in developing countries, such as those in Sub-Saharan Africa, who are among the poorest in the world and particularly threatened by ecosystem degradation. The agreed “Policy Options and Practical Measures” include recommendations targeted specifically at this group. In this respect, massive public and private sector investments will be required.

Challenges in feeding a growing world population and in meeting increasing demands for dietary improvements (e.g.

increased meat consumption) are daunting. Yet food security will not be ensured, if degradation of the natural resource base continues as it is currently. Science and technology based solutions for sustaining increases in productivity, while protecting ecosystems are key to addressing these challengers. Successfully meeting sustainability and production requirements, places increased importance on the multiple functions of agriculture: (i) producing food and fibre; (ii) providing ecosystem services, and conserving natural resources and biodiversity; and (iii) providing

livelihoods (income, health and nutrition) and supporting the quality of rural and urban life. Basically, CSD-17 in developing its policy recommendations has taken all these aspects into account.

International organizations representing the Farmers, Business and Industry, and Science and Technology Major Groups jointly developed, already ahead of the Inter-governmental Preparatory Meeting of CSD-17, held in February, a Call for Action entitled “Farming First”. The Call for Action identified six interlinked priority action areas: safeguard natural resources; share knowledge; provide local access to fundamental resources for farmers; protect harvests; enable access to markets; prioritise research imperatives (www.farmingfirst.org). Without nominally referring to them, CSD-17 has confirmed the Farming First Principles and Action Areas. CSD-17 has called governments, the scientific and technological communities, businesses and civil society groups to focus attention on the source of our food security and the main implementers of sustainable land management. All these groups must work together to enable the many millions of farm families, especially smallholders in developing countries, to grow more crops in a sustainable manner through improved and innovative technologies, more collaborative research, committed knowledge sharing and by providing access to effective markets.

A close analysis of the CSD-17 policy recommendations also reveals that as regards the development and adaptation of knowledge, science, engineering and technology for use by small-scale farmers in developing countries, governments agreed to support:

- environmental and land use monitoring, interdisciplinary, integrated research, including agro-ecological research, education, information dissemination and extension;
- enhanced farm level data collection to better understand the diverse environmental, socio-economic and cultural conditions, and gender context in which farmers/pastoralists live and work as there can be no one size fits all solutions;
- blending science, engineering and

“..acknowledged the link between poverty reduction and sustainability but the relevant policy recommendations lack to a large extent the identification of concrete actions.”

technology with local knowledge to develop innovative methods in soil and water management, and agricultural production;

- building climate-informed early warning and response systems, in particular in drought-prone areas;
- enhancing public and private partnerships targeting small-scale agricultural systems;
- enhancing North-South and South-South partnerships.

There are two areas in which the CSD-17 policy recommendations come out relatively weak. These areas are on the one hand the fight against poverty and on the other hand addressing climate change. Emphasis on measures to reduce poverty should be an essential element in sustainable development related to agriculture, land, rural development, drought and desertification. CSD-17 acknowledged the link between poverty reduction and sustainability but the relevant policy recommendations lack to a large extent the identification of concrete actions in this regard.

As for climate change adaptation and mitigation, CSD-17 missed an opportunity to send a strong message to the negotiating process under the UNFCCC by emphasizing the role of agriculture and forests being used as carbon sink and pools. Climate change adaptation issues received some more attention. It was also recognized that there are critical gaps of knowledge in this area requiring intensified research efforts. In this respect, CSD-17 was the first global policy forum at which the newly launched international research programme on “Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security” (CCAFS) was presented in a side

event co-organized by ICSU, the Alliance of the CGIAR Centres, the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) and the Earth System Science Partnership (ESSP). In fact, CCAFS has been established as a new CGIAR Challenge Programme.

CSD-17 was particularly rich in terms of its programme of side events and learning center activities. The STC Major Group, upon the initiative of the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO), also organized a side event on human and physical capacity building. Moreover, ICSU was a co-organizer with CropLife International, the International Fertilizer Industry Association (IFA), and the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP) on “Farming First: Enhancing Sustainable Development through Agriculture”. Finally, ICSU and IFAP co-sponsored a side event organized by OECD on “Sustainable Food Security: Policy Priorities and Perspectives”.

Participants from all nine Major Groups participated extensively in CSD-17. The Chair, Minister Gerda Verburg, and all members of the CSD-17 Bureau, were fully supportive of the multi-stakeholder process underlying the work of CSD. Nevertheless, there will be room for improvement in this respect during the next CSD cycle.

CSD-17 also included for the first time a separate dialogue session with experts from the policy research community. The session provided an opportunity to discuss examples of science-based policy options in the context of the CSD-17 topical areas. Moreover, the experts proposed a new knowledge tool for CSD, the sustainable development policy research network. Upon an initiative of the CSD Secretariat, this proposal was brainstormed at the margins of the official CSD programme. It would seem that such a new tool for CSD must fit into Major Groups system and thus be linked in particular to the STC Major Group.

The responsibility for organizing the input by the STC Major Group into CSD-17 was with the International Council for Science (ICSU) and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO). ❖

CSD 17 Puts Agriculture and Farmers at the Center of Sustainable Development

By: Nora Ourabah Haddad, Senior Policy Officer of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers

For farmers, this CSD cycle was critical, in a context marked by multi-faceted crises often described as the three F's "food, fuel, financial". Given the cross-cutting nature of their activity, farmers lay at the heart of these challenges. For these reasons, this cycle could not have been more timely.

