

OUTREACH 2015



BUILDING PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CSD 11 - ISSUE IV

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT:

Is there a link?

Ever since the Stockholm Declaration, 1972, where principle 1 established a foundation point for the linkages between human rights and environmental protection, the road to get this link internationally recognized has been uphill, and still we have a long way to go. Principle 1 stated that every man has a fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being. Twenty years later, in 1992, at the Rio Conference on Environment and Development, the linkages between human rights and the environment were recognized in a procedural manner in principle 10. That principle stated that environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, and it also identified public access to information, and justice as key ways to handle environmental issues. A couple of years later in 1994 the UN General Assembly, in resolution 45/94, also stated the need to have a healthy environment adequate for people's health and well-being.



Author with Human Rights
No. 1 Supporter

In 1994 the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment, Madame Ksentini gave a strong input for the promotion of these linkages. Since then, the UN has not taken the topic up again until last January 2002, in Geneva, where in a joint effort between the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNEP office, an expert meeting was held with experts from both fields, human rights and the environment (in accordance with Decision 111/2001 of the UN Commission on Human Rights). One of the outcomes of that meeting was a set of recommendations on how to strengthen the promotion and the protection of human rights and the environment.

Later on, in 2002, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in paragraph 169 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation there is a reference on the linkages between human rights and the environment and there is a mandate where states have to further consider this relationship.

States have started to consider it. In the past 22nd Session of UNEP Governing Council in Nairobi, Kenya the decision about "Enhancing the application of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development" gave a mandate to UNEP Executive Director to report back on the value of starting an intergovernmental process to

develop global guidelines in the implementation of principle 10 of Rio Declaration. The other forum where states have considered this relationship is the UN Commission on Human Rights. Just out of the oven, in the last Session of the CHR, there is a Decision on "Human Rights and the Environment as part of Sustainable Development" stating that the protection of the environment and sustainable development can also contribute to human well-being and potentially to the enjoyment of human rights. This decision also says that the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are essential for achieving sustainable development.

With all these statements -above mentioned- on this topic, the objective is to keep alive the recognition of these linkages between human rights and the environment in order to put this issue into international processes so in the future victims will have mechanisms to complaint when human rights are being violated due to environmental degradation.

This long road for the recognition of the linkages between human rights and the environment leads us now to the 11th Session of the CSD. The question here is if the delegates are willing or not to follow up with the consideration of these linkages between human rights and the environment and sustainable development in general while identifying the program of work of the CSD for the next many years.

It is essential that, even when human rights are not formally part of the Agenda of CSD, they are mentioned in order to set a coherent policy between the outcomes of WSSD and the follow up that different UN agencies have to do. The full enjoyment of many human rights depends on the access to natural resources such as energy and water; indeed human rights are a precondition to sustainable development. This specific CSD has the special opportunity to recognize this relationship at this time and to endorse its importance.

The rights based approach to sustainable development will prevent abuses and will protect the people who are not able to be heard in these forums.

Victor Hugo Ricco, Legal Adviser at the Center for Human Rights and Environment.

CEDHA.

High Level Session on Visions for the Future of the CSD

The concluding session on the Vision for the Future of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) opened with a stringent reminder from Chairman Valli Moosa to keep comments within the ridged three-minute time limit. Again, the delegates took their time reaching their assigned seats and the opening comments were lost in the bustle. Once the session was in full swing, with delegates consistently disobeying Chairman Valli's time constraint, despite many reminders, the G77 and Small Island Developing States (SIDS) quickly dominated the scene. As the statements unravelled, it was clear the G77 and SIDS were ready to move from goal setting to action-oriented implementation. The need to implement already agreed upon goals, such as those consigned to Agenda 21, the MDGs and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) resounded in most everyone's statement.

Also, there was a common call for CSD reform at this session. The Kenyan Minister for Environment, Natural Resources, and Wildlife summed up this reformatory purpose of CSD-11, "*we should get it [the CSD process] right here*". Malawi quickly reaffirmed this position by calling CSD-11 "*a turning point*" for the process. Major issues discussed included the need for monitoring progress towards sustainable development, the financial and technological prerequisites for effective implementation, and CSD process reform.

