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NEWSLETTER

OUTREACH 1997

The Voice of the NGO Community at CSD

Countdown to Earth Summit II

Vol. 1 No. 16

WEDNESDAY 9 APRIL 1997

CSD 5 SPECIAL EDITION

CSD 5 OPENING DAY

AT A GLANCE

EDITORIAL

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RIO GRINDS (is back)

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EDITORIAL...

Five years later, and where are we?

by Esmeralda Brown, Southern Co-Chair
& Michael McCoy, Northern Co-Chair
CSD/NGO Steering Committee

Many of us Major Group and NGO representatives who have been working on the issues of sustainable development both for Earth Summit and for the Commission on Sustainable Development since 1990 can clearly see what kind of progress has been made in Agenda 21 Implementation since 1992.

As an "NGO Community", we can be justly proud of the implementation of a "democratic, participatory, and transparent" decision-making process among NGOs that monitor the annual sessions of the CSD. The self organized structure of the CSD/NGO Steering Committee has developed as one way for all regions of the world to be represented in on-going CSD work, ending a traditional domination by northern NGOs of most UN/NGO processes.

While the participation of a broad range of NGO representatives at the annual sessions of the CSD is much better now than it has been in the past, there remains an urgent need to support the NGO networks at a national and regional level so that they have the necessary financial resources to effectively monitor their governments between the annual CSD sessions.

Many of the government speeches at the CSD Intersessional session in February-March 1997 indicated the need for "political will" and a "political commitment" by the governments on the difficult issues of making sustainable development implementation impossible; such as financing, environment and trade issues in the WTO, indigenous peoples participation, and the lack of strong targets and timetables for CO2 reductions by the year 2002, among others.

At this moment of CSD Review, we see that it is only strong national and regional CSD/NGO networks of organizations of civil society that will be in a position to develop the necessary political pressure from citizens on the governments, "to do the right thing" regarding Agenda 21 implementation.

Supporting the work of national and regional CSD/NGO networks will be one of the highest priorities of the CSD/NGO Steering Committee over the next several years.

What of the Governments progress?

Governments, both North and South, have not shown either a great deal of political courage, innovation, remarkable vision, or creative, long term thinking in their proposals for the next five years of work for the CSD. It as if the spirit and urgency they showed rhetorically at Rio has lost a great deal of steam when it has come to the much more difficult and much less romantic work required in the actual implementation of specific policies for achieving sustainable development.

The challenge to the NGO representatives here at CSD5 is to do what NGOs have always done best; push the governments to do more than they ever planned to, and to encourage them to take seriously the commitments they made to their citizens: in local communities, in cities and rural areas, to securing the survival of the natural environment, and the commitment to present and future generations. We must remind governments that like the NGOs and Major Groups that are here, they will also be held accountable in the future for either their visionary and courageous actions in realizing the goals of Agenda 21 or for their cowardly inaction. It is their choice and our choice and the question is, will we together be able to rise to the Challenge assuring our sustainable future?

All editions of OUTREACH as well as other NGO documents and related information can be found on the CSD/NGO Steering Committee Web Site:

<http://www.igc.apc.org/habitat/csd-97>

COMMENTARY...

The session has started: Now, where do we go?

Will CSD 5 churn out a 'business as usual' result, a 'worst case' result or a 'best case' result? The first day of this crucial session is over. To the astute and mundane political observer, the opening day probably looks very much like any other opening day. Is this business as usual, then? A number of the professional conference participants said that several of the statements, while not containing any big surprises, did possess a spirit of optimism and a willingness to show commitment and

action. So far, so good.

The High Level Segment of CSD 5 has caused some apprehension among NGOs. Would the world hear a series of ready-made general statements on the merits of attaining sustainable development at all levels of society? Would this be accompanied by an enumeration of global environment problems? And would it be delivered in a pompous style by a high level minister? What wishful thinking for the global cynic. What encouragement for the forces opposed to the UN. Gratis fuel to the conversation we are all too familiar with: 'I told you so, we don't need no world organization to tell us what we already know!'