The International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), the Farmers' Major Group focal point, used all possible entry points to ensure that the voice of farmers was heard, including: meetings with representatives of main negotiating block countries, co-organizing and participating in side events, making interventions at ministerial roundtables, multi-stakeholder dialogues and plenary sessions as well as participating in both print publications and radio programs.

The main reason why farmers believe that the CSD17 turned out to be a success is due to the unprecedented recognition of the importance of agriculture for sustainable development and food security. CSD is one of the only UN platforms which clearly stressed the important role of agriculture in the achievement of sustainable development, putting farmers at the center of agricultural policies.

This relative success is without doubt due to the determination of Chair Ms. Gerda Verburg, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality of the Netherlands. Ms Verburg worked hard to go beyond apparent divergences of views and opinions and overcome these obstacles to move the process forward.



Photo: Grassroots International

Why is IFAP satisfied with the outcome of this cycle?

First, the adopted "text as prepared by the Chair" gives due recognition to an integrated approach towards building a new agricultural model which is people centered and knowledge based. This approach is reflected both in the five-point Farmers' Priorities for action as well as in the multi-major group initiative "Farming First" .

Not only does this text recognize the central role of agriculture in sustainable development but it also acknowledges the role of farmers as key stakeholders and agents of change.

It rightly points out the need for a wide range of actions for implementation, including efforts to increase investments in agriculture of developing countries, in particular for small-holder farmers in these developing countries. Further, it calls for

increasing the share of government budgets devoted to agriculture and providing access to credit for farmers.

Farmers are pleased with reference made to the central theme of capacity-building. This should be done through provision of targeted and timely technical assistance to support farmers, especially small-scale farmers. The promotion of equitable access to land and clear and transparent land tenure are also central, especially for women farmers. These elements of the text give farmers strong motivation to manage and protect the land through improved agricultural practices and also provide a means of providing collateral for farmers to obtain farm credit. Sustainable land management is a prerequisite to sustainability and underpins long-term land productivity.

The section on Africa gives even more attention to farmers as key actors. It suggests integrating farmers and local

entrepreneurs into agricultural supply chains through affordable credits, access to insurance, participation of farmers' organisations in decision making and access to extension services.

The need for a sustainable "green revolution in Africa to help boost agricultural productivity, food production and national and regional food security in a way that supports ecosystem functions", is critical.

What will it take for Africa to get out of the devastating cycle of poverty? It is time to recognize agriculture as an engine for economic growth after more than 20 years of neglect by public policy makers. Less than 4% of national budgets in many African countries are dedicated to agriculture. All African governments need to honour their commitment to dedicate at least 10% of their national budgets to the development of agriculture, as stated by the Maputo declaration. IFAP is pleased with references to the target of 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) for ODA for developing countries by 2015.

The issue of climate change has gained scientific consensus and is being recognized by the international community as one of the most pressing and threatening issues currently facing humankind. CSD17 could not have overlooked this issue. To the satisfaction of farmers, CSD17 did seize the opportunity to point out the often forgotten link between climate change and agriculture.

IFAP welcomes and fully supports Minister Verburg's call for agriculture to be included in the climate change negotiations, saying it is fundamental if mitigation and adaptation goals are to be met. In fact the text recognizes climate change as an urgent global priority which impacts all the CSD 16-17 cycle cluster themes. All of these elements are critical for farmers to achieve long term sustainability. Not only is agriculture impacted by climate change effects, but it is also a solution provider to both mitigate and adapt to its adverse effects.

“North-South and South-South cooperation is needed between farmers' organisations but also between governments and intergovernmental organizations.”

Farmers are increasingly implementing sustainable agricultural practices, ranging from conservation agriculture, sustainable grazing and manure management, sustainable water and land management, and need to be supported and encouraged to continue doing so.

This leads us to the issue of the production of services rendered to nature by farmers, commonly referred to as "payments for ecosystem services".

The issue which was one of the major sticking points of the negotiations is commonly referred to as "payments for ecosystem services". It almost led to the failure of this cycle, as it was viewed by some developing countries as another disguised way of supporting developed countries' farmers' incomes. To avoid such a political deadlock, an alternative phrasing was presented: "increasing awareness of non-trade distorting models where farmers are encouraged to adopt practices that would restore and maintain and enhance ecosystem services."

The apparent disagreement revealed by the CSD negotiations over this issue should be viewed as a wakeup call by parties, so as to avoid such a situation in future multilateral negotiations.

To overcome these divergences between many developed and developing countries in the future, there is a need to seriously reflect upon the setting up of such payment schemes in developing countries. However, governments in developing countries do not always have the capacity to support such mechanisms.

Farmers in developing countries are most in need of sustaining their livelihoods. They need encouragement to conciliate food production with environmental conservation through landscape valuation, integrated water management, and biodiversity conservation. Farmers from both developed and developing countries need to be rewarded through incentive mechanisms for these "non-food services".

Existing stewardship schemes could serve as a good base for inspiration. The international community needs to look at ways in which these countries could support their counterparts in developing countries to allow their farmers to benefit from the same type of mechanisms. North-South and South-South cooperation is needed, between farmers' organisations but also with governments and intergovernmental organisations.

Throughout the CSD process, IFAP emphasized the need for a long-term global plan for agriculture with clear objectives and strong stakeholder participation. National targets should be established and a consultative process of development set up to enable better monitoring and evaluation on an annual basis, as stated by the IFAP President, Ajay Vashee.

