

The Voice of the NGO Community at CSD

Countdown to Earth Summit II

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CSD 5 SPECIAL EDITION

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COMMENTARY...

CSD5 so far - a dialogue of the deaf?

The stifling heat in the room did not seem to be generated by efforts for mutual understanding between developed and developing countries, or environmental and development agendas, on the first day of CSD5. The G77's opening statement stressed that the global partnership established at Rio is being undermined by falling aid from developed countries, and lack of progress on technology transfer, FDI that makes a real contribution to sustainable development for all developing countries, debt reduction or improved terms of trade. The developed countries responded by calling for a series of new environmental initiatives - all of them sorely needed, it must be said - without making any firm commitments, and certainly no new ones, on how to pay for existing priorities, let alone new ones. (Was it fate that the EU's statement was cut short by the chairman's red light and that the section on finance and ODA was dropped?)

Will this failure to grasp the nettle of finance 'kill the dream of sustainable development', as the G77 statement ominously suggested? Such an outcome from UNGASS would hardly impress the millions of people all around the world whose attention will be focused expectantly on heads of state in June.

How can the developed countries demonstrate that they really do still believe in an equitable global partnership for sustainable development? Here are just a few ideas:

- set specific targets and timetables for reversing the decline in aid: for example 0.7% of GNP by 2002;
- double the GEF - not 'adequate replenishment', the best offer heard from donors so far;

- develop mechanisms to spread FDI more widely and ensure it is environmentally and socially sustainable - for example by targeting increased ODA to appropriate capacity-building in environmental and social policy and institutions - and to ensure that international investment regimes do not undermine governments' ability to regulate FDI;

- the EU should introduce air fuel taxation now (not 'propose that UNGASS should consider the initiative to prepare' a tax, as the EU opening statement said), and channel revenue into the environment and poverty eradication in developing countries; if it really does want to 'reconfirm its commitment to sustainable development', the EU can take an international lead when its legislation exempting air fuel from excise duty expires at the end of 1997 should do so, rather than postponing action by calling for more international debate;

- establish an Intergovernmental Panel on Finance, as called for by several countries at the Intersessional and supported on the first day of CSD5 by the Chief Executive Officer of the GEF, - to focus debate and proposals on a range of financial issues for sustainable development;

- cut debt burdens by making the new Heavily Indebted Poor Countries initiative work (key donors are currently backsliding from earlier support) and going further as a matter of urgency.

The world is watching

Rob Lake
UNED-UK/BirdLife International

Just prior to the start of yesterday morning's session, NGOs discovered that the entire table of their arduously produced materials had been carted away without warning. This is a serious matter for NGOs. A full article will appear in Outreach tomorrow.

NEWS FROM THE CONFERENCE ROOM...

NGO Interventions During Day Two of the High-Level Segment, 9 April 1997

Statement by Clifton Curtis, Political Advisor
Greenpeace International

Before commenting on three specific issues, I would like to make some general observations on behalf of Greenpeace International. In general, we are very disappointed with the tenor and substance of the interventions made thus far in this High-Level segment.

With few exceptions, there is no real sense of urgency. With few exceptions, the actions being called for are inadequate to the task. With few exceptions, measurable targets are either completely missing or far too weak.

For sure, some have got it right. The G-77, through Tanzania, were right on target with their demands for more effective action in addressing finances. Several of the AOSIS representatives said it better than any of us NGOs when it comes the binding CO2 reductions that are required. And the UK, through Minister Gummer, was "spot on" in highlighting the need for a sense of urgency in this meeting. But those are the exceptions, not the norm.

This High-Level Ministerial segment provides the opportunity to lay down strong, imaginative markers for the negotiations that will follow from 11-25 April. For past CSD sessions, the High-Level segment was at the end, and the change this year was in significant part because NGOs and others wanted Ministers to set the tone and direction of CSD negotiations that would follow.

We therefore urge Ministers and their governments to grab the opportunity, now, to make sure that the Special Session, at the end of June, truly is something Special.