Monitoring

With the focus on implementation, monitoring became a focal point of the session. While there were differences on which level monitoring should take place, there was a general agreement on the need for monitoring mechanisms. Differences surrounded the role of partnerships and national governments in the monitoring process. While the African states strongly supported the involvement of partnerships in the process towards sustainable development, there were some reservations from other nations about the effects partnerships will have on national governments. Those concerned with partnerships wanted to ensure national governments remained the chief implementer of sustainable development programs.

There were several good ideas put forth regarding the "how to" of monitoring. Mongolia called for a collection of best practices and relevant scientific studies to be made available as an information source for nations to use when putting together their own models for sustainable development. Equally as innovative, Chile declared the importance of a fully transparent, internet clearinghouse to report, monitor and provide information for implementation.

Financial Aid and Technology Transfers

As expected in a G77 discussion, overseas development aid (ODA) and technological transfers were consistently emphasized. Many nations felt as if they could change their practices and implement sustainable development, but not without the support of

developed nations. For example, Egypt feels as though the rift between developed and developing nations is continuing to widen. The Dominican Republic seconded this motion, saying aid never arrives and if it does it is "*too little, too late*". Financial and technological issues will continue to be a contentious issue the CSD process will face.

Process

There was relatively little contention on the logistical reform of the CSD process. Most statements reaffirmed the acceptance of the two-year cycle and the limitation on issues. While some nations preferred to focus on only one issue, the majority agreed that two issues would provide an acceptable level of breadth and depth. Demark, reflected on the importance of integrating horizontal themes into the chosen focal issues. These horizontal issues include poverty and sustainable consumption and production, which were commonly upheld by other nations. The Danes also threw in gender equality. The major suggestion for the first CSD issue was water. This is reflective of the G77 and SIDS composition of the session.

Diverting from the general tone of the session, Iceland and Pakistan focused on the environmental pillar of sustainable development more so than other nations. Iceland, representing the Artic Council, asserted the Artic region should be viewed as a global indicator for environmental damage. The Artic nations were the first to alert the global community about the long-term accumulation of organic pollutants in the atmosphere. They have recently noticed an increase in mercury levels, as well. The Artic Council is currently conducting an Artic Climate Impact Assessment and requested that ocean issues and marine environmental health be given emphasis in future CSDs.

Pakistan continued the environmental dialogue by referring to regional degradation associated with the Aral Basin. They called for financial resources and technology transfers so that the Central Asian region could remedy the drastic environmental problems. However, environmental issues did not dominate the scene. The general attitude of the participating nations can be summed up in Mozambique's words, "*We have devised a therapy, now we must decided, how do we administer the therapy?*".

Evy Wilks, Stakeholder Forum

Interactive Ministerial Roundtable

Today's roundtable regained some of the energy and focus witnessed on Monday. A presentation from Jonathon Sachs (Special Advisor on the Millennium Development Goals – MDGs) outlined something of how the MDGs might be linked to the CSD's follow-up work for the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPI). He did not shrug away from calling governments to get a sense of urgency about meeting the MDGs. Whilst the targets are feasible, he said, if we don't mobilise funds and act now they will not be realised. South Africa backed up Sachs statement about the feasibility of achieving the MDGs, citing their own progress towards meeting the global drinking water target (2015) as a clear

case where a target looks quite possible to achieve.

Various ministers and UN bodies proceeded to relate their own perspectives on specific aspects relating to means of implementation, trade and institutional issues. However, there continues to be a tendency to get stuck into the substance of the issues without tackling how and which issues needed to be covered through a new CSD system.

Financial resources

The UK minister announced a new financial initiative – an International Finance Facility that they hoped would help double current levels of Official Development Assistance (ODA). She referred back to the Monterrey commitments – that dealt with debt sustainability, financial mechanisms and trade issues and recognised the need for governments to increase their own ODA contributions. Other countries and groups, such as the EU and Norway, Germany, presented their commitments to increasing ODA contributions. The World Bank also reminded participants that a doubling of ODA would be required to achieve the MDGs – costing some \$50 billion per annum. They said that projects in key economic sectors, such as health and education, would be needed to attract inward investment.