This CSD cycle proved the ability of this UN commission to tackle in a comprehensive manner, topical issues pertaining to sustainable development. Now, governments need to translate these good intentions into actions on the ground. CSD needs to take the lead as a coordinating platform and set the example within the international community. A "people's centered and knowledge based" agriculture is an important driver for the UN to achieve is MDG1.

Farmers are ready to follow this up at the national level, reengaging with their governments to make sure this truly happens. ❖

Should the 2 billion people living in drylands be more hopeful after CSD17?

The 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), a two year cycle where among other issues agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa were discussed, is now finished and most delegates are simply satisfied with the fact that they actually managed to agree on a text. Which could be considered progress since the last CSD cycle did not provide any agreed text.

By: Lauren Naville Gisnås, Drylands Coordination Group; Nathalie van Haren, Both ENDS; Patrice Burger, CARI; The networks eniD and Drynet: www.dry-net.org

But does the text include really innovative policies, and does it call for actions which will make a difference for the people living in the drylands of the world? We are afraid that the answer is NO. Once again international negotiations about global problems have failed to deliver in terms of agreeing on the need to make changes and to suggest clear innovative actions to reach sustainable development and improve the living conditions of the 1.5 billion people in drylands that are threatened by desertification and land degradation. Old conflicts and disagreements about commitments, funding and implementation have erupted between the developing and developed countries once again. National interests and agendas have come in the way of global solutions to global problems. The lack of a cooperative integrated approach to worldwide challenges seems to become more common in current global environmental negotiations and agreements.

Getting lost in language, terms and the aridity of discussions

The delegations struggled to agree on new terms and language, but also more surprisingly on some old terms being introduced. Endless discussions took place on what was meant by 'marginalised groups', what is 'conservation agriculture', what are 'regreening activities', and even more shockingly what is meant by 'sustainable', more than 17 years after Rio 92 and 20 years after the Bruntland report in 87!! When did the CSD become an arena of philosophical debate on semantics? Is it due to the poor knowledge of concepts within the delegations? Or is this just another excuse to not have to agreement on language, innovative solutions and practices in a collective strong will?

A fragmented process

The negotiations held at CSD17 were not helped by the fact that the discussions on the themes were separated from each other. How can one discuss and suggest actions to

combat desertification and drought separately? How can one discuss agriculture issues, its sustainability in dryland areas without discussing the causes and effects of desertification? And how can one agree on actions to combat desertification without solving land tenure issues? This fragmentation of the themes was a problem in the negotiations. Precious time was wasted to agree on where to place this and that language, on whether to move entire paragraphs to the cross-cutting section or whether any text on financing should be kept for the section on means of implementation.

In the meantime, several delegations did not want to discuss certain issues, such as carbon sequestration as they were considered as climate issues which are to be discussed at the UNFCCC. Others did not want to include language on financial means to stop land degradation since this will be discussed at the next UNCCD Conference of the Parties (COP) in September. How can one negotiate and agree on a text with suggestions for policies for sustainability when the themes cannot be discussed in a holistic manner or discussions taking place in other arenas cannot be brought up? Isn't the Commission on Sustainable Development the arena to approach global challenges as poverty, degradation of land and water bodies, ecosystem changes due to climate change, biodiversity loss and migration in an integral and holistic manner?

Where did sustainability in agriculture go?

In the debate about agriculture, according to many parties agriculture should only be about boosting productivity. Any reference to sustainable agriculture was systematically deleted. The idea that agriculture can fulfil many societal functions at the same time, like supporting livelihoods, contributing to food sovereignty, preserving ecosystems and ecosystem services was barely discussed. It is quite shocking that parties in the Commission on Sustainable Development could not

find any agreement on this or a willingness to discuss it. We wonder: if the CSD is not doing it, who will do it?

Where were the Major Groups?

The lack of common language and commitments of the delegations to come with an inspiring but practical text at this CSD is also somewhat reflected in the Major Groups participating in this event. Very few civil society organizations that are involved in sustainable development in general or drought, desertification, Africa, land, agriculture and rural development in particular were present at this CSD cycle. Many CSOs perceive the CSD as a 'talk show' and not as a powerful instrument; however, by not participating in the CSD, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Is there any added value in the final text?

Based on what is said above, can we see any added value in the final chair's text which is the ultimate outcome of CSD17? Well, let's mention some positive elements for the drylands. The UNCCD and its ten year strategic plan are mentioned several times in the final text and support for the implementation of the convention and the strategy is emphasized and thus agreed on by the delegations. Parties agreed to integrate the subject of desertification and land degradation into their policies, strategies for sustainable development and UNCCD National Action Programmes (NAPs) which is often lacking and is one of the reasons why the UNCCD receives little support and is poorly implemented at the national level. Nevertheless, the lack of financial commitments preventing the effective implementation of the UNCCD was still not solved at the CSD. After the full and entire political recognition of the UNCCD framework, could we expect the full and entire support for the ten year strategic plan during COP 9? Logically the answer should be "yes we can"!

The importance of collaboration and coordination between the three Rio conventions was mentioned several times in the chair's text; however, the suggestion of promoting

synergy between the three conventions was surprisingly enough, not accepted. More concrete suggestions should have been made here on how to increase this collaboration and avoid duplication of work. For example, UNFCCC National Adaptation Programmes of Action (NAPAs) could have been integrated with the UNCCD National Action Programs (NAPs).

