

# OUTREACH 1997

The Voice of the NGO Community at CSD\*  
 Countdown to Earth Summit II

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### TOWARDS EARTH

**OUTREACH '97**  
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### SUMMIT II

*NGO initial comments on Co-Chair paper*

This paper has no intention of speaking for all NGOs, nor civil society at large. Many NGOs can not sign up to positions other than those in their competence.

NGOs have produced two substantive documents in preparation for the CSD Intersessional which have been distributed. This document is to highlight a few of the areas we feel are missing from the Co-Chairs' text. We would refer governments to our two previous documents for a more substantive overview of what NGOs are calling for.

#### **We call upon governments for the following commitments:**

#### **NGO Access to Earth Summit II and the General Assembly**

Ensure that the arrangements for the UN General Assembly Special Session are based on the newly revised Arrangements for Consultation with NGOs - 1996/31 - and that these arrangements should apply to strengthening NGO access to and participation in the General Assembly and its committee.

1. Reflect their commitments at Earth Summit II in June in a program of work to be completed by the 3rd Earth Summit in 2002.

#### **Integration of Economic and Environmental Objectives**

2. Complete sustainable development strategies by the year 2002 and ensure that all major groups are actively involved at all levels of decision making in the formulation and implementation of these strategies.

3. Ensures greater transparency, accountability and the public's right to complain, as now accepted and implemented at the International Financial Institutions, in the formulation and realization of national strategies for sustainable development.

#### **Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns**

4. Organize empowerment and awareness raising campaigns among most affected groups such as youth on sustainable consumption and production patterns.

5. Set national resource consumption targets based on the environmental space (with an equity approach to meet the basic needs) and enhanced quality of life for all. Promote socially and ecologically sound patterns of production and consumption through an efficiency and sufficiency revolution.

#### **Making Trade, ((delete Environment)), and Sustainable Development Mutually Supporting**

6. To convene a Trade and Environment Ministerial meeting before the next Ministerial meeting of WTO to address the relationship between trade and sustainable development.

7. Establish an Intergovernmental Panel or sub-Commission of the CSD on Trade and Sustainable Development to explore and make recommendations in regard to the implementation of fair trade vs free trade.

#### **Poverty**

8. Coordinate the outcome of the World Summit on Social Development on the integration of poverty strategies into Sustainable Development Strategies. Countries should publish their indicators on poverty and their strategies, including the elimination of structural adjustment policies, to eliminate poverty by the year 2000 in time for the General Assembly review of the Copenhagen Summit.

#### **Freshwater**

9. To focus on the watershed approach to the issue of the conservation of freshwater, ensure that democratic control of water is supported and maintained.

#### **Oceans**

10. Establish an Intergovernmental Panel or sub commission on Oceans to prepare a comprehensive scientific assessment on the state of the oceans and

#### **Towards Earth Summit II (con't)**

the necessary policy recommendations, drawing on efforts by UNEP and GESAMP - Joint Group of

Experts on Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution - in this field; the Law of the Sea treaty now in force should also be considered as a policy dialogue forum; immediate action is necessary to redress problems of excess of fishing capacity, wasteful fishing practices, and unsustainable aquaculture. Governments must also agree to protect the deep ocean.

#### Transport

11. Give priority to the allocation of road space for public and non-motorized transport, support car-free areas in cities, apply the "polluter pays principle" to transport to reflect the true social costs of motorized travel; and promote land use planning which reduces the need to travel by car.

#### Atmosphere

12. Endorse a legally binding CO<sub>2</sub> reduction target of 20% from 1990 levels by the year 2005, and commensurate reductions of other greenhouse gases, to be agreed at Kyoto, December 1997.

#### Population

13. Support the full implementation of the programmes of action of the 1994 IPCD and the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women and the 1996 Habitat II Conference.

#### Chemicals

14. Commit to a legally binding instrument on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) that will focus on 'reducing and eliminating' them, not just controlling them; come to an agreement on Prior Informed Consent and a global harmonized system for the classification and labeling; and develop a Framework Chemicals Convention without delaying the expeditious negotiation of a treaty on POPs.

#### Biodiversity Convention

15. Ratify the Biodiversity Convention by the end of 1997.

#### Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies

16. Clean up and dispose of all toxic military waste in an environmentally sound manner; implement an immediate ban on the production, sale, use and transfer of anti-personnel land mines.

#### Finance

17. Replenish and increase in the GEF; fulfil the commitment to the

0.7% GNP target for aid by 2005 ensure all aid is focussed to the implementation of the agreement of Rio and of the other recent global conferences.

18. Recognize and act on the urgent need for an intergovernmental process, under the aegis of the CSD, aimed at reaching global consensus on a range of financial issues and formulating concrete recommendations for action at the international and national level. These include innovative financial mechanisms, the balance between and respective roles of ODA and FDI, the coordination of subsidy reductions, and the creation of a policy environment and international mechanisms that maximize the contribution of FDI to sustainable development.

19. Recognize that Governments who can proceed faster than others in commitments to funding sustainable development and all other multi lateral activity should be encouraged to do so.

