

speaking for the CSD/NGO Steering Committee

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NGOs calls for action on oceans

NGO Caucus calls for a more effective forum for ocean-related action, with maximum NGO participation. In accordance with the their Statement on Oceans NGO Caucus urges government and CSD to agree to actions that will reward sustainable fishing practices.

The NGO Caucus welcomes the work of the CSD on Oceans Issues. Now, more than ever, there is a need to address these issues in a comprehensive, effective manner.

World fisheries are in crisis, and the health of marine resources and of the coastal communities that depend on them, is in jeopardy. To address these serious issues, the NGO caucus therefore recommends the following:

First, that a more effective forum for ocean-related action be agreed at this meeting. Among the criteria that the NGO Caucus has articulated in more detail for this forum, the NGO caucus feels strongly that this forum should allow maximum NGO participation, and should report to the CSD, ECO SOC and the General Assembly. The NGO caucus has identified two kinds of organizations that would meet these criteria; these are an intergovernmental forum or task force on oceans, or a standing committee on the oceans.

In addition, the role and functioning of the Joint Group of Experts on Scientific Aspects of Marine Pollution (GESAMPS) should be reviewed with a view to allowing NGO participation and effective implementation of GESAMPS decisions, and the work of the present 34 intergovernmental bodies engaged in oceans-related work should be streamlined and regionally coordinated.

Second, The NGO Caucus recommends, with respect to fishing, that the following urgent measures be agreed:

- at this meeting, the CSD should agree

that governments should sign the 1995 UN Agreement on Straddling Fish Stocks and Highly Migratory Fish Stocks, and that those that have signed, ratify the agreement by April, 1999, in order to demonstrate that they take the alarming decline in fish stocks seriously;

- the CSD should support the work of FAO on reduction of overcapacity.

Third, the NGO Caucus urges governments and the CSD to agree to actions that will reward sustainable fishing practices. These actions are outlined in more detail in our paper, but include establishing national fisheries laws designed to encourage sustainability, promoting common action among nations whose fishermen exploit a common resource, and encouraging governments and their fishing industries to engage positively in the ongoing development of independent voluntary certification of sustainable fisheries.

In conjunction with other measures, the NGO Caucus believes that an independent, third-party certification scheme such as that developed by the Marine Stewardship Council, has a valuable role to play in working toward sustainable fisheries in both the developed and the developing world;

The NGO Caucus further urges governments to actively participate in efforts to reduce subsidies that encourage unsustainable fishing in the FAO, the WTO, and in other fora and recommends that further action be considered to make the work of existing organizations internationally effective. This includes addressing problems ranging from how to mini-

mize oil spills, to establishing marine protected areas, to addressing POPs, TBT and EDCs.

Thank you Co-chairs, we will appreciate your serious consideration of these recommendations.

This is the NGO Caucus Statement on Oceans, presented for the CSD intercession March 1st 1999 by Jean Earley on behalf of UNED-UK - the UK Committee on UN Environment and Development, and the NGO Oceans Caucus. Earley is Chief Executive of the Marine Stewardship Council.

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It's necessary to provide human rights in tourism

NGO Caucus stresses that it is imperative to provide legal frameworks to safeguard human rights in tourism.

With regard to sustainable tourism, please allow us to voice our concern that the current focus is on tourism industry development which presupposes economic benefits that will automatically bring general improvement for all. Often this is not so.

We humbly submit to the Chair that the focus should instead be on ensuring a good quality of life for all people within a healthy environment, that of sustainable communities. This requires that all stakeholders, including local communities, women, and indigenous peoples be an integral part of decision making, planning, implementation, and monitoring of any sustainable tourism development. It is the right of these local stakeholders, in particular, to be empowered to determine the very feasibility of tourism as an instrument of sustainable development, and be able to consider other options of development for themselves.

It is therefore imperative to provide the necessary legal frameworks to safeguard human rights in tourism. We would like to emphasize this protection of human rights must be an integral part of any proposal for sustainable tourism, particularly in the context of widespread sex tourism, child prostitution, and trafficking of children and women. We appreciate that these concerns were raised by many governments as their key points, although these important issues were absent in the draft elements.