The final text gives recognition to the importance of the role of pastoralists in terms of drought mitigation and combating desertification which is significant especially considering that these people are often seen as ‘marginalized’ or worse as the major cause of land degradation. But the importance of pastoralists in terms of sustainable rangeland management and *therefore* their contribution to carbon sequestration and climate

“The importance of collaboration and coordination between the three Rio Conventions was mentioned several times.”

change mitigation was not included, which is again a failure of providing innovative ways to move forward.

The link between desertification and climate change is clearly mentioned in the chair’s text, but here one should be careful not to overemphasize the role of climate change in desertification at the risk of ignoring other causes of desertification that are not linked

to climate. In addition, combating desertification has been linked to achieving the Millennium Development Goals including poverty reduction. Thus, the text again emphasizes the development character of the UNCCD convention.

What now?

Let’s see now how the national governments will interpret the CSD text into policies and put them into practice on the ground. In addition, as there is very little about the role of Mayor Groups in the Means of Implementation, we are looking forward to see how civil society organizations will be involved (or not) in developing, implementing and monitoring these policies. The lack of reference to civil society organizations in the final text is a very negative sign, not only in terms of the role of these organizations, but it also shows that there is a wrong understanding of the role of key stakeholders who are actually able to implement sustainable development around the world.

Unfortunately, nations will have a short break as migrations, social instability, local wars, trafficking, and an increasing number of poor people in drylands will very soon come back to the front of the international agenda by the increasing vulnerability of the drylands’ inhabitants to the effects of climate change. Like many other issues discussed during the CSDs, sustainable development of dryland areas affected by desertification is not only a technical question, nor a vague general discussion: the question then is what is really the added value of the CSD process among the other global discussions? Should we not reflect on an international framework that is able to aggregate and consolidate, harmonize, and help in the implementation and monitoring of innovative sustainable ideas and approaches instead of adding words to words?

Finally, to the question, should the 2 billion people living in drylands be more hopeful after CSD17?, we have to answer “we don’t know” since CSD did not push towards new sustainable solutions for the situation of the people living in drylands. However, we hope that CSD17 was a preparation for an effective plan of implementation at the Buenos Aires’ UNCCD COP9 in September 2009 and the follow-up for the Kyoto protocol at the Copenhagen UNFCCC COP15 in November 2009 instead of just being a prodigy of disappointing outcomes. ❖



Urban Rural Linkages - Bringing Stakeholders Together for Vibrant Markets and Food Security

“Making urban market facilities accessible to regional and local producers will create urban-rural linkages that could slow rural-to-urban migration, stimulate local economic development, and strengthen food security.”

— Vision Statement from Gerda Verburg, Chair of the Seventeenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development upon successful conclusion of the Session, 15 May 2000

By: Linda Elswick, Thomas Forster & Ruud Schuthof

Background of Urban Rural Linkages in the Context of CSD themes: During both the Review Session of CSD 16 and the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for CSD, attention was given by governments and major groups of civil society to the important linkages between urban and rural sectors to meet the Millennium Development Goals, combining economic development, social protection and environmental goals. Some of these linkages were also contained in the final text for CSD 17, reflecting the important role of both rural and urban local authorities in rural development, to enable access to markets for small farmers, and for securing food safety nets.

The final text reflected that to enable a diverse and strong pattern of urban rural linkages all over the world, governments, intergovernmental organizations and civil society should work and learn together to exchange information and build international, regional, national and subnational networks, as well as create meaningful information exchange on urban-rural partnerships, across both developing countries and developed countries.

Why are urban rural linkages important to agricultural development in response to the food crisis?

Urbanization is a worldwide trend with many implications that touch agriculture. Cities inhabit over 50% of the world's population, meaning that 3.3 billion people live in city

environments. Cities occupy 2% of the world's land but consume 75% of its resources. Major concerns are where the resources come from and where and by whom they are produced. At the same time the range of problems small scale farmers are facing cannot be neglected. Linkages that combine solutions for urban and rural phenomena are therefore necessary and favourable.

Urban centres provide important markets for agricultural goods. Urban market facilities should be accessible to regional and local producers to enable direct marketing to consumers and other buyers.

Urban rural linkages will have various positive impacts:

- reduce transportation costs and carbon emissions use and increase local knowledge on food production and marketing maximize farm income;
- encourage crop diversification;
- protect valuable biodiversity in gardens and farms;
- create employment opportunities in the area where the food is produced;
- improve the quality of life through e.g. product freshness.

Beyond market links, we also need to acknowledge how agriculture touches upon and impacts urban centres and rural communities in a variety of important and inter-linked ways - through:

- healthy eating initiatives;
- school lunch programs;
- food assistance programs;
- community food gardens;
- farmers retail and wholesale markets.

As food security rises in public visibility, the interests and stakes that are shared by both urban and rural communities should increasingly be considered mutually supportive as opposed to distinct, separate, or in conflict with each other.

Multi-stakeholder public food and community planning must become a priority:

The path to more carbon neutral communities and wider citizen-stakeholder engagement reflected in positive concrete changes in many communities, is leading to a new horizon of farming and food systems change, where local authorities lead and energize wide cross-sections of their constituencies. In many countries and regions, communities are newly discovering their countrysides and the economic, environmental and social assets of resilient and diverse food systems.