#### Indicators

20. Recognize the need to use appropriate sustainable development indicators appropriately as a tool for community decision making; taking into account that: a) data must be objective as possible; b) all interests, including beneficiaries, must be involved - everyone who is impacted, particularly grass roots women.

#### Major Groups

21. Establish National and Major Group reporting to a sub commission of CSD. This would offer a peer group review of the work being done.

22. Address the fact that there has been very little progress in relation to indigenous peoples' issues.

23. Establish a Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples within the UN system and adopt the Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in its present form. Both measures would further the objectives of Agenda 21 and the UN Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Wednesday, 5 March, UNA-NY has organized a meeting with H.E. Mr. Razali Ismail, President of the General Assembly, at the UN Church Centre from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

The Sixth International Conference of The World Information Transfer will be held at United Nations Headquarters on 17-18 April 1997. Running parallel to CSD V, this conference, which is being co-sponsored by the Government of Chile, will focus on "Environmental Degradation: Its Effect on Children's Health." Further information can be obtained by contacting the following:

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## FEATURE...

### HOW BRIGHT IS THE FUTURE OF THE WORLD'S GREEN FUND?

**Briefing on the GEF by Mohammed El-Ashry,  
Chief Executive Officer of the GEF, 4 March**

*A personal commentary by Rob Lake  
UNED-UK/BirdLife International*

Mohammed El-Ashry, the Chief of the Global Environment Facility - the 'world's green fund', set up just before Rio and due to spend \$2 billion on tackling biodiversity, climate change, international waters and ozone depletion problems between 1994 and 1997 - gave a briefing and answered questions for governments, NGOs and others at a lunch-time meeting yesterday. El-Ashry outlined the complex structure of the GEF: an Assembly of all participant countries (over 150) is the ultimate governing body, while policy decisions are made by a 32-member Council made up of 16 developing countries, 14 developed countries and 2 countries with economies in transition. The Council meets twice a year; votes are taken by a 'double weighted majority' - decisions have to be approved by both a majority of members of the Council and countries representing the majority of funds. NGOs - who select their own representatives - attend Council meetings as observers and have speaking (but not yet voting!) rights. The GEF is co-ordinated by Secretariat in Washington D.C., while projects are actually run by the 'Implementing Agencies' - the World Bank, UNDP and UNEP. The GEF acts as the 'financial mechanism' - the official source of funds - for the implementation of the Biodiversity Convention and the Climate Change Convention.

OK. That's the bureaucracy. But what are the real issues?

The first question to El-Ashry, by the representative of Colombia, went right to the heart of all the big technical and political questions currently surrounding the GEF. Negotiations amongst donor countries start on 12 March in Paris on the 'replenishment' of the GEF - i.e. its new budget. How much does Mr El-Ashry expect the donors to provide? Will there be changes in the GEF's scope, for example to include desertification - as has been called for by many developing countries and which some donors may support? Will the GEF streamline its procedures and make it easier for developing countries to get projects approved? What is the future of the controversial 'incremental cost' principle, under which the GEF only covers the difference in costs between activities a country would pursue for its own national development benefit, and actions needed for the benefit of the global environment - a topic that has generated considerable discontent in the Biodiversity

Convention Conference of the Parties in particular.

El-Ashry's replies were frank, but diplomatic, and sometimes personal. Unsurprisingly, he revealed nothing on replenishment: no-one knows how much money the donors will be prepared to give. He did not mention that rumours abound that the environment-friendly development ministry in one key donor country is under pressure from its finance ministry to cut GEF contributions (a recently re-unified EU country with a big budget deficit), while other donors talk enthusiastically of increasing the GEF (low-lying coastal countries known for their wooden shoes). On widening the GEF's mandate to include desertification, El-Ashry argued firstly that the GEF can already fund land degradation projects anyway, secondly that any new areas must genuinely be global environmental problems, and thirdly that new work must be accompanied by significant new money - otherwise the GEF will just do more things less well.

On streamlining procedures, El-Ashry said the GEF is doing all it can. Fast-track systems have been introduced for 'medium-sized' projects up to \$1,000,000 (of particular interest to NGOs), and the Implementing Agencies are trying to standardise their paperwork and get things done faster. This may be true, but there is still clearly considerable frustration amongst recipient countries - and NGOs - with the complexity and bureaucracy of the system. Incremental costs is an issue that seems to generate more heat than light. While many countries complain that the principle is opaque and obstructive, some insiders argue that in reality a very flexible approach has been taken to biodiversity projects in particular, and that incremental costs has in fact meant total costs. This seems to be another area where the GEF needs to put more effort into clarifying and communicating its message.

This author's view on the great GEF debate? It may not be perfect, but it's the only global environmental fund we have. In a political and economic climate in nearly all donor countries

in which public spending is under severe pressure, not to mention the hostility to internationalism in the US in particular, NGOs should support the GEF - while working to improve it. Donors should increase their funding, while resisting temptations to create a broader GEF unless they can provide sufficient (i.e. substantial) resources to guarantee that they will not just create more problems by weakening the institution.

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## RIO GRINDS...