On specific issues, Greenpeace International has prepared a "Priority Issues" paper that addresses eight issues. We distributed that recently to governments through their Permanent Missions here in New York. I would kindly request that you review that statement, including the examples it provides for concrete, measurable actions. For this intervention, I will only highlight three of the issues addressed in that statement:

1) For fisheries: Yes, progress has been made since Rio, including the adoption of a precautionary approach and stronger enforcement measures such as those codified in the 1995 UN Fisheries Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks. Nonetheless, excess of fisheries capacity remains a critical problem that is getting worse. It cries out for attention and action. In the absence of strong action, at the global level, to address fishing capacity, other measures run the risk of being, to perhaps put it crudely, akin to "putting a band aid on cancer." We call on governments to demand that the FAO deal with fishing capacity, including the taking of steps to substantially reduce the fishing capacity of large, industrial-sized fishing vessels by 25-to-50% within a very short time;

2) For chemicals, progress has been made since Rio, in particular in addressing persistent organic pollutants (POPs). It was very encouraging, most recently, that governments agreed by consensus, at UNEP's Governing Council two months ago, to establish an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) that will meet beginning in early 1998 through 2000 with a view to concluding a new global treaty on POPs. At the same time, what we have not heard yesterday or today are imaginative proposals designed to assist developing countries in making the shift away from toxic chemicals to clean production. Failure to do that will have serious, adverse impacts on the global community's efforts to deal effectively and expeditiously with the reduction and phase out of POPs; and

3) For forests, progress has been made since Rio, in particular with respect to the more than 130 "actions" agreed by the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) that now need to be implemented at sub-national, national and international levels. Unfortunately, though, some countries are diverting attention away from action, now, by calling for the negotiation of a global forest treaty. Greenpeace opposes the negotiation of a new, global forest treaty, primarily because we think it very likely that such a regime will be little more than a "chain saw convention" - taking us further away from, rather than toward, sustainable forest management. We don't need that. What we need is action, and we need it now.

Mr. Chairman, Greenpeace International looks forward to working with you, with government officials and others in formulating bold, measurable actions at this CSD for final consideration at the Special Session. We look forward to working with you and others in ensuring that the Special Session really is something "Special." Thank you.

Statement by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz
Cordillera Women's Education and Resource Center
on behalf of the Indigenous Peoples' Caucus
(slightly abbreviated)

UNCED was one of the high points in our continuing effort to have the world recognize and respect our basic rights as distinct peoples and our rights to our ancestral territories. Agenda 21 fell short in affirming these rights but its recognition of indigenous peoples as a major group gives additional opportunities to speak before the governments of the world, as what I am doing now. Chapter 26 has

served as a reference point in many of the resolutions passed by the UN, from the General Assembly, UN conferences, down to the working groups and UN specialized bodies.

The inability of Agenda 21 to clearly affirm our basic rights to self-determination and to our ancestral territories is its main weakness. We believe that our capacity to effectively contribute to sustainable development is directly linked to the recognition and respect of our basic human rights as peoples and our rights to have control over our ancestral territories and resources, and our indigenous knowledge.

Agenda 21 and the other documents which came out of Rio have several sections which refer to us and our important roles in achieving sustainable development. Principle 22 of the Rio Declaration is one example. The acknowledgment of the need to change unsustainable patterns of production and consumption is relevant for us because it is an admission that the prevailing development paradigm is unsustainable therefore elements of these or the whole paradigm should be altered. Many indigenous peoples still practice sustainable production and consumption, although to the modern world these are considered primitive.

One aspect which is glaringly absent from the Rio documents, however, is the whole issue of mining. Mining of minerals and oil still remain as a main economic activity in our communities and this has resulted in massive environmental degradation and disasters. The depletion and contamination of freshwater resources, siltation and pollution of rivers, lakes, oceans, and deforestation, that are taking place in many of our lands are caused by mining. Mining is one of the most unsustainable ways of land and resource management.

Obviously, this whole issue was conveniently avoided because large-scale commercial mining cannot pass the test of environmental sustainability.

We will take stock of what have been done and not done, five years after Rio. Some of the hard lobbying done by indigenous peoples bore some fruits such as the following:

- decision of the Convention on Biological Diversity in COP3 which calls for an intersessional workshop to advance further work on the implementation of Article 8 (j).
- the International Meeting on Indigenous and other Forest Dependent Peoples on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests, held in Colombia in December 1996 which is one of the intersessional processes of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests.
- the formulation of Sustainable Development Plans which have involved some indigenous peoples, for example, the Arctic Environmental Strategy.

However, these gains are still very inadequate to reverse the crisis situation in many of our territories and communities. There is no significant improvement in the environment and development situation of indigenous peoples 5 years after Rio. The general picture painted in the Secretary General's documents for CSD V, are reflective of what is taking place in indigenous peoples lands.

In fact, because of globalization, the aggressive extraction of primary resources from our lands and the massive conversion of indigenous lands into commercial plantations, mining areas, industrial estates, golf courses, have even worsened. Deforestation, dam-building, the dumping of hazardous and toxic technologies, industries, and products, and wastes in indigenous peoples' lands still continue.

