

Newsletter

Vol. 1 No. 3

November/December 1996

OUTREACH 1997
Countdown to Earth Summit II

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OUTREACH '97
CSD NGO Steering Committee

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OUTREACH 1997
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WELCOME

Dear Friends

Esmeralda Brown & Michael McCoy
Co-Chairs of the CSD NGO Steering Committee

NEWS FROM THE INTERNET

CSD NGO Steering Committee

The Steering Committee has now constructing a web page. This is at

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

There is also a general list server for those interested it is csdgen@undp.org To be added to the list, just send a message to [<majordomo@undp.org>](mailto:majordomo@undp.org) with the one line message: subscribe csdgen

Useful Web Pages

Secretariat for the Biodiversity Convention <http://www.unep.ch/biodiv.html>

Clearinghouse Mechanism for the Biodiversity Convention <http://www.biodiv.org>

Bionet <http://www.access.digex.net/~bionet>

Secretariat for the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)

<http://www.unfccc.de>

IEA Greenhouse Gas Research and Development Programme

<http://www.ieagreen.org.uk/>

Secretariat for the Convention on Desertification <http://www.unep.ch/incd>

Ozone Secretariat <http://www.unep.ch/ozone>

Secretariat for the IPF <http://www.un.org/dpcsd/dsd/ipf.htm>

Habitat (post Habitat II information) <http://www.undp.org/un/habitat>

UNEP <http://www.unep.ch/>

DPCSD <http://www.un.org/dpcsd/>

Linkages (Earth Negotiations Bulletin) is a multimedia reference tool for environment and development issues. <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages>

UPDATE

Things to look out for in the run up to 1997

In the Coffee Bar

With speculation rife over the future over the future of Gus Speth as head of UNDP - Liz Dowdeswell head of UNEP gets a year's extension to help repackage UNEP. UNEP have had a cut of 30% in their budget over the last 2 years. Now some of the larger

environmental NGOs have a larger budget than UNEP! Is this the way to protect the environment?

In the coffee bar we have heard that there are 2 if not 3 possible candidates against Gus Speth. It is accepted by everyone that Gus has done a great job at UNDP but some of the Europeans want to make a point to the US who have reduced their contributions. The candidates come from Denmark and the Netherlands. The 3rd candidate is rumoured to be Baroness Chalker!!

One UN organ that people think may be for the chop after Earth Summit II is the Secretary General's High Level Advisory Board. What is that you might ask. Exactly. Would the money being put into this perceived junket be better used going to UNDP.

January sees the Presidency of the EU go to the Netherlands and the Head of the G77 to Tanzania, both keen supporters of NGOs and sustainable development. At a recent NGO Earth Summit II meeting in Dar es Salaam, Honourable Jakaya Kikwati, the Foreign Minister, laid the challenge for the next year "The increase in ODA of development countries to at least the levels previously agreed upon, that is, 0.7% of GNP, and restoration of commodity prices to levels that duly take into account the environmental and ecological costs of production".

Conventions

THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP-3) TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

4-15 November 1996

Taken from Earth Negotiations Vol 9 No 65

As the Convention on Biological Diversity's Conference of the Parties (COP) moved into its third year, it further refined its internal mechanisms as well as how it interlinks with other relevant international instruments and processes. Regarding internal COP mechanisms and processes, discussion centred on the need for a more focussed work programme, and took some action to exert its authority over the interim financial mechanism and the administration of the Permanent Secretariat. Delegates at COP-3 also addressed the question of how to interface with a variety of other international fora, including those related to forests and Agenda 21.

With the Special Session of the UN General Assembly to review progress made in implementing Agenda 21 scheduled for June 1997, it is appropriate and timely for the CBD to also engage in an exercise of self-assessment and re-orientation. As the final decision on the COP's input into the Special Session notes, biodiversity is a cross-cutting issue that interfaces with several different facets of Agenda 21, and therefore a substantive review of progress made thus far under the CBD would certainly be integral to the objectives of the Special Session. However, due to the timing of the Special Session and COP-4, this could be a missed opportunity. COP-4 has been scheduled for May 1998, six months later than previously anticipated, and thus the deadline for submission of the first national reports no longer coincides with the Special Session.

Because the implementation of the CBD's objectives will primarily occur at the national level, a more substantive review of the progress of CBD implementation would be possible if Parties have undertaken the exercise of assessing their own achievements at home. Therefore, the postponement of COP-4 will likely mean that CBD's contribution to the Special Session will be less meaningful than it could have otherwise been.