Nothing has happened to corroborate this apprehension so far. Allow us to say we have the feeling that the opening statement by Dr. Rumen Gechev, chairman of the fourth session of the CSD, may have set the standard for the rest of the contributions. But then again, the arriving delegations could not know the contents of his statement. The other presentations were all written in the various capitals of the world without consulting the UN. Are we not in fact experiencing a feeling of sustainable consensus in the world to support global environment?

Revitalizing the momentum of Rio seems to be one of many points the different delegations will agree on. Eradication of poverty, changing patterns of consumption and production, achieving strong and measurable commitments on doing something about climate change, understanding and working for sustainable energy development and developing sustainable freshwater management are but a few of the other areas the vast majority of speakers seem to agree on. We, the NGOs, have at this point every reason to believe that something good will emanate from this session. To quote Bill Richardson's statement today, "the United States urges ... decisions, results, solutions and deliverables -- in short ... action."

We are all for that, as long as this moves us toward a sustainable world.

...jgs

NEWS FROM THE CONFERENCE ROOM...

NGO Interventions During Day One of the High-Level Segment, 8 April 1997

Statement by Martin Khor, Director
Third World Network

At the Rio Summit, the world's citizens were assured by our political leaders that at last some serious action would begin to tackle the serious problems of development and environment and bring us back from the brink of crisis and catastrophe.

And the action would be inspired by global partnership to sustainable development, where the rich and the rich countries would change their unsustainable policies and practices and help the poor and the poor countries through increased aid and better access technology.

Five years later the world's citizens are extremely disappointed and indeed we are alarmed at what has happened. Environment problems are worse than ever. The spirit of Rio seems to have vanished. Aid has fallen. Financial resources continue to be sucked out from the poor countries through debt servicing and low and declining terms of trade. The rich countries seem to be advocating a fallacious position that private investment can substitute for aid to the poor when everyone knows that private investments move towards profit-maximization (and not sustainability), that most of the capital flows to the South are short term, speculative and that FDI mainly goes to only a dozen countries. The poor countries need the right kind of aid, and they need debt relief and better terms of trade more than ever, so that they can build their own domestic capacity. Only then will investments flow, and not before. It is simply fraudulent to wave private investment flows to the poor as a panacea and as an excuse not to fulfill the obligations of Rio.

Development and the principle of and right to development seems to be challenged today by some Northern governments, and there is even a real danger now that the environment will be used as a reason to stop the legitimate right of developing countries to enjoy development. By no means have the four components of sustainable development - economic and social development, environmental protection and equity among and within nations - been accepted as the old debates begin again.

The environment has dropped many notches down the global and the national agendas.

The major reason is that in the five years after Rio, the process of globalization linked to liberalization has gained so much force that it has undermined and is undermining the sustainable development agenda. Commerce and the perceived need to remain competitive in a globalizing market, and to pamper and cater to the demands of companies and the rich, have become the top priority of governments in the North and some in the South. The environment, welfare of the poor, global partnership, have all been dislodged and sacrificed in this wave of free-market mania.

The most glaring weakness at Rio was the failure to include the regulation of business, financial institutions and TNCs in Agenda 21 and the other decisions. These institutions, that are responsible for most of the world's resource extraction, production, pollution and generation of consumer culture.

UNCED and CSD have failed to create international mechanisms to monitor and regulate these companies. Instead their power have spread much more. In particular, the Uruguay Round agreements and the establishment of the WTO have institutionalized globalization. Through its strong enforcement system the WTO and its legally-binding rules threatens to over-ride all other declarations, action plans and paradigms, whether they be Rio, Copenhagen or Beijing.

The globalization process, enforced especially through the rules of WTO, rewards the strong and ruthless and punishes the weak and poor. In fact it defines the criteria for success and failure, for survival and collapse. Its paradigm places profits and greed above all else, and its unregulated operation will continue to downgrade development, social and environmental concerns at both national and international levels.

It is the antithesis to sustainable development and to global partnership.

The CSD needs to address this crisis of the battle of paradigms between unregulated globalization driven by individual self-interest and corporate greed, versus global partnership between rich and poor towards sustainable development. We need political will and moral courage, we need moral will and political courage, among our governments, both North and South.

