On behalf of Consumers International and on behalf of the NGO Caucus on Sustainable Production and Consumption I would like to thank the CSD for providing us with this opportunity to speak to the distinguished representatives from so many countries. We believe that having this kind of opportunity to speak to you here, even for just a few short minutes, to share with you some of our views, concerns and desires is extremely important to our mutual commitments to sustainable development. We strongly share the belief stated in Agenda 21 and frequently repeated inside this building that “access to information and broad public participation in decision-making are fundamental to sustainable development.”

Unfortunately, many NGOs are concerned that many principles and values expressed in Agenda 21, including the “overriding” importance of sustainable production and consumption and the need to develop national policy frameworks for this are not taken as seriously as they should. The sense of “grave concern” about this issue seems to be lost in what we see as a process of marginalizing this issue. Being cross-cutting, the issue of achieving sustainable production and consumption is essentially the effort to create sustainable and just economies. Many NGOs feel that governments currently give far more priority to policies resulting in increased military spending, destructive subsidies, and ultimately unsustainable consumption. The low priority given to sustainable production and consumption policies and the need to develop national policy frameworks on this is indeed a matter “of grave concern” to us.

Extending the Consumer Protection Guidelines to include sustainable consumption initiatives is a crucial next step in achieving sustainable development. Since adopted in 1985, the original guidelines have proved to be one of the most practical policy frameworks ever passed. Since that time, sustainable consumption has increasingly been recognized as a consumer protection issue, and we believe these new guidelines will be an equally effective tool for governments.

We recognize that the current text retains many of the positive ideas originally proposed at the meeting in Sao Paolo, a process that enjoyed wide and open participation from all major groups. Regrettably, since that time this level of openness and transparency has not been maintained. As a result, a number of troubling changes were made that we wish we could have had the opportunity to discuss during intergovernmental negotiations. Among them is the elimination of reference to the fact that sustainable consumption depends upon the availability of sustainable goods and services (i.e. sustainable production) and the overemphasis placed on the responsibility of consumers. Other changes lessen the responsibilities of governments and business in making the transition to sustainable consumption possible for everyone.

RECOMMENDATION:
In spite of our concerns we will not ask you to re-open negotiations on this document. We realize you have worked hard to reach an agreement on this text. Instead, we encourage the delegates at this CSD to adopt these new guidelines and create the necessary instruments for their effective implementation.

We will, however, ask for two things:
• First, we want to know that after all this work, this document will not end up gathering dust on the shelf. We

Con’t...
Some delegates may be skeptical about this idea of “partnership” between NGOs and government, just as some of us NGOs are also skeptical. However, remember that while NGOs may be critical and sometimes loud, we can also be your strongest friends and allies.


CSD NGO Steering Committee News

The Committee met on Monday to discuss preparations for the April Dialogue Sessions. The meeting agreed the criteria for the selection of opening speakers and participants in each of the Dialogue Sessions.

The criteria for the NGO speakers is as follows:

• gender balance;
• regional balance;
• ability to speak well.

The final selection will be done by the CSD NGO Management Committee and will be based on the names put forward by the NGO paper co-ordinators. NGOs are committed to making the Tourism Dialogue sessions a ‘real dialogue’ between the stakeholder groups. Selection of the NGO teams for each Dialogue Session (18 people) will be based on participation in the process and ability to think on your feet as well as gender and regional balance.

The Steering Committee also published this week a booklet with the Guidelines by which they operate. These Guidelines will be distributed to NGOs and delegates over the coming week and are available on the CSD NGO Steering Committee web site at www.csdngo.org/csdngo. Also on the web site are NGO papers in preparation for the April Dialogue Sessions. The Committee met on Monday to discuss preparations for the April Dialogue Sessions. The meeting agreed the criteria for the selection of opening speakers and participants in each of the Dialogue Sessions.

The Role of Industry Initiatives in Promoting Sustainable Tourism: A Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue - Conf. Room D

Organized by: The International Hotel Environment Initiative

TUESDAY SIDE EVENTS

1:15-2:45 p.m.

Roundtable on Indigenous Peoples and Tourism - Conf. Room 4

Organized by: Indigenous Peoples Development Network

The Role of Industry Initiatives in Promoting Sustainable Tourism: A Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue - Conf. Room D

Organized by: The International Hotel Environment Initiative

FAT Tuesday at the Metropolitan Cafe’s Annual Mardi Gras Bash with The Nut Brothers Tuesday 23rd at 10.30pm (1st Ave. bet. 52nd/53rd)

Lou Marini on sax (Blues Brothers)
Alan Robin on trumpet (Blues Brothers)
Lawrence Feldman on sax (NY Philharmonic)
Larry Farrell on trombone (Woody Herman)
Tom McDonnell on vocals (Blue Brothers)
David Spinozza on guitars (Paul Simon /Paul McCartney)
Stu Woods on bass (Bob Dylan and Al Copper)
Rob Kondor on keyboards (Eric Clapton, Carly Simon)
Keith Carlock on drums (Blues Brothers)