UNDP announced that, as the lead organisation regarding the Global Solidarity Fund, a task force had been established to assess the need for the fund and how it might work, as well as to assess the obstacles for development of small to medium enterprises in developing countries. The USA felt that resources must go beyond government ODA commitments and that the private sector, in areas such as energy and water provision, needs to be better engaged. USA, Norway and Germany spoke about the importance of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in this regard. Norway and USA noted that good governance, capacity building and tackling corruption are important elements of creating a more suitable environment for FDI. Japan also supported this view and called for all forms of financial resources to be used to mobilise development.

The NGOs were challenging and raised real concerns about the process becoming overly reliant on financial sources and privatisation processes – making countries increasing subject to the vagaries of the stock market and private sector. They referred to the Johannesburg commitment to enhance corporate accountability and hoped that a taskforce would be established, also to help agree some ground rules for private sector engagement and partnerships more generally.

Trade

UK called on trade reform to support developing countries, including through the elimination of agricultural subsidies in the developed countries. This view was supported by the World Bank. The EU also recognised there was a need to increase the productive and trade capacity of developing countries. NGOs reminded governments of the current grid lock around the Cancun WTO discussions. They agreed there were real problems with existing trade barriers for the developing world, and called for greater fairness, access and capacity building in this area.

Means of implementation

The Korean Republic was keen to point out that means of implementation was not only about finance and trade issues but also required addressing needs for technology and science, education, capacity building – all of which were linked to poverty eradication, sustainable production and consumption and natural

resources management.

The Global Environment Facility representative stated that Capacity Building was at the heart of successful implementation of the Sustainable Development agenda. The World Bank felt that greater country ownership and stewardship was needed.

Monitoring

The Korean Republic pointed out that a part of the concept is the need to Monitor progress. The EU, UNESCO agreed that it was vital to track progress in implementing the Johannesburg targets.

Education

Japan reminded participants about the commitment for the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development beginning in 2005, for which UNESCO is taking a lead. He noted that synergies were needed in the educational sector to ensure that the decade would be a success.

Institutional frameworks

Coordination across UN bodies was also a popular theme. UNESCO noted that partnerships within the UN were improving. Giving the example of the World Water Development Report – where for the first time 23 UN agencies had collaborated to produce the report. In terms of meeting the 2015 targets it said that the UN and World Bank needed to work together to achieve them. The importance of regional coordination was also reiterated by a number of groups. A representative from ECLAC spoke on behalf of the five regional commissions and whilst wryly commenting that they didn't have financial resources to offer – committed to help coordinate the full advantages of regional and sub-regional bodies towards supporting the process. He called for a bottom-up approach to be applied as had been used during the Johannesburg preparations – noting that regional cooperation would be especially important for key issues such as water and sustainable production and consumption patterns.

Many countries recalled the target for producing national strategies for sustainable development in 2005. In this regard, the Korean republic identified the need to strengthen national councils for Sustainable Development. The GEF said that national level coordination across departments and ministries as a priority to help reduce international fragmentation and implementation – that this would be supported by the development of Sustainable Development strategies or plans within countries.

The chair concluded the session by outlining some emerging areas of consensus. That clearly there was a need for greater coordination and good governance at all levels. That financial resources were vitally needed but not the only means of implementation that would ensure a successful meeting of the Johannesburg commitments. Finally he called on governments to do more to enhance stakeholder engagement in the future – so that wider interests and perspectives could help inform and drive the process forward.

Rosalie Gardiner, Stakeholder Forum

JPol and the Economic & Social Commission for West Asia

The session played host to a number of presentations, intended to help delegates understand what is already being developed within the region. The joint Council of Arab Ministers for Environment, UNEP and ESCWA, established in preparation for the WSSD, has been extended to include UNDP under the leadership of the League of Arab States. The region is the smallest of all the UN Economic Commissions with only 13 countries but it is felt that it is vital for cultural regions to work with the whole of the Arab Region of 22 countries. This will need to be done in cooperation with NEPAD.

There was a recognition that the region has suffered greatly due to 50 years of war where over 9% of GNP is being used for armaments and has distorted national priorities. This is compared to 3% for other countries. If the region can drop down to 3% and build stability in the region this will free funds to help deliver sustainable development.

The region has over half of the oil stocks and over 70% of the income from the region comes from the export of oil. To reduce the dependency on the oil industry in future, tourism offers a possibility for development as the region is the cradle of civilisation. This can include the opening up of the Iraqi heritage for eco-tourism.