The kind of globalization we have is not sustainable, neither is it inevitable or uncontrollable. It has to be stared in the eye, and regulated, channeled, directed towards sustainability goals. Otherwise all the words we speak in the next few weeks and months will be marginal, will be only a kind of play, unless we are able to face up to the real challenge of this globalization process.

The CSD must make a decision to reassert the primacy of global partnership, to reassert the right of the poor to develop, the duty of the rich to curb their lifestyles and to help the poor, and the common but differentiated responsibilities to save Earth. The CSD must set up a mechanism, such as a sub-commission or a high-powered working group, to examine and take decisions on globalization and how it should be channeled towards sustainability, and this should be a cross-sectoral issue to be discussed each year in the future.

The legally-binding rules of the WTO should be reviewed to assess their contribution or otherwise to sustainability goals. This can be done through the in-built review process of the WTO. But such an assessment should also be done independently, through the CSD and other bodies. In particular, the new issues now before the WTO (investment and competition policy and government procurement) must be subject to serious study for their impacts. In particular, the moves by Northern governments to introduce a multilateral investment agreement through both the OECD and the WTO are likely to have very adverse impacts on both development and environment and if the MIA or MAI is passed it will over-ride many aspects of Agenda 21 and render impotent many of the issues and actions we will discuss in the next few weeks. The CSD cannot ignore what is happening in the WTO, nor confine its attention only to the "trade and environment" spectrum. We have to make the WTO more and more transparent to the world, and more accountable to sustainable development. The narrow paradigm of gaining more and more "market access" for the big companies, especially to the markets of the developing countries, must be modified and tempered by the larger paradigm of sustainable development.

The CSD and the Special Session of the General Assembly must tackle these larger issues of globalization, otherwise we will be overwhelmed, and there will be nothing optimistic to talk about when we convene again five years from now for another review.

If at Rio we were moved by the urgency to save the Earth, all the more, in fact many times more, do we have the need to eradicate poverty, and institute equitable mechanisms to defend the environment. We urge our political leaders and the officials in government and the UN to redouble their efforts to re-establish sustainable development at the top of the agenda. We in the NGO community, needless to say, will continue to fight for people's rights and the Earth. There is nothing more important in the world today that we can do together.

Statement by Jocelyn Dow,
Vice-President, WEDO

We meet here nearly five years since Rio where we signed on to Agenda 21, an Agenda of Hope, not Perfection, and to the Declarations of Rio that were a call to action for those who wished to develop a path that was more people-centered, gender fair, and sustainable. We signed on to a collective agreement to implement a more rational, accountable and sustainable life as nations and as peoples.

WEDO played its part along with that of hundreds of women's organizations to ensure that the documents and processes of UNCED were reflective of all women's realities across class, race, ethnicity and location. Women fought for our inclusion as half of humanity. We moved the meager references to women in the early drafts to a Principle, and an entire chapter on women. We succeeded in ensuring that women were main streamed in and to the documents. But there were some failures, one of which was bringing the role of militarism as a major negative force in the discourse of Rio. Today, sadly, we have to acknowledge that some of these old battles are still with us. In this very building there are over a hundred NGOs, many of whom are women, who are excluded from the Non-Proliferation Treaty discussions. Nuclear power and energy are twin sides of the same coin. Exclusion is its cutting edge. The issue of nuclear materials, arms, war, energy and environmental health are interlinked. The drain of resources for military activity engaged in by nearly all governments and the threats to the well-being of the planet and women's life is undeniable. Women are organizing the First World Conference on Breast Cancer in Canada in July where these links to women's health and the women's cancer crisis will be clearly demonstrated.

We cannot therefore be complacent on any issue here as we meet here today. We intend to be part of the reckoning. Women will raise our voices and continue to direct our energies to ensuring that we are central to the review of the past five years. We will continue to strive for no less a right at the Special Session of the General Assembly than we enjoyed during the formulation of the Rio commitments.