For the full report see Earth Negotiations Vol 9 No 65 enb@igc.apc.org

WORLD FOOD SUMMIT 13-17 NOVEMBER 1996, ROME, ITALY

In Rome, heads of state once again reaffirmed international commitment to the basic human right of access to a secure and adequate food supply. *"We, the Heads of State and Government, reaffirm the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, ... We pledge our political will and our common and national commitment to achieving food security for all and to an on-going effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015"*.

With the agreement of the Rome Declaration on World Food Security and the World Food Summit Plan of Action, progress has been made towards creating the right conditions for the achievement of world food security. However, for this to be fully realised there is a need for concerted action **at all levels**.

The draft Plan of Action does not envisage special mobilization of new or additional international resources, to help implement its recommendations. It places implementation responsibility squarely on the shoulders of individual countries, while recognizing that international cooperation can and should play a supportive role. trade and markets.

- Nations must adopt a strategy **consistent with its own resources and capacities** to achieve its individual goals
- but, must **cooperate regionally and internationally**, to organise collective solutions to global issues of food security.

(World Food Summit Plan of Action)

Increasingly societies and economies are **interlinked**, coordinated efforts and **shared responsibilities** are essential. Poverty eradication and a peaceful environment are paramount to in maintaining meaningful food security.

The environmental dimension of agriculture production is fundamental to reducing hunger and improving food security. The challenge is of staggering proportions, and the world must act, now. As the World Food Summit adopts policies and a Plan of Action, environmental and natural resource considerations must occupy a central place in the proposed measures.

Feeding another 3 billion people by the year 2030 - a likely scenario - will require rapid gains in agricultural production. Achieving those gains without damaging natural

resources on which both agriculture and life itself depend will require a different approach to food production than has been used in the past - an approach that builds on ecological principles such as diversity, resilience and efficient energy use. The knowledge is there. What is needed is the political will. Environmental considerations are reflected widely in the draft Action Plan.

Environmental and natural resource degradation as a constraint to achieving food security; sound management of natural resources; urgent action to combat land degradation; control of overfishing; conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity; the promise of, and cautions entailed by, biotechnology development; actions to implement global environmental conventions and agreements; management of water resources; reducing deforestation and so on, are all reflected in the draft text.

The challenge is to achieve and sustain food security within nature's limits. Both the supply and demand side of the issue have to be sensitive to the environmental dimension. For example, almost 70 percent of those stocks of marine fisheries for which assessments are available are being fished at levels close to or beyond the maximum sustainable yield.

Unless national governments and the international community address the multifaceted causes underlying food insecurity, the number of hungry and malnourished people will remain very high in developing countries, particularly in Africa, south of the Sahara; and sustainable food security will not be achieved. This situation is unacceptable. This Plan of Action envisages an ongoing effort to eradicate hunger in all countries, with an immediate view to reducing the number of undernourished people to half their present level no later than 2015, and a mid-term review to ascertain whether it is possible to achieve this target by 2010.

Food and Agriculture Organization Fax: 52255249, Tel: 52252932 or 52253420, E-mail: food-summit@fao.org

WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE 9-13 DECEMBER 1996

(taken from Sustainable Developments, produced by the International Institute for Sustainable Development)

The first Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO) met in Singapore from 9-13 December 1996, the first meeting of a body created only 2 years ago. The event proved to be much larger than originally anticipated, with hundreds of journalists and NGO spectators.

Notable achievements from the Ministerial Conference can be seen as the completion of the Information Technology Agreement (ITA) the adoption of the Comprehensive and Integrated Plan of Action designed to lend further assistance to the least developed countries in accessing and sharing the benefits of the rules-based multilateral trading system.

Trade and Environment

Although some countries addressed a number of environmental issues in their opening statements to the Plenary, a number of countries expressed the view that environment was essentially a non-issue at this first Ministerial Conference. The Committee on Trade and Environment's (CTE) Report was adopted by consensus on 9 November 1996 and was therefore not a matter for negotiation among delegations in Singapore.

Prior to the conference some countries, mostly developed, expressed concerns that the conference should focus on a review of the implementation of the Uruguay Round, as they believed progress towards fulfilling commitments over the last two years had been slow. Uruguay Round negotiations established an agenda within the WTO, which specified time scales to renew negotiations, to revisit agreements and to assess the effectiveness of these agreements. In contrast many developing countries in their opening statement highlighted their apprehension that environmental measures may be used as a guise for protectionism.

A number of NGOs attended the conference, but the overriding feeling was frustration at having little or no opportunity for lobbying.

The CTE was unable to agree whether eco-labels should cover non-product-related process and production measures as well as issues pertaining particularly to the make up of the product. It can be argued and that the way a product is produced is as important as the materials it is made out of and that eco-labeling should distinguish products that have covered both issues effectively.

