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LETTER

OUTREACH

The Voice of the NGO Community at the CSD

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OUTREACH 2000

Voice of the NGO Community at the UN CSD
"Working Towards Earth Summit 2002"

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Jubilee 2000

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Focus on Poverty Eradication

Preparations for Earth Summit 2002 are starting to gain momentum.

In early February the European Commission hosted a meeting on 2002. In the UK from the 27th to the 30th of March, Wilton Park will host a Conference - Earth Summit 2002: Identifying an Agenda (contact virginia.crowe@wiltonpark.org.uk tel +44 1903 817714) with speakers including Nitin Desai (UN Under Secretary General), Minister Avoka (Ghana), Minister Meacher (UK) and Klaus Toepfer (UNEP Executive Director).

In April before the CSD G8 Environment Ministers will meet and discuss 2002 in Japan and UNEP will host a meeting of African Ministers which will have the subject on their agenda.

Beyond April the Danish Government are hosting an NGO conference on 2002 organized by the Danish NGOs which will address 6 issues: development, finance, trade, investments, economic growth and poverty eradication; Institutional reform; Freshwater; Food Security; Biodiversity and Climate Change.

To help collect ideas NGOs have produced a questionnaire to ask what their organization ranks as the most important issues for 2002. Fifty nine organizations responded to the questionnaire these included representatives from all Major Groups and had 34 organizations from developed countries and 25 from developing countries. The results showed a clear message for governments, the top ten were:

- 1) Poverty (264/275)
- 2) Consumption and Production (243/275)
- 3) Access to Information (237/275)
- 4) Freshwater (235/275)
- 5=Education (233/275)
- 5=Health and Environment (233/275)
- 6) Land use (226/275)
- 7= Agriculture (224/275)
- 7= Finance, Aid and Debt (224/275)
- 8) Gender Issues (222/275)
- 9) Forests (218/275)
- 10) Trade and Investment (217/275)

As interesting was the answer to the modalities questions for 2002.

- 1) There should be regional preparatory meetings for Earth Summit 2002 (52/58)
- 2= The CSD in 2002 should review Agenda 21 and the Summit should be forward looking (51/58)
- 2= The Dialogue process of the CSD should be integrated into the Summit preparatory meetings and the Summit itself (51/58)
- 3) The Summit should be used to set up the new UN machinery for sustainable development in the 21st century (44/58)
- 4) Earth Summit 2002 should be at Heads of state level (43/58)
- 5) The Summit should be held in a developing country (41/58)
- 6) There should be a separate Secretariat set up for organizing the summit (33/58)

Full details on the questionnaire results will be distributed during this CSD

Intersessional or can be found on the web site www.csdngo.org/csdngo.

So What to do after Seattle?

Commentary

by Nick Mabey, WWF-UK

The failure of the WTO Ministerial talks in Seattle to launch a new round of trade negotiations has graphically exposed long standing flaws in the process of global trade negotiations. Closed negotiating processes dominated by a few large countries brought about a crisis of legitimacy, with groups of African, Latin American and Caribbean Countries publicly denouncing the way decisions were being taken.

The inability of even the most developed countries to agree because of the complexity and scope of issues also highlighted the fact that poorer countries had little chance of effectively participating in the talks due to a lack of expertise and capacity.

Finally, the fact that disputes over environmental issues - and especially the regulation of trade in GMOs - remained at the heart of the negotiations even in the final hours shows that the WTO must finally take its environmental responsibilities seriously.

The pressure for reform generated from Seattle must turn into real commitments. The UK initiated proposal for a reform conference is welcome, but members should also:

Halt 'new round' negotiations: halt attempts to try and achieve a quick deal on a new round in Geneva and initiate a formal period of reflection and review. Only this clear signal will help build - rebuild trust in developing countries in the WTO.

Institutional reform: the current proposals for a conference to discuss reform should be agreed, and must focus on both the processes of the WTO and the appropriate scope of issues to be included in the institution. Developed countries should immediately enhance funding of existing capacity building programmes.

Interface with Environmental Treaties: disputes over biotechnology regulation highlighted tension between WTO and multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). With the WTO in stasis, the initiative for clarifying this relationship should pass to relevant MEAs, and work begun in the meetings of the Biosafety Protocol, POPs Convention and Kyoto Protocol in 2000.

Reform of EU Negotiating Processes: the conflicts between Member States and the Commission over environmental issues at Seattle show that reform is needed if non trade issues such as environmental are to be dealt with in the future.

The demonstrations in Seattle show the increase in public awareness of the WTO. Governments must engage more actively with both parliaments and the public to incorporate their concerns and explain the implications of proposed agreements.

This must not be a public relations drive to promote the WTO but a frank and honest dialogue of the flaws so graphically exposed in Seattle. This should include consideration of what reforms are needed to make it work in the broader public and global interest.

**"Jubilee 2000 says write off those unpayable debts in the year 2000, under a fair and transparent process. I'm with Jubilee 2000."
Bono**

Women's Caucus Declaration at Third Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization

Seattle, Washington, USA, November 30 – December 3, 1999

The Women's Caucus is comprised of women's organizations from the South and North attending the Third Ministerial Meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle, Washington, USA. We are concerned that the rule-based system created by the WTO has produced increasing levels of inequality in both the North and South. This system privileges corporate interests over community and national interests. Trade liberalization is not gender-neutral and has a different impact on women and men, similar to the different impact it has on developed and developing countries. While some women may gain from opening up of trade, the majority of the world's women and girls are adversely affected by the unequal power relations created at the national, regional and international levels by the new trade regime. We firmly believe that the trade policies should ensure gender equality and equity and people centered sustainable development.