Today we meet in the season of review, reform and globalization - a globalization of trade, finance, information and of poverty, a global poverty that is both old and new. Women are over represented in the last category and under represented in the first three. As we collectively review the past five years of implementation and non-implementation, we will see that women have honored nay, in fact exceeded the commitments we made at Rio. Yet, the negotiations at the intersessional of the CSD failed to recognize and address the critical and vital role and impact of women in the implementation of Agenda 21. Women have lit the path to sustainable livelihoods. Women have carried the torch of solidarity and partnership. And women will bring the flame of continuity into these discussions to link our commitments and yours from Rio to Beijing. We promise to hold you feet to the fire.

Statement on behalf of the Youth Caucus
by César Marchesino, Latin American Youth Network for Sustainable
Development

The statement as delivered by Mr. César Marchesino on 8 April varies from the text below, dated 7 April, on which his remarks were based.

We call for: Governments to implement Earth Summit Commitments by ensuring the involvement of youth in all levels of decision making; recognition of youth NGO initiatives towards social justice, economic equity, micro-enterprise development and eco-sustainability; establishment of mechanisms and increased funding for North-South grassroots youth partnerships; governments to ensure that youth have increased access to information and documentation; youth to be allowed to initiate and develop their own ways of working towards sustainable development.

Implementation objective: Increased support on all levels for awareness, skill-sharing and empowerment of youth as present and future leaders and agents of change.

Implementation activities: The Special Session must support and be open to new and innovative ways of actively involving youth NGOs in the Sustainable Development process and debate. Therefore, we strongly urge the establishment of a system to ensure regular, democratic and balanced representation of young people at the CSD. Each National Delegation should include a NGO Youth Representative to facilitate the exchange of information to and from youth. The host country should ensure that the widest possible representation of youth NGOs, in particular Southern youth NGOs, in the process.

If continued youth participation in the implementation of Agenda 21 is to be assured, firm governmental financial commitments must be made and adhered to. Young people should be partners in the development of educational curricula around all aspects of sustainable development. Young people should be encouraged to promote Agenda 21 through peer education.

Further youth participation in the Agenda 21 process can be achieved through open dialogue sessions between youth and government at all levels. At a Local Agenda 21 level, youth should be enabled to take an active role in the auditing processes.

Rationale: Too few governments have taken strong steps to work with youth in recent years and achieving good inter-generational partnership. More remains to be done, and governments must find financial mechanisms to support youth involvement and empowerment in all regions.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT:

OUTREACH will be conducting a straw poll for who should be the next Executive Director of UNEP after Elizabeth Dowdeswell. Nominations for all possible candidates should be handed in to the CSD/NGO Steering Committee c/o the Editors of Outreach, by 9:58 a.m. on Friday the 11th. Voting will take place during week two.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DAILY MEETINGS:
(unless otherwise announced)

8:30-9:15 a.m., Room D, Women's Caucus
8:30-9:00 a.m., Church Center, Youth Caucus
9:15-10:00 a.m., Room D, NGO Strategy Session
6:00 p.m., Vienna Caf,, Process Sub-Committee

PANEL DISCUSSION:

"GLOBALIZATION: A THREAT TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT?
CRITICAL ISSUES FOR CSD V"

When: Wednesday, 9 April
Time: 1:15-2:45 p.m.
Where: Conference Room D

Speakers include:
Martin Khor, Third World Network
Yash Tandon, Int'l South Group Network
Victoria Tauli-Corpuz, Indigenous Peoples' International Centre
for Policy Research

Organized by the Third World Network
Do we need a Freshwater Convention?

When: Wednesday, 9 April
Where: Conf. Room D
Time: 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Speakers:
Derek Osborn, Co-Chair of CSD Intersessional
Pierre Najlis, UN DPCSD Task Manager for Freshwater
Jim Lamb, Severn Trent Water
Gunilla Bjorklund, Executive Secretary CFWA Stockholm
Environment Institute

Chair: Felix Dodds, UNED-UK

IAEA will give two presentations on Wednesday, 9 April in the Dag Hammarskjöld Auditorium:

10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Security in the Nuclear Field and Verification

2:00 -5:00 p.m.
Peaceful Applications of Nuclear Energy

NGO REGISTRATION

Registration of NGOs will take place at a Registration Desk located in the Public Lobby of the General Assembly Building (enter through the Visitor's Entrance located on 1st Avenue and 45th Street). For security purposes, all representatives are requested to bring a photo ID (i.e. passport or drivers license), as well as a copy of their letter of accreditation from their organization. Passes will not be available for persons whose names have not been communicated in advance.