### overheard at the coffee bar

Rumor has it that UN Reform Czar Maurice Strong is looking favorable at a management buy out at the Centre for Human Settlements. Unfortunately, staff were unable to distinguish any managers to produce the required bid.

The refurbishment of the Vienna Cafe by the Austrians has had NGOs thinking that perhaps the renaming of the space between the toilets as Bonn Ice Cream Parlor might see movement towards one of the NGO targets.

Rumor has it that the Secretary-General has been seen speaking to leading DNC fund raisers. Could this mean that the 38th Floor will soon be rented out to visiting "FOK" to give funds to save the UN and reform it?

President Clinton was through New York for the second time in two weeks this weekend for Chelsea's birthday party. NGOs are looking into the possibility of organizing a party for "Socks" (much cheaper than Chelsea!) For June to secure Clinton's participation in the Special Session.

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## QUOTES: PAST & PRESENT

### past:

"Many members of Congress today complain that 4% of our federal budget is too much to devote to aid - yet in 1951, that program amounted to nearly 20% of our budget - 20% in 1951 and 4% today. They refuse today to vote more than \$4 billion to this effort - yet in 1951 when this country was not nearly as well off, the Congress voted \$8 billion to the same cause. They are fearful today of the effects of sending to other people 0.7% of our GNP - but in 1951, we devoted 2.8% to this purpose.

The Congress has already reduced this year's aid budget \$600 million below the amount recommended by the Clay Committee. Is this nation stating it cannot afford to spend an additional \$600

million to help the developing nations of the world become strong and free and independent - an amount less than the country's annual outlay for lipstick, face cream and chewing gum?"

*President John F. Kennedy  
New York Protestant Council  
8 November 1963*

### present:

"Development aid is no longer needed to strengthen the American position in the Cold War against Soviet Communism. Development aid is now viewed by some skeptics as welfare gone global. Development aid is treated by a jaded political class as money down a rat hole instead of an investment in economic take-off for the prosperity -- and participation in global markets -- of 3/4 of the world's people.

Yet, the wealthy countries need rapid economic strides in developing countries in order to secure their own future prosperity. Liberalization of trade -- the hallmark of the 1980s and 1990s -- has been an important stimulus to economic growth but private investors alone will not invest in the schools, the water systems and transportation networks that are needed for a developing economy to sprint forward. Certainly, the reconciling of environmental sustainability with economic growth requires a strong public component as we build the metaphorical bridge to the 21st Century."

*Jeff Laurenti  
Executive Director of Policy Studies  
UNA-USA*

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## NGO CORNER...

*There are more than 550 accredited NGOs behind the NGO Steering Committee. Together they represent millions of people on all continents. We will be using this column in the next few days to introduce a few of these NGOs to you.*

**The youth by itself is a numerous and formidable group. They are also one of the stakeholders. Today, we introduce representatives from the Youth Caucus.**

### YOUTH CAUCUS

Maybe you've seen us around...we are this week, six youth representing *q2000* from Sweden, the *Canadian Environmental Network Youth Caucus' Youth Sustainability Project, REJULADS (Latin American Youth Network for Sustainable Development)* and *Rescue Mission Planet Earth*. We have been working hard to ensure that youth perspectives play a central role in planning for the CSD and in the sustainable development movement. By bringing together our different experiences and skills, we have successfully formed a dynamic and assertive group of young people brainstorming,

lobbying and contributing to the NGO position on many issues.

We are all involved in local Agenda 21 projects and bring to this forum the concerns of youth working on global issues in their communities. While we care about the well-being of the whole earth, some of our priority issues are sustainable consumption and production patterns; youth empowerment; education and participation; fair trade; finance for sustainable development; bio-technology and organic agriculture. Many governments and NGOs have responded positively to our lobbying efforts and ideas.

We are forging ahead with the proposed CSD 5 agenda for youth which includes:

- an orientation session prior to the start of CSD 5;
- a strong youth caucus process with daily caucus meetings;
- an interactive issue-based Youth hour to which all are welcome;
- a working group structure including documents, media and activism committees.

We hope to be pro-active in making CSD 5 inclusive of gender and diverse regional perspectives from youth. In order to acknowledge and avoid chronic over-representation by Northern countries, we have agreed that every Northern NGO youth delegate will be matched with a Southern NGO youth delegate.

While still here at the Intersessional, we will use this opportunity to respond to the paper prepared by the Co-Chairmen. We want a commitment for action, to change current consumption and production patterns, with special regard to youth empowerment, media literacy among youth, and an end to subsidies on manipulative or eco-damaging advertising.

We also urge all governments to include NGO youth representatives in their delegations in the coming meetings on sustainable development. As a major group, youth are fully capable of articulating and working on all issues.

We will continue to work to be seen, heard and included, welcome your support.

## SUSTAINABLE FASHION!

*Photo from The European, 1-8 March*

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The **Steering Committee** has a web page. <http://www.igc.apc.org/habitat/csd-97>  
There is also a general list server for those interested it is [csdgen@undp.org](mailto:csdgen@undp.org) just send a message to be added to it.

The complete NGO statement referred to under "UPDATE" will be posted on the web site in a couple of days.