One aim of the post WSSD process is to set up a regional sustainable development strategy which will need to build on national sustainable development strategies. It is hoped that as these are being developed the region can develop a more sustainable development approach within government. In many states the work on sustainable development does not go further than the environment. This could be setting up sustainable development focal points in governments. This could lead to horizontal linkages between department.

There was a clear hope that there would be more coordination from different Ministries to ensure cohesion in the region as far as promoting sustainable development.

This year for the first time World Environment Day will be held in the ESCWA Region and the Arab Region as a whole in Lebanon.

Felix Dodds, Stakeholder Forum

Regional Implementation Forum for Africa

past, present and future

A wide ranging debate on Regional Implementation in Africa was held on Wednesday afternoon spanning recent achievements, the current institutional situation and how to an African Regional Implementation Forum (RIF) in the future. The US made their now customary challenge (made in all RIF debates this week) of the concept of RIFs, querying whether basing implementation reviews

and interaction on a fifty year old geographic structure might not be the best way forward. At this meeting however, they were alone in expressing this view.

The progress review commenced with a robust summary of NEPAD's progress to date by Professor Wiseman Nkhulu, Head of the NEPAD Secretariat. He described the three stages of development of NEPAD commencing in September 2000, the strategic thrust of NEPAD, the African Peer Review Mechanism and the progress towards sectoral implementation. He stressed that whilst significant progress had been made, it would be inappropriate to have too short a perspective. There was still a significant issue of capacity development in Africa. This approach to timing was somewhat challenged by Ronnie Kassels, the South African Minister for Water who advocated an approach of "let's get our hands dirty" and push ahead in the knowledge that neither the capacity nor the policy is as perfect as one would wish. Similarly Dr Bakary Kante of UNEP and Dr Josue Dione of ECA outlined what their respective organisations had achieved in relation to and in response to WSSD.

A major theme of many speakers was that of integration, whether challenging from the floor regarding the perceived lack of integration or explaining the degree of integration that already exists. Zimbabwe were concerned that NEPAD should not be an additional layer and emphasised the need to integrate ECA, AU and ADB. Dr Dione explained that the three African regional organisations ECA, ADB and AU all share a common secretariat and that each had a quite distinct role.

Several speakers touched on the issue of the relative roles of different African institutions. Whilst NEPAD was seen as the key institution by most, different viewpoints were expressed regarding the role of UNDP, UNEP and the different roles within the NEPAD structure

As to the approach for future of the African RIF, Ms Fatou Ndoye of NESDA sought greater stakeholder participation in the African RIF and Dr Dione stated that ECA were looking at ways in which business and civil society could be more effectively introduced.

Robert Whitfield, Stakeholder Forum

Chairman's Summary of the High Level Segment

Chairman Valli Moosa convened a half hour session to review the high level segment of the last three days. He started the proceedings by stating that CSD-11 has offered an opportunity to review the implementation of Agenda 21, and the JPOI towards achieving the MDGs. He spoke about the CSD how can help coordinate and add value to the work of United Nations agencies. He called for an integrated approach to sustainable development at national levels, especially with regards to national sustainable development strategies (NSSDs) and that the overarching objective of the future work of the CSD should be sustainable development, for poverty eradication.

Each cycle will included an in-depth review dealing with crosscutting issues every two years—the targets relating to the crosscutting issues will not be reviewed. Despite there being one

issue focus for each year—the structure will remain flexible to deal with emerging issues. The CSD will agree the issues for the first two cycles. It will also suggest the issue for the third cycle. CSD 12 will confirm that third cycle and suggest the fourth issue.

The chairman drew special attention on Africa, LDCs and SIDS. He said that the segment endorses the support to promote sustainable development in the region and these special areas. He added that Good Governance at all levels, good governance and corporate responsibility of international business should be encouraged.

The first year cycle will focus on water. Within this theme there will be discussion clusters dealing with sanitation, water resource management, land and agriculture. Cross-cutting issues will be addressed in each cycle - means of implementation, including finance, gender, governance, legal and regulatory frameworks, capacity building, changing consumption patterns and technology transfer - will all be addressed in the context of poverty eradication.