Schedule for registration:

Wednesday, 9 April
 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
 Monday, 14 April
 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.
 Tuesday, 15 April
 9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.

NOTE: At all other times, please call the NGO Section at (212) 963-4843 or (212) 963-4846 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. for information on how to secure your passes.

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 Hammarskjöld Auditorium. The keynote speech will be given by David Satterthwaite, IIED.

REQUESTS FOR MEETING SPACE
 8-25 April

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.

Important:

As of 8 April, daily NGO strategy sessions will be held every morning from 9:15-10:30 a.m. in conference room D. At all other times, NGO activity will be based in Conference Room E.

The HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT CAUCUS will be held from 2:00-3:00 p.m. in Conference Room E on the following dates:

Thursday, 10 April*	Monday, 14 April	Tuesday, 15 April
Wednesday, 23 April	Thursday, 24 April	

* The Health & Environment Caucus along with the Women and 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). Consult CSD Today for exact time.

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 and Vice-Chair of the CSD (Tanzania)
 Professor Gabriel Moran, Director of Religious Education, NYU
 Ms. Lahane'ena'e Gay, President, Pacific Cultural Conservancy

Call (212) 750-2773 for more info.

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.

PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY:
 LOCAL INITIATIVES FOR CITIES & TOWNS

From 1-5 June 1997, an international conference will be held in New Castle, Australia to examine and encourage environmental awareness in local communities. The outcome of the conference will be presented to UNGASS in June. For more information, contact the Conference Managers, Capital Conferences Party Ltd. in Australia at: tel.: 612 9252 3388; fax: 612 9241 5282; email: capcon@ozemail.com.au

HOW TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE TO OUTREACH...

OUTREACH will be serving the NGO Community particularly at CSD 5 and Earth Summit II in June. We will make efforts to include statements made by NGOs during the sessions as well as articles you wish to see published. The editors reserve the right to choose and edit any contribution. All contributions must be submitted, with a proper by-line, NO LATER THAN 4:00 P.M., to be considered for publication the following day.

Note: Where possible, it is preferred that contributions are made in "ready format," i.e. that they are submitted on a IBM compatible diskette or sent via e-mail, indicating clearly that it is a submission to OUTREACH. To submit electronically, send to < wfuna@undp.org >, marked 'submission to OUTREACH'.

RIO GRINDS...

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

Who was that Canadienne who works for an international NGO active in forests who suddenly left the CSDI and was then seen in the company of His Royal Highness?

Rumor has it that a large green NGO has been breeding 196,000 tadpoles on UN grounds who will all become frogs at 10 a.m. on 23 June.

Following the success of recent UN privatization highlighted by this column, we have just heard about a new round of proposals to be laid on the table this week. Group X Securities have put in a bid for the UN Security contract and UN Catering has been bought by McDonald's. Vienna Caf, is to become a fast food burger joint.

After opening the Rio Grinds column to input from several contributors, a strong bid for a new name for this column has come in. It is "Coffee Anon."

As our contribution to the evolution of the CSD/NGO Steering Committee into a workable NGO co-ordinating network, Outreach and the "Coffee Anon" column announce the start of a 'Rename the CSD/NGO Steering Committee' Contest. Suggestions must be received by 9:58 a.m. on Friday, 11 April. The top 10 best suggestions will be printed and the winner will have the pleasure to treat the whole Steering Committee to an all expenses paid trip to the Rio Sheraton Hotel.

Anyone for "Strong Coffee?"

CLASSIFIED ADS

OUTREACH is looking for volunteer typists and/or a 'jack (or Jill) of all trades' to help in the production, and reproduction of this daily newsletter.

OUTREACH is looking for a talented hand to serve as 'political cartoonist.' Any who qualify should meet the Editors in Vienna Caf,.

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)

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OUTREACH 1997
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