Young people who are motivated by food issues in urban areas are finding new connections with their rural counterparts. Farmers who are farming with conservation practices such as organic and agroecological approaches, are becoming models. Consumers are now becoming more aware of the impact of their dietary footprint and demanding more local products that are



in season. City planners have returned to thinking about food, and many researchers and decision-makers are trying to understand the meaning of their "foodshed" and planning for their local food systems within a global context. Enabling policy recognizing urban rural partnerships can boost these developments much further than at present, for many are still uncertain about what urban rural partnership even means, or how they can be fostered and implemented.

The example of Eastern and Southern Africa (MDP ESA):

Municipal governments are engaging with rural authorities to support farmers and build new markets with support across a range of sectors. In Africa, municipal authorities have recognized the value of urban and peri-urban food production. Through the Cities Farming for Future (CFF) and From Seed to Table (FSTT) programs, MDP-ESA has been working with the Resource Centre for Urban Agriculture and Food Securities (RUAF) Foundation in partnership with African municipal authorities to encourage integration of urban agriculture in urban land use planning as a strategy for improving food security and nutrition, securing sustainable markets for urban farmers, particularly women and the youth, and promoting good environment management practices.

“Enabling policy for urban rural partnerships can promote economic activity, create jobs for youth and food workers and small business and bring fair prices for farmers.”

The policy toolkit needed for urban rural partnerships :

Enabling policy for urban rural partnerships can promote economic activity, create jobs for youth and food workers and small businesses, and bring fair prices for farmers, especially women and small farmers. Health, education, planning and other agencies of local authorities can be encouraged to coordinate more effectively with each other and with national agencies, for example in local food system networks and policy councils. Enabling policy can help mobilize investment in farm to market infrastructure through public/private partnerships.

The role of public procurement, together with private investment can be an engine for comprehensive and sustainable development of the food environment in every region. The power of public purchase can be further mobilized to help create safety nets and social protection systems for the non-farming urban public, providing a degree of buffer against food supply and price shocks, while serving longer term rural economic development. This enabling policy

for urban rural partnerships represents a bold step for creating food system resilience in all regions. Intergovernmental organizations, global NGOs and other major groups can readily identify opportunities and embark directly in collaboration with national governments, and begin jointly planning and implementing a wide array of urban rural partnerships, reflecting the urgency and vulnerability felt at community levels in developing and developed countries.

Following the conclusion of CSD in May, stakeholders who worked to achieve the policy outcomes for urban rural linkages have begun to plan next steps to build upon the momentum experienced at CSD. A plan to start working with a first selection of cities and their foodsheds was part of the ICLEI World Congress and Urban Nature Forum in Edmonton Canada. Research and capacity building efforts are in planning stages during the summer of 2009. These efforts are about showcasing the urban rural partnerships as a base for policy and will be key for delivery in upcoming UN processes including the next CSD cycle, the Food Summit, Climate talks, and the Biodiversity Summit in 2010. ❖

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Where's the innovative thinking?

When words say so little and attitudes speak volumes. What is the type of rural development that has been agreed upon?

By: Maria Arce Moreira, Policy Adviser,
Practical Action

There is no way to delink the agriculture and rural development debates. For this reason, the final outcome of the CSD17 needs to be understood in this context of interconnectivity and given the challenging world we are living in, taken with a pinch of salt.

For those attending this year's session, the negotiations may have become somewhat surreal at certain stages and many may have wondered about the ultimate motivation and beneficiaries of many of the proposals. I found myself distressed by the selective knowledge of several of the parties and highly disappointed by the apparent ignorance to the existence of the IAASTD report for example. Surprisingly even the Chair of the CSD17 – when interviewed – showed a lack of knowledge about the existence and the contents of this important document, treating it as any other piece of research circulating around the UN corridors. While many of us expected the IAASTD to provide the basis upon which a truly transformative debate on agriculture and consequently on the type of rural development – fit to the current times – would take place, what became evident is that there was little political will to move the debate from the business as usual approach.

And it is this traditional approach that has ultimately prevailed in the final document. Rural development framed around the search of increased agricultural productivity and access to markets – important but not the only elements that should capture our attention – is the generic proposal that governments have offered us.

While the text recognises the importance of effective participation by rural communities, the rhetoric remains insufficient due to the



implicit homogenisation of rural people and communities and the generic approach taken to rural livelihoods. Effective approaches to rural development need to recognise from the start the diversity of actors and their differentiated needs and contributions. It is over simplistic to continue ignoring the differentiated and often conflictive agendas and priorities of livestock keepers, pastoralists, forest dwellers, fisher folk, agricultural labourers, small scale and commercial farmers. While the recognition of the role of women and youth are welcomed and essential, governments could have moved a step forward and recognised the diversity of actors and the multifaceted nature of rural development.

The text is also limiting in the sense that governments would encourage and facilitate the participation of rural communities and vulnerable groups – logically in their own terms- but this will not necessarily imply, that already existing processes and rural grassroots movements will be recognised on

their own right as legitimate voices in this process and as examples of good practice.

Addressing deficits in basic needs is fundamental, not only because they contribute to improved productivity and income generation but because their delivery ultimately will enable rural communities and the vulnerable groups within them, to achieve a minimum level of dignity and standard of living to develop their full potential as productive and engaged global citizens. The emphasis on investments to provide essential infrastructure and services if not addressed with care, may lead to the traditional provision of physical infrastructure at a scale that does not address the real needs of rural communities and override issues of community ownership and control, accessibility, affordability, appropriateness and long term sustainability.

The lack of a specific reference of the need to support decentralised infrastructure systems – energy, water or transport – for

instance may highlight the interest in investing in infrastructure linked to high productivity activities rather than those that could address basic needs of rural communities. In other words business as usual.