Globalization and trade liberalization which push governments to provide best incentives for foreign investments to come in, means that even the few existing laws in a few countries that recognize indigenous peoples' land rights are being weakened or repealed.

A look at the ongoing conflicts in the world today would show that a significant number of these are conflicts over resources found on indigenous peoples' lands.

In the light of these negative trends in the area of sustainable development, indigenous peoples are proposing the following:

1. The CSD should support the immediate approval of the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in its present form by the UN-Commission on Human Rights and the UN General Assembly
2. The CSD should contribute to the discussions on the establishment of a Permanent Forum in the UN for Indigenous Peoples.
3. The Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development coordinate an inter-agency task force directed at ensuring a more informed and active participation of Indigenous Peoples in programs designed to contribute to global sustainability . This can also to look into the coherence of programs within the UN system and other multilateral bodies insofar as programs on environment and development are being formulated and implemented for indigenous peoples.
4. The mandates for the UN Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations and the Fund for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples should be expanded to include the participation of indigenous peoples at the CSD and the related processes.
5. The CSD should organize a day on Indigenous Issues at the future CSD and should include indigenous peoples in its work programme as it had included industry.
6. The CSD should review the progress of UN agencies in relation to the impact of genetic research programmes and biotechnology on indigenous peoples, especially the Human Genome Diversity Project.
7. The CSD should examine the impacts of globalization, particularly bodies like the World Trade Organization and regional trade agreements like NAFTA, MERCOSUR, APEC, etc. on indigenous peoples. We support the call of the NGOs for a formation of a subcommission within the CSD which will look into how consistent WTO policies and programs are with sustainable development.
8. The CSD should review the activities of national and transnational corporations on indigenous peoples especially those involved in mining, logging, biotechnology, information, and food, with a view to ensuring greater corporate accountability.
9. The COP of the CBD should explore and develop alternative forms of protection which will protect indigenous knowledge and innovations from TNCs who are only interested to usurp and monopolize our knowledge through IPRs.
10. There should be a study and formulation of conflict resolution proposals and programs to address the conflicts between indigenous peoples' control over their resources with transnational corporations and even with governments.

Presentation of video: covering CSD negotiations and preparations for UNGASS featuring interviews with CSD co-chairmen, agency heads, NGOs, country regional representatives and significant players.

Two showings in Conf. E on Thursday, 10 April:
10-11:00 a.m. and 5:00-6:00 p.m.

RIO GRINDS...

"Now treading the fine line between simple bad taste and outright liable"

UK Secretary of State for the Environment John Gummer met with NGOs and suggested that over-fishing may be linked to the inability of fish to be cuddly. Prove him wrong - - hug a gold fish today, hug a frog in June!

Following the recent Danish assessment of Habitat, Rio Grinds has learned that Habitat is asking to be considered under the World Bank HIPC initiative.

Which slight, balding, Northern NGO from a small working group European island state is being investigated by the NGO Caucus on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns to review his over consumption of diet decaf Coca-Cola. It is hoped that a local plan of action can be drawn up shortly.

Late word just in is that the Asian Caucus is considering replacing its choice for Bureau Member with the Holy See.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DAILY MEETINGS:

(unless otherwise announced)

Women's Caucus

8:30-9:15 a.m., Room D

Youth Caucus

8:30-9:00 a.m., Church Center

Strategy Session

9:15-10:00 a.m., Room D, NGO

Process Sub-Committee

6:00 p.m., Vienna Cafe

NGOs LINKING CSW, CSD AND NPT

In Conf. Room C today, 10 April from 1:15-2:45 p.m., The Health & Environment Caucus along with The Women & Environment Caucus will convene a panel discussion on "Strengthening Linkages between Women, Environment & Sustainable Development." Panelists will include Ms. Marta Duenas, Acting Director of INSTRAW and H.E. Amb. Razali Ismail (invited).

The meeting will also feature presentations by members of the NGO Committees on the Status of Women, Sustainable Development and Disarmament.

In addition, the HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT CAUCUS will be convene from 2:00-3:00 p.m. in Conference Room E on the following dates:

Tuesday, 15 April

Wednesday, 23 April

Thursday, 24 April

UNEP and The Committee for Religious NGOs will hold a symposium on "Our Environmental Future: Ethical and Spiritual Perspectives" on Thursday, 10 April from 1:15-2:45 p.m. in Conference Room 1. Panelists include:

Gillian Martin Sorensen, Assistant Secretary-General
H.E. Daudi N Mwakawago, Chair of the G-77 & Vice-Chair of the CSD
Professor Gabriel Moran, Director of Religious Education, NYU
Ms. Lahane'ena'e Gay, President, Pacific Cultural Conservancy

NPT RELATED EVENTS THIS WEEK:

Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons will be the subject of the weekly DPI/NGO briefing, Thursday, 10 April from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Dag Hammarskjold Library Auditorium.