We believe that the WTO undermines major international agreements that women have worked hard to get their governments to commit to including the UN conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and Habitat II. We further believe that all WTO agreements and policies should be bound by international human rights standards including the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against women.

The Women's Caucus urges the Members of the WTO to consider the following concerns clustered around the following critical areas of discussion at the Seattle meeting:

Systemic and Implementation Issues

- Ensure transparency and open participation of all member states in every negotiation process. Green Room by invitation-only meetings clearly violate principles of both transparency and inclusiveness as well as the integrity of the consensus process.
- Ensure that women's and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have equal access to information. Institute dialogue that allows substantial exchange between trade officials and NGOs.
- We recommend a comprehensive gender, social, and environmental assessment of the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements before undertaking a new round. Such a review should address the negative impacts and correct the deficiencies and imbalances in the agreements. This review and assessment should involve consultations with women's and other non-governmental organizations (NGOs).
- Democratize the WTO dispute settlement system to ensure impartiality, equitable access and a final appeal process outside of the WTO. Introduce and implement mechanisms to reduce the costs of dispute settlement for developing countries.
- Ensure gender and regional balance in all WTO decision-making bodies including expert and scientific panels.
- We urge developed countries to uphold the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries. Developed countries must fulfill their commitments in this area, especially for net food-importing countries and least-developed countries.

Agriculture

- A review of the Agreement on Agriculture (AoA) must include the experience of consumers, farmers, indigenous peoples, women, civil society groups, and research non-government organizations as well as multilateral organizations that have been critical of the existing rules governing agriculture.
- Ensure food security based on self-sufficient, small-scale, diverse agriculture instead of corporate export-oriented, agro-industrial monocultures.

- Ensure that southern and small farmers, particularly women, are not undermined by competitive pressures resulting from the rapid removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers and subsidized agricultural products from northern countries.
- Adopt the Convention on Biodiversity. Ban the patenting of living organisms and protect the knowledge, practices and
- livelihoods of indigenous peoples.

General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS)

- Ensure that public services such as health, education, social welfare, water, energy, among others are affordable and accessible.
- Promote symmetry in the treatment of the international mobility of capital and labor. Liberal entry of multinational service corporations must be matched by market opening measures for labor in developed countries.
- Provide women with capital, skills, training and technology that would allow them to take advantage of opportunities that increased trade in services provides.
- Ensure that trade policy does not overturn domestic regulations on consumer protection, public safety, public health and education, food safety and environmental protection, among others.

Tuesday's Program

8.30 - 9.15 am	Women's Caucus	CR-I
9.15 - 10 am	NGO Strategy Session	CR-I
10 am - 1 pm	Official Session: Opening of the Meeting - General discussion on Finance	CR-4
1.15 - 2.45 pm	CSD NGO Steering Committee meeting	CR-I
3 - 6 pm	General discussion on Finance continues	CR-4
6.15 - 7.45 pm	US Government- NGO Briefing	CR-I

Rio Grinds *What Rio did for the environment, Rio Grinds does for gossip*

To Quiz or not to Quiz that is the question?

1) What is UNDP?

a) A Management Consultancy b) a think tank competing with industry c) a UN agency to try and eradicate poverty

2) What is the IMF?

a) The International Management Forum b) International Monetary Fund c) International Money Foundation

3) When will the Copenhagen + 5 Review be completed?

a) 2000 b) 2005 c) 2100

4) How much will Canada pay for a Forest Convention?

a) \$0 b) \$0 c) \$0

5) Who will be Secretary General of Earth Summit 2002

a) Nitin Desai b) Simon Upton c) Ismail Razali d) Tommy Koh

Answers to be sent to CSD NGO Steering Committee c/o northclear@igc.org Winners will be entertained for a whole evening by NGOs.

One of the most read Secretary General's Reports for this years CSD is the one produced by UNESCO. Delegates are REALLY looking forward to debating UNESCO's Report in April. An NGO analysis of the lack of the implementation of the CSD work programme for UNESCO can be obtained by sending a request to northclear@igc.org

Wanted: An Agency to act as Task Manager for Education. Please contact the Division for Sustainable Development. Applications should understand how to prepare a strategic management plan and know how to enact instructions produced by the General Assembly.

Wanted: A President and a Congress that understands international relations and sustainable development.

For Sale: One slightly used secretariat to the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. Going very cheap, can be used for weddings and funerals.

NGO and government preparations for the Millennium Forum and Assembly are progressing and should be ready by 2100.

SUBMISSIONS TO OUTREACH

NGO representatives are invited to submit articles and announcements to OUTREACH via the following:

1) E-MAIL: northclear@csdngo.org

2) Labeled 3.5 diskette. Drop off (preferably with print out) at DC2-1782 (Two UN Plaza, 17th Floor).

Feature articles should be NO LONGER than 450 words. Information articles should not exceed 250 words. Deadline for announcements is 4:00 p.m. and deadline for articles is 6:30 p.m.. The editorial staff reserves the right to shorten/omit submissions.

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OUTREACH 2000- northclear@csdngo.org - <http://www.csdngo.org/csdngo>