Moreover, it is implicit within the concept of sustainable communities, that maximizing economic and other benefits to the local community should be the primary concern of foreign direct investment opportunities. We must ensure that these investments maximize domestic earnings and minimize financial leakages from the community or nation.

This is the NGO Tourism Caucus Response to the Possible Elements for a Draft Decision. Presented 26 Feb. by Ms. Nunley, Consumers International.

Indigenous Peoples and Tourism

Indigenous Peoples' rights are often violated when tourism industry seeks to maximise its profits with minimum regard for sustainable development.

I speak in a support role to the indigenous Peoples' Development Network, the Indigenous Peoples Biodiversity Network, and Cultural Survival Canada, all of which are international indigenous organizations spanning North and South, but lack funding for proper involvement in the CSD discussions on tourism or to attend today.

For indigenous peoples, tourism can be an important part of their overall community economic development when the tourism enterprise is conceptualized, owned, and controlled by the local community. However, in most cases, indigenous communities are involved in tourism on exploitative terms. Rarely does a community have opportunity to decide whether it wants tourism, or to set appropriate terms for visitation.

Overall, the trend is for indigenous peoples to disproportionately bear the costs of tourism. In the name of tourism, indigenous peoples have lost access to the land and resources essential to their food security, self-sufficiency, and cultural identity. This has created cycles of poverty and environmental degradation in indigenous communities. Simultaneously, the tourism industry has appropriated indigenous cultural property such as dance, song, and other arts, as well as the sacred sites integral to indigenous cultures and traditional knowledge systems.

The ecotourism industry is of particular concern to indigenous peoples. Although their traditional knowledge systems, practices, and innovations have for millennia been vital to the conservation of biological diversity in areas now popular with ecotourists, in very few instances do indigenous peoples actually share in the benefits of the tourism industry or have opportunities to establish independent enterprises. Furthermore, indigenous cultures are commoditized in the marketing of ecotourism.

For new relationships to be built with regard to tourism, the principle of prior informed consent must be adopted by governments and industry, and indigenous peoples must have the capacity to develop effective access and benefit sharing mechanisms.

With this in mind, we respectfully ask the following:

- I. that governments include indigenous peoples in all critical analysis and decision making concerning tourism, particularly ecotourism;
- 2 that any decision making body established under the CSD to address tourism have indigenous representatives fully address the issues of cultural sustainability raised in the Berlin Declaration on Sustainable Tourism, and comply with Article 8(j) of the CBD;
that indigenous knowledge and technologies play a central role in the re-definition of what constitutes sustainable tourism, plus the development of criteria, indicators, and early warning systems for sustainable tourism; and
4. that governments, United Nations agencies, and NGOs fund and support indigenous innovation processes for sustainable tourism.

Statement read by Alison Johnston to the plenary during the CSD intersessional on behalf of International Support Group for Sustainable Tourism

SIDS is important, say NGOs

Quoting the Barbados Plan of Action, NGOs focus attention on The Small Island Developing States (SIDS) for a number of reasons.

In 1994 in Barbados, one hundred and eleven (111) governments adopted the SIDS Plan of Action that was built on the Rio process. The Barbados conference was the first test of the 'Global Partnership' declared at the Earth Summit in Rio.

An innovative and workable plan of action, with unprecedented NGO, trade unions, traditional and Indigenous Peoples and governments inputs, was adopted in Barbados. After building up hopes of millions of people from SIDS we are disappointed with the lack of results to date, due to the absence of inadequate and the misuse of existing resources, unsustainable follow-up and the lack of political will.

We still have an opportunity to achieve something-substantial if all Stakeholders- Governments, the International Community, NGOs, Business community and the other actor's come together to map out a common path. The articulation of comprehensive Strategies to integrate the concepts and principles of Sustainable Development into Local, National Development Plans and Regional programmes is vital

We call upon all of the major stakeholders in SIDS, international institutions and non- SIDS governments to join forces to make the SIDS Plan of Action work. If in these 41 small island developing states we cannot show the way, there is doubt in our minds that any substantial change can happen in the other developing and developed states.