Likewise the recognition of the vulnerabilities to climate change faced by communities in rural areas should have been matched with the recognition of the need to support rather different agricultural production systems, which are bio diverse and more localised in nature, less dependent on external inputs and which value existing local knowledge and sustainable practices vis a vis their contribution to addressing both adaptation and mitigation to climate change. The emphasis on increasing productivity and the preponderance of markets misses the point of the potential mismatch between the need for climate resilient agriculture and what traditional market oriented agriculture

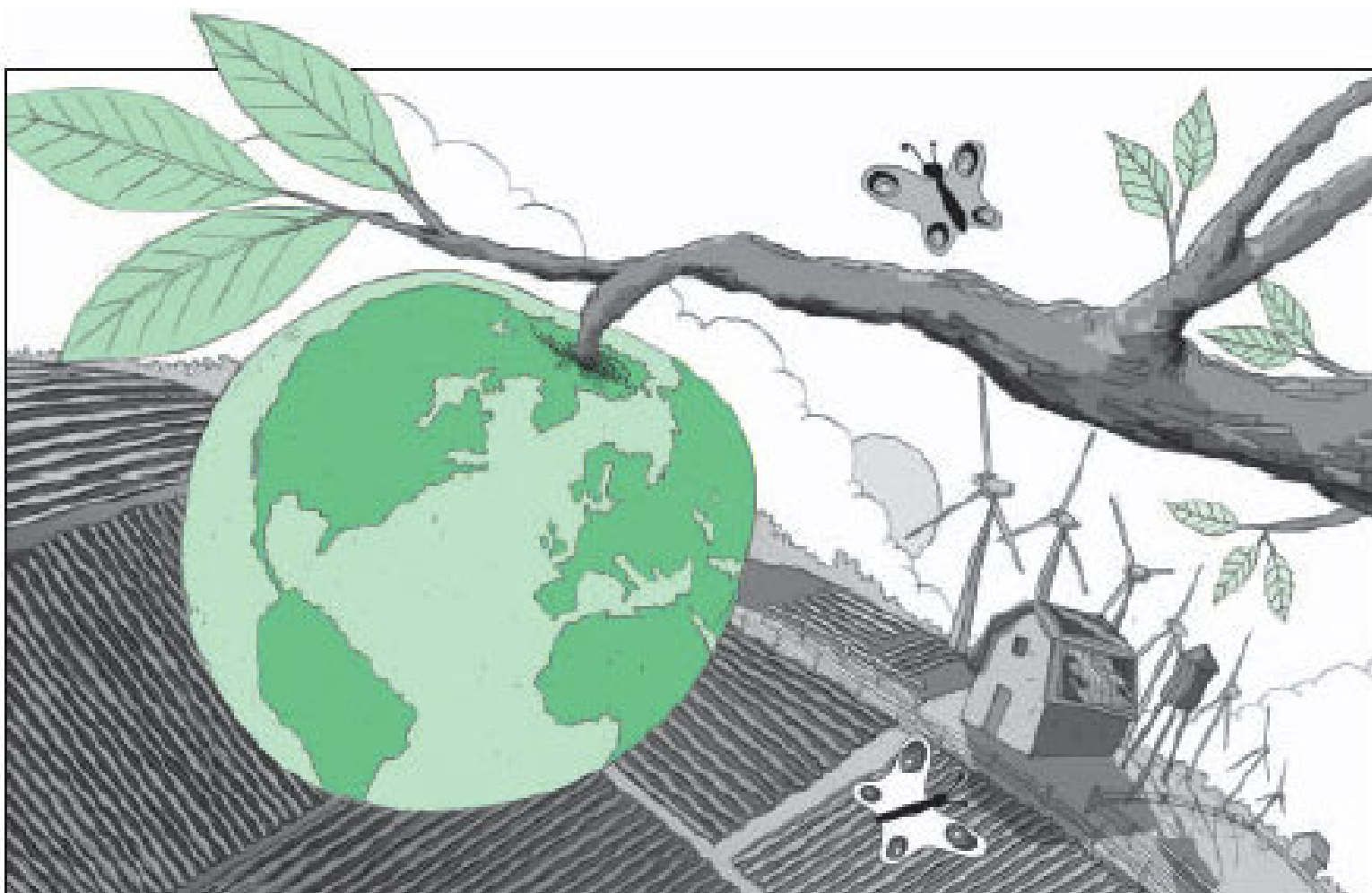
“The perception of rural communities as mainly producers in nature negates their contributions as users, managers and protectors of their own environment.”

represents in terms of emissions generation to start with. The preference given to one over the other will translate into what direction rural development will follow, how investments will be prioritised and whose priorities will ultimately count.

The perception of rural communities as mainly producers in nature negates their contributions as users, managers and protectors of their own environment and therefore excludes them implicitly from discussions and decisions over the control

and management of increasingly scarce natural resources. The CSD17 has neglected to discuss the important role of existing rural institutions in ensuring the achievement of sustainable rural development. Local authorities in rural areas, the governance systems under which they operate, existing capacities (not only the financial resources available) will ultimately determine whether rural development is inclusive, gender sensitive and climate resilient.