For the second cycle, the session suggested that Energy should be considered as the major issue. This would include issue on access to energy, climate change, energy efficiency, diversification of energy supplies, natural resource management and renewable energies. The session further suggested that CSD should provide support for the UNDP in implementing poverty and environment programmes in developing countries.

The chair explained that the first of each cycle will be the review

year on achievements and ways forward. The second year would place more attention on decisions about how to overcome constraints that might be hindering progress. Thus he said the second years will be the policy years.

On the overall future of CSD, the high level session suggested that CSD should create a platform for knowledge management and replication of best practice among its members. Multi-stakeholder process have been suggested as an approach to promote policy formulation and implementation. The Chair also announced that Regional Implementation Forums would help create a space to build partnerships for sustainable development, and that the CSD should strengthen the relationship between civil society organisations and governments.

The session also suggested that future CSD cycles should be seen to be promoting high level representation and participation of all stakeholder groups including gender balance. Special attention should also be given to educators, science and technology communities.

The session endorsed the Bali Guidelines for partnerships but the scope of their use remains an outstanding issue.

Musa Salah, Stakeholder Forum

STAKEHOLDER VIEWS

Setting the Agenda; Participation, Education & Capacity Building

Worldwide, people are aware and worried about the quality of their water, food, security, the air they breath, their children, their health, their communities and nation. They have heard about global warming and are concerned. Is awareness raising enough? Stakeholders also need access to knowledge, opportunities to acquire skills, forums on values, in order to act. As professionals how do we respond to these rights and responsibilities?

One of the greatest challenges facing the CSD process is staying on top of what we need to know in order to act strategically. One of the greatest challenges facing the implementation of Agenda 21 is staying abreast of evolving, strategic approaches to sustainability. Our target audiences include:

- 1) Civil society;
- 2) People who influence others because of their position in society and;
- 3) Professionals from scientists to technicians that create our base of knowledge and understanding upon which we base our decisions.

In the side event on “Strengthening the Role of Science in

Sustainable Development Decision-Making and Implementation, the work of Dr. Zakri, UNU Institute for Advanced Studies, on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment serves as an important model engaging diverse stakeholders in addition to the policy relevant stakeholder.

The buzz in the hallways and in the discussions on the floor reflects this growing commitment of the CSD to strengthening the education component in framing the plan of work over the next ten years. As a cross-cutting issue education plays an important role throughout Agenda 21. The key question we face is broadening the definition of education for sustainable development to create an informed political forum and an informed civil society that can participate and act on principles of sustainability. That is, devising mechanisms to engage people.

CSD11 is an excellent time to strengthen the CSD process by placing education on the agenda as a self standing theme. The Education Caucus would like your help in putting education on the agenda. This theme of education is the strategic key to moving Agenda 21, JPOI, and the UN Millennium Development goals forward - focusing on engaging people in sustainability. Discussion on sectoral subjects can then bring the education theme into the process on both a regional and global level.

The Education Caucus meeting will be held April 30, 11:00 – 12:00, 1st Floor UN Cafeteria [in the back by the windows]

Pam Puntennay, Education Caucus

Competitors in Business - Partners in Sustainable Development

Are the twin aims of achieving competitive advantage and building a genuinely sustainable business doomed to be mutually exclusive goals – or can companies in competition with each other really come together to work on sustainable development without compromising their business positions?

A global initiative currently under way in the cement industry indicates that the integration of sustainable development goals into every area of business strategy will provide companies with a competitive edge and ultimately also ensure their long-term survival.

Four years ago ten of the world's leading cement companies came together to form the Cement Sustainability Initiative (www.wbcdcement.org). Representing every continent, operating in two thirds of world markets and producing almost one third of the world's total cement output, the Initiative oversaw the largest independent research study ever undertaken into the long-term sustainability of the global cement industry. The resulting publication in July 2002 of the CSI's **Agenda for Action** commits its members to a series of individual and joint sustainable development projects over the next five years, including for example, the publication of individual performance data and targets for carbon dioxide(CO₂) emissions by 2006, the development of common health and safety reporting practices and the agreement of guidelines for the use of all fuels and raw materials in cement kilns to be applied by all ten companies across their operations.