As we stated in Barbados NGO Plan of Action, attention must be paid to SIDS for the following reasons:

"Sustainable management of resources is critical to our economic, social and cultural survival. SIDS have special characteristics shaped by nature: small size, small populations, limited natural resources, fragile Eco-systems prone to natural disasters, large distances between territories, sometimes within a single state. Yet, our major ecological vulnerabilities are neither born of nature nor are of our own making: climate change, environmental disasters, Northern toxic waste dumped on our beaches, the degradation of our coastal and marine resources, permanent devastation of

entire islands and atolls by nuclear testing, depletion of our natural resources and biodiversity, ... none of these arose as a result of our traditional lifestyles and forms of livelihood.

In addition, SIDS must be dealt with because the 31 million plus people in 41 island states are the most vulnerable on the face of the earth. Urgency is needed because as the oceans rise islands disappear. SIDS also serve as barometers of well being when it comes to the pollution of oceans, depletion of fish stocks, and negative impacts of tourism etc.

In view of the history of exploitation and degradation of the environments and economies of SIDS we, the NGOs, feel that the northern societies that have benefited from small islands developing states should join SIDS efforts to move from developing to developed states in a meaningful way. SIDS NGOs feel that as the world joined forces in a Marshall Plan for Europe after World War II, the same level of commitment is necessary to put former colonies on the road to self-sufficiency and Sustainable Development.

Negative impacts

1. Negative impact of World Trade Organization (WTO)

The Northern concept and practice of globalisation and liberalisation has contributed and will continue to the destabilisation of economies in SIDS.

4. Structural Adjustment policies - World Bank/IMF

The structural adjustment policies of the World Bank and the IF continue to marginalise and undermine social aspects of development. According to the process of these International Finance Institutions, loans and projects are started without adequate participation and involvement of local communities. If the projects succeed, the profits and interests 'go north' if they fail, the communities pay back the loans and this entails further impoverishment.

NGOs continue to be deeply troubled and concerned about the widespread social, economic and human devastation caused by the prevalence of LMFIWB styled "Structural Adjustment Pro-

gramme" in SIDS.

While these programmes promise economic salvation, they only served in promoting economic marginalisation, retarding social development and increasing human misery.

We cannot support a process, which seeks to impose programmes on SIDS and their communities, which are non-participative and unbalanced in their design and implementation. Where the burdens are carried by the "poor" and the benefits to the rich.

At the same time we welcome the recent statements by World Bank President, James Wolfenson, on an intended shift in World Bank policies towards greater social development, poverty alleviation and wider participation of civil society in bank related projects.

7. Lack of Human resource development facilities - free education from elementary to tertiary level, access to information, lack of capacity building on all levels, including informal micro and medium size business

8. Access to capital and credit

It is felt that the efforts of NGOs are hampered by their inability to access private and public capital and necessary credit, to engage in meaningful responsible and socially beneficial economic activity. While irresponsible speculation and movement of capital to and from our countries without control leaves communities without the wherewithal to implement self help programs of action.

9. Failure to adequately utilise NGOs and other civil society actors' potential as engines of social and economic growth.

Solutions

1. CALLS FOR CHANGE IN WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION

In order to ensure that the WTO and its processes are not inimical to the sustainable and positive development of SIDS, we are forced to call for fundamental changes to the methodological operations of WTO. We believe that greater levels of transparency and representativeness within the organisation. It must be based on a greater access to critical

information on key policy issues within WTO. Finally it must be based on a special dispensation under WTO, for providing for immediate capacity building programmes for SIDS to participate meaningfully in WTO. For e.g. the decision to raise the percentage of votes needed to effect change in the rules and regulations of the WTO was not done in a transparent and inclusive manner.

2. We call for reparations in the forms of cancellation or forgiveness of debts owed by SIDS to international finance agencies and Governments because of the burdens that debt places on social and economic development of SIDS. We consider it a moral obligation on the part of these institutions and northern governments to redress the wrongs of colonialism and other systems imposed on our peoples.