Many expressed dissatisfaction that the CTE has made no significant recommendations for environmental reform in the WTO and the conclusions it has reached seem to suggest that the environment will remain a peripheral issue in the WTO. On a more positive note, however, observers noted that there is some evidence in the report and Plenary statements that Members are beginning to understand that trade liberalization does not necessarily foster sustainable development and that complementary environmental policies are needed.

A full version of this report can be found in Sustainable Developments Vol 3, No 6 Dec 1996 (address above)

COMING SOON

Major Groups and NGOs to play a key role in Five Year Review of Agenda 21

Esmeralda Brown & Michael McCoy

There is no doubt that Major Groups and NGOs will play a significant part in the review of Agenda 21 at the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD 5) and during the Special Session of the General Assembly in June 1997.

Since Agenda 21 was first launched at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 the non-governmental sector has done much towards its implementation, successful or otherwise. In the last four years NGOs and Major Groups have carried out outreach

schemes in their regions at local, regional, national, and international levels, as well as in the more formal settings of the CSD and other international forums.

A fundamental outcome has been the establishment of an NGO Steering Committee three years ago, designed to facilitate information sharing during and after the annual sessions of the CSD. The Steering Committee now has over sixty members, with representatives from every region of the world, covering every major issue of Agenda 21. The Steering Committee will play a major role in facilitating preparations in the run up to the forthcoming events of 1997. To date preparations have been in a number of forms such as telephone and e-mail consultations, national and regional conferences and surveys.

The fourth session of the NGO and major group forum set out a number of areas that needed to be more adequately addressed in the coming year's meetings. The areas warranting further attention included: the development of new and innovative forms of financing for sustainable development; the evaluation of the implications and impact that World Trade Organisation's decisions on trade issues have on issues of sustainability; increased involvement of major groups in the preparations of National Reports;

However, as is always the case many NGOs that are marginal may be unable to attend any of the sessions next year due to lack of financial support. The Steering Committee is going some way to set up structures for support and to raise additional sources of funding from governments and the private sector, primarily by raising awareness of the important work which the CSD carries out.

Major Groups to have individual dialogue sessions at CSD

At the October session of the 51st General Assembly in New York and the meeting in October of the CSD Bureau in Sophia it was recognised that an essential element of the 1997 discussions should be the views of Major Groups and NGOs.

The General Assembly and the CSD Bureau discussed proposals for the organisation of dialogue sessions with the major groups. The Bureau stressed that while agreeing with the proposals in principle, any process must be very well organised to ensure that their impact on the 1997 Review is significant.

Major Group discussion will comprise a week of dialogue sessions in the second week of CSD 1997. The sessions will each last for three hours, during which presenters elected through self organised consultation will be given the opportunity to share experiences and suggest future priorities.

The current schedule is:

14 April 10:00 a.m. Women
1:00 p.m. Children and youth

15 April 10:00 a.m. Indigenous people
1:00 p.m. NGOs

16 April 10:00 a.m. Local authorities
1:00 p.m. Workers and trade unions

17 April 10:00 a.m. Business and industry
1:00 p.m Scientific community

18 April 10:00 a.m. Farmers
1:00 p.m.Synthesis of the sessions

**For information relating to dialogue sessions contact the CSD Secretariat -
Zehra Aydin,**

Announcement to Major Groups

The CSD secretariat would like to be informed of meetings, consultation processes or projects that you or your partners have launched to generate contributions to the 1997 special session of the General Assembly to review Agenda 21 implementation. Please send such information to Zehra Aydin Major Groups Focal Point

DIARY COUNTDOWN '97

6 - 17 January The 10th meeting on negotiations for the Desertification Convention (INCD-10), New York.

8 - 19 January IPF . Issues to be addressed will include the need for appropriate legal arrangements and finalising the report to be submitted to the CSD, New York

13 - 15 January CSD High Level Advisory Board Meeting, Monaco

27 January - 7 February UNEP will hold its 19th Governing Council. Policy issues for UNEP for the next two years will be agreed and a review of the governing structure of UNEP will be carried out. Nairobi

10 -21 February 4th Session of the IPF, New York

24 February- 7 March Intersessional meeting for the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) now recognized as PrepCom I for the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in June, New York

13 - 19 March Rio Plus 5, Earth Council, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

7 - 25 April CSD meeting - PrepCom II for the Special Session of the UNGA, New York

30 April - 11 May May Meeting of the Commission on Human Settlements to review outcomes from Habitat II and agree priorities for implementation of the Habitat Agenda. Nairobi

12-16 May Open Ended Ad hoc working group on Biosafety (Prov)

23-27 June ***** Special Session of the UN General Assembly. The Chair of the meeting will be Ambassador Razali of Malaysia.

July CITES Meeting (details to be confirmed)

December COP 3 to the FCCC Japan

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