A Round Table Discussion of NGO Proposals for Eliminating Nuclear Weapons will be held from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, 10 April in Conference Room B.

The Nuclear Fuel Cycle in a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World: Thursday, 10 April, 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. in the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium.

The Road to a Nuclear Weapons Free World: Materials, Technology and Verification Issues: Friday, 11 April, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. in Conf. Room B.

World Verification of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World and Steps Toward That Goal: Friday, 11 April, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. in the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium.

PANEL DISCUSSION on Perspectives on the Need for a New Global Forest Convention chaired by Mr. Steve Trent, Head of Campaigns for the Environmental Investigation Agency UK/USA, will take place on Thursday, 10 April from 6:15-7:15 p.m. in Conference Room 3. Panelists include:

Mr. Hans Hoogeveen MPA, Deputy-Minister Department of Int'l Affairs, The Netherlands

Mr. Narayanan Kanan, Deputy Secretary-General
Ministry of Primary Industries, Malaysia

Mr. Carlos Weber, Director, Metropolitan Region
Chilean Forest Service, Chile

The NORTH AMERICAN CAUCUS will meet on Friday, 11 April at 10:30 a.m., Delegate's Lounge.

A workshop on Changing Consumption Patterns in Human Settlements is being organized by UNCHS and UNDP/CSD on Friday, 11 April 1997 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Dag Hammarskjold Auditorium. The keynote speech will be given by David Satterthwaite, IIED.

REQUESTS FOR MEETING SPACE

IN THE UNITED NATIONS BUILDING...

Contact:

Ms. Zehra Aydin, Major Groups Focal Point
2 UN Plaza, 22nd Floor
tel.: (212) 963-8811
fax: (212) 963-1267

Procedure:

- 1) Fax your request to the above number before 4:00 p.m. the day prior to the requested date.
- 2) Costs for the rooms vary, depending on type of room and service needed, i.e. sound (cost runs \$60.00 per hour - if your meeting runs over even by 5 or 10 minutes, be prepared to pay for the full second hour).
- 3) Ensure that contact person and contact number are presented clearly in your fax.

NOTE: Space is extremely limited due to an increased level of participants and decreased allocation of space.

AT THE CHURCH CENTER, 777 UN PLAZA...

Contact:

Ms. Sharrye Moore (not Ms. Linda Arnold as indicated in the weekend edition of OUTREACH)
tel.: (212) 682-3633

Procedure:

- 1) Pick up forms to reserve space at the Church Center on the 2nd Floor of 777 UN Plaza (corner of 44th Street & 1st Ave.)
- 2) Fill out the form and hand it in to Ms. Linda Arnold before 4:00 p.m. prior to the requested meeting date.
- 3) For all bookings at the Church Center after 6:00 p.m., a \$60.00 security charge will apply.

NGO CONSULTATION ON INCREASING ACCESS TO THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND ITS MAIN COMMITTEES AND ALL AREAS OF WORK OF THE UN

WHEN: Wednesday., 30 April

10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

WHERE: UN Headquarters
(room to be announced)

Representatives of NGOs in Consultative Status with ECOSOC and those Associated with DPI are invited to participate in a day of discussion on specific issues that are likely to be raised at meetings of the Sub-Group on NGOs of the Open-Ended High-Level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, which is examining ways to increase NGO participation in the work of the UN General Assembly, its Main Committees and the UN System as a whole. All UN Missions are also invited to send Representatives.

This Consultation is being organized under the auspices of the NGO Committee Chairs of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (CONGO). For further information, call the CONGO office in NY at (212) 986-8557.

CSD 5 Mantra:

(Repeat)...Urgent Situation; Far Too Little Being Done; Bold Actions Needed; Measurable Steps Required; (Repeat)....

OUTREACH '97

CSD NGO Steering Committee

World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)

Editors

Jan-Gustav Strandenaes

Sharon McHale

Contributing journalist

Michael Strauss

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Please send material/inquiries to

Jan-Gustav Strandenaes

Fax (212) 963-0447

Tel (212) 963-5610

E-mail: wfuna@undp.org

www.igc.apc.org/habitat/csd-97