Additionally, we strongly reiterate rec-

ommendation #2.48 of the NGO Barbados Plan of Action; namely that governments "provide resources for reparations (e.g. Repatriation to their ancestral homelands) to the descendants of peoples forcibly displaced by colonialism and slavery"

Governments must join with United Nations and other International bodies to control the irresponsible flows of capital and credit around the world and provide for access to capital and credit for Sustainable development projects by the communities and NGOs. We request a strengthening of the SIDS unit within the United Nations, through the provision of a self-standing SIDS Unit in the Division of Sustainable Development. They must have the necessary increase in the staff complement with the necessary additional financial and other resources to effect their mandate.

Multi-stakeholders regional coordinating structures must be strengthened and supported. These structures must facilitate the active involvement of a wide representation of NGO and other civil society actors. The Caribbean regional structure could be cited as an example of cooperation among NGOs, Governments and other stakeholders.

We seek development of coherent National Master Plans for Sustainable Development and request that projects selected for support should fit into a transparent and inclusive framework emanating from the national master plan which should include NGO projects.

NGO statement on Small Island Developing States Programme of Action Prepared by the international network of Small Island Developing States and Indigenous Peoples (INSNI) caucus for CSD 7, 1 st march 1999. A member of the CSD NGO Steering Committee.

Strengthening the role of business and industry

Marine conservation and sustainable development efforts should not begin and end with the work of NGOs, individuals and local communities. Nor can they simply be left to governments. The enormous influence of business and industry makes it essential that this major group plays a part in tackling the problems facing the world's oceans, as Agenda 21 makes clear.

One of the most important links between the business community and the world's oceans is through commercial fishing. Every year, 80 million tonnes of marine fish are sold and eaten. Fish is an important source of protein for many of the world's poorest people and is increasingly popular with the consumer classes. Global demand continues to rise. Fishing has become increasingly mechanised and efficient; huge factory ships stay at sea for months, using highly sophisticated equipment to track down vast schools of fish.

But now over-fishing is endangering the functioning of entire marine ecosystems and is threatening the world's fishing industry - and the 200 million people who rely upon it for employment - with a catastrophic loss of jobs and money. Some fisheries that have sustained coastal communities for generations have now virtually disappeared.

Modern fisheries are enormously subsidised; world wide, governments pay tens of billions of dollars a year in subsidies to an industry that catches only US\$70 million worth of fish. The fish-

ing industry is also extremely wasteful. Every year, 1840 million tonnes of fish and other marine life - between one quarter and one third of the world's catch - is thrown back, dead or dying.

A comprehensive response is required, including improved enforcement of legislation, reduction of harmful subsidies, establishment of no-fishing areas, and elimination of destructive fishing methods. One important way in which the industry can itself contribute to this effort is through various forms of self-regulation linked to consumer awareness

The initial impetus for the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) came from a partnership formed between the food processing company Unilever and WWF - World Wide Fund for Nature International. The two organizations began from very different starting places; senior staff at Unilever were worried about long term business implications of collapsing fish stocks while WWF campaigners were concerned about the ecological implications.

Attention focused on the potential for a more general labelling system for sustainably produced marine products. The discussions drew on experience outside the marine field and particularly on the growth of other "ecolabelling" schemes and the independent certification of products that meet agreed social and environmental criteria. These include organic food standards, and the newly launched standards of the Forest Stewardship Council which aims to provide a

guarantee that timber and other forest products bearing an agreed label have been produced in ways that do not damage people or the environment.

Activities

Formed in 1997 and officially launched in early 1998, the MSC is an independent, non-profit body that sets broad principles and criteria for sustainable fishing. The role of the MSC is to work with responsible stakeholders in the fisheries sector to promote and achieve its objectives.

The MSC is based around a market-led solution to problems of fish stocks world wide, using independent certification of sustainable fishing operations according to previously agreed principles. Only fisheries meeting these principles will be eligible for certification by independent, accredited certifying firms. Certified products will be allowed to display the MSC logo, thus allowing consumers to choose marine products that have been caught with as little impact on the environment as possible.

Signatories and supporters of the MSC have been drawn from the fishing industry in many countries around the world.

Certification of fisheries is likely to be a difficult and therefore slower process than has been the case with some other environmental certification schemes.

Background article provided by The Marine Stewardship Council. Article is abbreviated by the editors.