But why have they grasped the nettle of addressing the long-term strategic challenge of sustainable development and why have three more cement companies joined the initiative? The plain fact is that they have recognised that sustainability is crucial both to their long-

term success and survival. Many current practices, such as energy use and limestone quarry operation, are essential elements of the business and key parts of an agenda for sustainable development. Stakeholders in the cement industry are exercising increasing pressure to take sustainable development into account in business strategy, product development and plant management. Increasingly companies which can demonstrate genuine commitments and actions are beginning to gain new forms of competitive advantage.

Working in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders to develop common standards and approaches to sustainable development provides the companies with demonstrable, objective and independent methods of assessing and, where necessary, improving performance. It also offers stakeholders the means of making independent evaluations and informed decisions. All of the companies in the Initiative are aware that taking the genuine concerns of their stakeholders about long term sustainable development into account are essential to maintaining their "licence to operate" and run their business effectively. Today keen interest is taken in how businesses manage environmental and social issues – mistakes in these areas are easy to make and can be both costly and difficult to put right. Ultimately, salvaging a badly damaged corporate reputation can be the most difficult of all.

Comments Noel Morrin, International Environmental Director of RMC Group, one of the Initiative's co-sponsors,

"Sustainability is not a straightforward issue - transparency, openness and accountability are therefore of paramount importance in demonstrating how sustainable development principles are being integrated into business operations. At RMC Group we have worked hard for a number of years now to try to place sustainable development at the centre of how our business operates. It is early days for RMC and for the wider CSI. We are on the starting blocks of what is becoming a marathon rather than a sprint

For further information please contact:

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SIDE EVENTS

The Role of Local Governance

"We live in an increasingly interconnected, interdependent world. The local and global are intertwined. Local government can not afford to be insular and inward looking. Fighting poverty, exclusion and environment decay is a moral issue, but also one of self interest. Ten years after Rio it is time for action by all spheres of government, all partners. And local action, undertaken in solidarity, can move the world."

Local Government Declaration to WSSD.

The evening workshop - hosted jointly by Local Government International Bureau (LGIB) and UNED-UK Committee addressed the importance of local governance in implementing the Johannesburg outcomes, and making significant progress towards sustainable development.

In the initial stages, the Johannesburg process made weak reference to the role of local authorities. However, changes in the strength of negotiations on this subject at Prep Com IV (Bali), ensured that Local Authorities, and local governance in general were better referenced in the final Summit outcomes. Two key achievements in this area at the summit were the hosting of the Local Government Parallel event, and the inclusion of Paragraphs

In these paragraphs, government agreed to "Enhance the role and capacity of local authorities as well as stakeholders in implementing Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the Summit and in strengthening the continuing support for Local Agenda 21 programmes..."

At the Summit local authorities gathered at the parallel event to agree a new phase of local engagement in sustainable development. They called this Local Action 21, to emphasise the significance of a shift from planning and rhetoric to implementation.

Chaired by Mike Ashley Director of LGIB, a panel of speakers addressed the issue of different spheres of sub-national governance. Councillor Parks Tau of the City of Johannesburg spoke briefly, but informatively on the fundamental role of local authorities in delivering key services e.g. water, health, energy, in support of national policies and initiatives. He pointed to the significant effect of good quality services on inward economic investment. Further to this he spoke on the challenges of decentralisation and the need to build the capacity of local governments to enable them to fulfil their roles in implementation. In respect to this, he highlighted the example of the South African contribution to the Summit, which had been a shared responsibility between central and local government.

Kenty Richardson, Environment Ministry, Catalonia Region, Spain, spoke on the under representation of regional (sub-national) government, despite recognition at Johannesburg of the importance of good governance at all levels. He drew attention to the development of a new network of Regional Government, and the production of the Guateng Declaration during the course of the WSSD. He complained that the system of major groups adopted at the Rio Summit, while acknowledging the role of local governments, ignored the significant strategic role played by regional government across the world, ranging from states in the US and Australia to provinces in Canada, South Africa and China. As a result of this, Regional governments have not had the ability to participate and influence decisions at the UN level.

In the discussion that followed, a key issue was raised on the need to recognise the role of local communities in delivering sustainable development on the ground. The need for open and accountable relationships between local authorities and their communities was highlighted, although it was recognised that Local Agenda 21 had led to a significant "reconnection" of Local Authorities and local communities.