Despite the failure to consider of the important findings of IAASTD, the outcomes of the CSD17 in terms of rural development perhaps offer a relative good use of wording but it cannot provide certainty that the policy recommendations agreed upon will shape rural development according to the current challenges of the world. ❖



Youth: Capable not Vulnerable

By: Alicia Cundall, Youth Caucus

Many of the Youth Caucus attending this year's CSD were pleased to see that government delegates took measures to remove youth from the category of "vulnerable populations". Women and indigenous peoples, also, have begun to be removed from this grouping. While all people — particularly the marginalized in society — are of course *affected* by adverse conditions, we also have the capacity to *effect* them positively. When collaborating with local peoples (whether youth or otherwise) in sustainable development work, it is important to remember that your collaborators are not vulnerable bundles of needs; they are people with limitless potential to make positive change, equipped with capacities latent within.

In order to bring out and develop the capacities that all people have, we need education. If you study youth caucus statements since Rio, you will see that children and youth have consistently called for more educational opportunities. The Youth Caucus is also specific about the kind of education we are looking for. Youth Caucus members who have lived in rural communities, for example, know that rural education initiatives should be geared towards development within the community. Rural universities and agricultural extension initiatives are most successful when spearheaded by local peoples and when theoretical learning is integrated with practical experience. This CSD we called for education to foster excellence and pride in the field of agriculture and we were pleased that our suggestion, to strengthen research education and extension for sustainable development was included in the text.

Youth were also pleased that the importance of educating girl children and promoting gender equality was also stated



throughout the text. One of the Youth Caucus' seven priority principles centers on the need to achieve gender equality. There were some concerns from government delegates that perhaps the gender equality theme was repeated too often. As a young person studying International Development and pre-medicine, I feel that the need for women's emancipation cannot be overstated; only when women and girls are given equal opportunities can international peace and stability be achieved.

So far, the main advocates of gender equality are women. When men also feel ownership of the movement too, equality and peace will be won. Indeed, we can all be advocates for women, aboriginal peoples, children and youth whether or not we belong to that particular 'group'. We all belong to the human race and—in that sense— "their agenda" is "our agenda". Recognizing this increases the chances of cooperation and realization of common goals and true sustainable development.

We saw more unity of thought about our

common agenda and increased collaboration between the Major Groups at this CSD. For example, Youth Caucus members took time to consult with members of other Major Groups to bounce off ideas and hear their suggestions. Children and youth called for government delegates to do the same and consult with various Major Groups and Civil Society and the Youth Caucus will continue to do so for the next CSD. For example, in our statement at the Ministerial Roundtable on responding to the food crisis, we encouraged government delegates to consult with the Indigenous Caucus members to learn about successful grassroots projects.

The Children and Youth Major Group also called for language to be incorporated into the text on child labor — a plea that was also raised at CSD 16. Child labor is defined as "*work that damages a child's mental, physical or emotional development*". While the total abolition of child labor is a long-term goal in many countries, certain forms of child labor must be tackled immediately. Some of the worst areas of work into which

young people are forced include trafficking, armed conflict, slavery, sexual exploitation and hazardous work (International Labor Organization). Despite numerous attempts, no language on child labor exists in CSD 17's final text document.

The text does include some general language on labor, stating that the "work agenda of the International Labour Organization" should be "tak[en] into account" as an important way to achieve

"It is extremely likely that the Youth Caucus will again raise concerns about child labor next year since it relates closely to the themes of CSD 18."

"decent work for all" (p. 20). However, the Youth Caucus focus point is specifically about child labor and its relationship to hazardous working conditions within the agricultural sector. Agriculture accounts for 70% of child labor worldwide (Dorman, 2008). It is extremely likely that the Youth Caucus will again raise concerns about child labor next year since it relates closely to the themes of CSD 18. We are determined to ensure the battle against child labor is given the attention it deserves.

Employment is another important theme to members of the Youth Caucus and other young people with whom we collaborate. In one of its statements at CSD 17 the Youth Caucus mentioned that new employment opportunities can be created through ecosystem conservation and renewal. It is

this renewal component that's lacking in the final text document. While conserving and managing the resources we have is repeated throughout the text, the importance of regenerating what has already been depleted or in some cases lost is lacking.

There are practical ways to restore our natural resources. For example, the Scottish organization 'Living Water' provides employment, clean water, and marketable products through carrying out biological wastewater treatment. Kenyan Nobel Prize winner Wangari Maathai's tree-planting initiatives restore degraded lands in Africa. Maathai's work creates employment for thousands of people and renews natural resources, generating food, wood, fuel and medicinal products in the process. ❖



Business and Industry: Text is Balanced Approach

By: Robynne Anderson

The business and industry sector welcomes the agreed text of CSD-17 and generally find it to be a comprehensive and balanced document. As the text recognizes, it is imperative to tackle the challenges of sustainable development as they relate to Africa, agriculture, drought, desertification, land and rural development in an integrated and cooperative manner. Business and industry believe a mosaic of solutions through the joint efforts of all stakeholders will be needed. The CSD-17 agreement begins to link those solutions.

As many who participated in the CSD negotiations will know, business and industry was one part of the multi-stakeholder effort: Farming First (www.farmingfirst.org). Farming First emphasizes returning farmers to the centre of policy decisions as fundamental to sustainable development. The Farming First framework proposes six interlinked imperatives for sustainable development:

1. Safeguard natural resources
2. Share knowledge
3. Build local access
4. Protect harvests
5. Enable access to markets
6. Prioritize research imperatives

The six pillars of Farming First are about the continuous cycle of resources, knowledge and tools for farmers to use sustainable agricultural practices. Farming First is about a process of ongoing improvement that applies to ALL forms of agricultural systems including modern, organic and others. Every system must be made more



Photo: World Bank

sustainable, today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come.