Mike Ashley, Georgina Ayre and Rosalie Gardiner

Human Settlements: Developing Sustainability

According to presenter Jonas Rabinovitch the difference between the world's richest 20% and the poorest 20% doubles every generation. It is these inequalities and the corresponding social and environmental dimensions that helped inspire this meeting on developing sustainability pertaining to human settlements. Of the current global trends, urbanization and inequality have had some of

the most resounding affects in overpopulated urban slum areas. 200,000 individuals a day become urban dwellers, and of that portion 1/6th of them live in slum areas.

The meeting heard presentations by members of UN-Habitat, UNDP, and a South African Local Government representative. All delegates stated their positions pertaining to the growth and spread of urbanization, and gave their views on what their organization will do for the future of this issue. The floor was then open to comments and questions.

UN-Habitat has indicated that Target 11 of the Millennium Goals has become the organizations new framework. This goal will be to "spare no effort to free our fellow men, women, and children from the abject and dehumanising conditions of extreme poverty ..." It will be this inspiration that will preside over the meeting of the UN-Habitat governing council, convening May 5th-9th. At the meeting, members of the council will be looking at how the organization can be improved and funded. It will be discussing measures towards becoming a better mechanism towards resolving poverty issues, and how to most efficiently make use of available funding.

The UNDP position mirrored the UN-Habitat position, in that it will continue to make efforts towards improving the conditions existing in urban slum areas. The representatives indicated that the organization's intention is not to end or curb urbanization, but rather attempt to make living conditions better for those that must live in these areas. He indicated that the revenue base must be increased, and allocated efficiently so as to provide maximum funding. Besides financing, other dimensions are important to sustainability including environmental, social, and especially institutional change.

During the rest of the session, questions and comments dealt mainly with this final dimension. The representative from South African Local Government stressed how important it is for local authorities to be involved in discussions, in order to positively affect policy change. It is at this level that acts as a springboard for these development programs. She also stressed several other points:

- Coordination of inter-agency cooperation
- Integration of sustainable development initiatives in short and long term planning
- Basic / Minimum standards of development within urban areas

It appeared by the end of the session that the development of relationships with local governments seemed to be the most likely venue for success in the future.

"If we just say what people want to hear we may not add. If we say what they don't want to hear we may be ignored. But if we point the way and join hands and walk together then we may get somewhere."

Community Leader, Kabul

Nick Constantinou, Stakeholder Forum

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10.00 - 1.00	Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Presentation on Future Work Programme of Work of the CSD. Conference Room 1
10.00 - 10.40	Livelihood Enhancement, Conservation of Bio-Diversity & Stability through Systematic Trans-boundary Resource Mng. Conference Room B
10.45 - 11.25	The Power of Partnership in Creating a Global Initiative to Conserve Bio-Diversity. Conference Room B
11.30 - 12.10	Opportunities for Implementing Sustainable Rural Development and Eco-Village Training Programme. Conference Room B
12.15 - 12.55	Resilient Communities - A Pillar of Sustainable Development. Conference Room B
1.15 - 2.45	Technological Innovation & Sustainable Development - Challenges & Opportunities for International Cooperation. Conference Room B
1.15 - 2.45	Make the Connections: Poverty, Water & Gender in the MDGs. Conference Room 4
1.15 - 2.45	Ecological Footprinting: An Indicator to Measure Sustainable Production & Consumption Patterns. Conference Room 6
3.00 - 6.00 (TBC)	Presentation by the Chair of Draft Decisions. Conference Room 4
3.00 - 4.30	The Equator Initiative: A Partnership for Sustainable Communities in the Tropics. DHL Auditorium
3.00 - 4.30	Sharing Experiences on Building Partnerships between the UN & Private Sector/Foundations. Conference Room B
4.30 - 6.00	Lessons Learned from Successful Partnerships: Carbon Finance for Climate Change Mitigation & Sustainable Development Conf. Room B
6.15 - 7.45	Changing Production & Consumption Patters: NSSDs, CSD & the 10 Year Framework. Conference Room 6
6.15 - 7.45	Making Practical Sense of Paragraph 6 (Ethics in Implementation of A21 of the WSSD. Conference Room B

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