Specifically for our sector, we are pleased to see "recognising the importance of science and technology" in the text, as well as: "Promote and scale up the development, transfer, dissemination and adoption of safe and science-based practices, products, and technologies, including advanced technologies and corresponding know-how." Business and

"Business and industry support the pursuit of sustainability by providing technology packages, R&D, people and expertise, outreach capacities, managerial and market development skills."

industry support the pursuit of sustainability by providing technology packages, R&D, people and expertise, outreach capacities, managerial and market development skills.

We also believe that the mobilisation of funding for research and development is very important. The private sector has come to bear a large proportion of the costs of agricultural R&D, and would welcome greater investment from the public sector into this valuable effort. Achieving sustainable agriculture requires applied research and available, appropriate technology, prioritising locally relevant crops and farmers' needs, stewardship techniques, and adaptation to climate change. This will ensure that farmers' needs are taken into account and that they benefit from continuously improved tools and knowledge to enable them to success-

fully achieve all the other steps of the process.

Focusing on farming is a key mechanism to foster economic and social development for millions of individuals and food security for all. It is vitally important that CSD has recognised the central role of farming in food security and poverty abatement.

Food and agricultural commodities chains are increasingly global and comprised of many different stages and players, including farmers, manufacturers, suppliers, transport, retailers, consumers and waste managers. Sustainability in food and renewable commodity chains requires shared responsibility and engagement among all those involved along their life-cycles.

“Focusing on farming is a key mechanism to foster economic and social development for millions of individuals and food security for all.”

Enabling a wide range of policy, market and voluntary measures and approaches throughout the value chain will be more important than ever as governments and the private sector cope with the recent economic downturn.

Policies and programs to support innovation, foster initiatives that build skills and joint efforts and partnerships involving major groups are of critical importance. It was a concern that we had to lobby to include private sector in the list of acknowledged partners but were happy to

see the role acknowledged in the final text.

Governments, businesses, scientists and civil society groups should focus attention on the source of food security, and encourage all these groups to work together to enable the many millions of farm families, especially smallholders, to grow more crops sustainably through effective markets, stepped up collaborative research and committed knowledge sharing.

For our part, the business and industry community is very conscious of the need to convert the words of CSD-17 into action. Recent announcements at the G8 may prove to be the enablers needed to put real effort into the concrete recommendations contained in the CSD report. ❖



Photo: DEFRA

Food for Thought...

Felix Dodds, Stakeholder Forum

“Radical Measures are Imperative!”

I recently had the pleasure of attending two fascinating meetings in Switzerland. The first was one organised by Maria Ivanova of William and Mary College and Dan Esty of Yale Law School on the subject of Global Environmental Governance. A subject which I strongly believe underpins our collective ability to address environmental issues in the future. The meeting brought together all of the former Executive Directors of UNEP. This was the first time this had ever happened. It was fascinating to see the reflections they had, all coloured by their experiences leading UNEP.

For me the most visionary was Maurice Strong, who not only gave an air of urgency to the proceedings but also focused on what is the emerging nexus of environment and security. As Maurice said: “We need a radical shift in the mind-set which dictates our priorities. We must treat (climate change) it as a security issue, the most important threat to global security we will ever face.” He went on to suggest that: “Energy is at the heart of this transition. Climate security and energy security are two sides of the same coin: one cannot be achieved without the other.” An issue that we at Stakeholder Forum also take very seriously, our book *Climate and Energy Insecurity* will come out in November.

The reform of Global Environmental Governance now seems to be integrally linked to Rio+20. The need for reform of UNEP, the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Bretton Woods institutions around a new ‘one planet

reality check’ is increasingly clear to more and more people.

The second meeting I attended was at IUCN, and was a celebration of Maurice Strong’s life and his 80th birthday. It brought together 100 key friends and thinkers to look at the climate issue prior to the Copenhagen climate talks in December. IUCN should be congratulated for taking this initiative. As Julia Marton-Lefèvre, IUCN Director General said. “This debate will help to frame the questions and answers for the climate change discussions later this year in Copenhagen and beyond.”

What was the underlying message from the two meetings? Well we have a short time to address the climate change crisis but concurrently to this everything else is going in the wrong direction, only a fundamental change in the economic model that the world operates will enable us to stand a chance to survive equitably on this planet. This point underpins for me, why the suggested focus of Rio+20 by the Brazilian Government is absolutely the right focus. But it also showed how few people we now have who can see the interlinkages that do exist and the true challenges we face.

Maurice Strong’s career is an amazing one and if you haven’t had the chance to read his autobiography, ‘Where on Earth are we going?’ then put it on your Christmas stocking list now. Not only was Maurice Secretary General of the Rio and Stockholm Conference and the first



Executive Director of UNEP but he is also someone who has contributed so much more, raising hundreds of millions for the 1980s famine in Africa and the reforming the UN. Could Maurice do it again in 2012? Well we do need someone who has the trust of both developed and developing countries and who isn’t afraid to speak the truth.

I am reminded of another of my heroes speaking just before he was assassinated in 1968...speaking about a different issue but so relevant today when he said: “A revolution is coming— a revolution which will be peaceful if we are wise enough; Compassionate if we care enough; successful if we are fortunate enough— But a revolution is coming whether we will it or not. We can affect its character; we cannot alter its inevitability.” Senator Robert Kennedy. ❖

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ANPED’s newsletter on sustainable consumption and production

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