

## UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES

### UN/CSD-10

## WSSD: The Second and Third PrepComs

### Introduction

The Committee on Sustainable Development (CSD) acting as the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), met for its second session from 28 January to 8 February 2002 at UN Headquarters in New York. Over 1000 representatives of governments, United Nations (UN) agencies, convention secretariats and international organisations, together with the nine Major Groups, attended the session.

The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21, including the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, adopted in 1997 (see *Environmental Policy & Law*, Vol. 27 (1997) No. 5 at pages 388 and 423), together with the other outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.<sup>1</sup> The session also sought to reach agreement on a document that could form the basis for negotiations at the Committee's next session in late March.

The first week of the PrepCom was devoted to an information-sharing dialogue (the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues and General Debate) on general and specific topics and issues to be reflected in the Chair's Paper that would be transmitted to PrepCom-III for its consideration.

The Commission began by considering the results of regional preparatory committees, which were presented by the Chairs of the respective Committees.

Opening statements were made by Emil Salim (Indonesia) the Chairman of the PrepCom and Nitin Desai, Secretary-General of the WSSD. The Chairman stressed that 'this is not a conservation meeting, nor is it an environmental meeting. It is a sustainable development meeting, which will consider the three pillars of sustainable development – social, economic and environment issues.'

Nitin Desai introduced the report of the UN Secretary-General on implementing Agenda 21 (E/CN. 17/2002/PC. 2/7) and listed achievements since Rio. He noted, among other things, the establishment of principles such as common but differentiated responsibilities and the precautionary principle.

### Main topics of general debate

In the general debate, countries reaffirmed their commitment to the outcomes achieved at UNCED. A number mentioned the idea of a 'Global Deal' which could serve as the conceptual framework for the outcome of the WSSD. Such a deal would be formulated as a package, balanced in terms of the interests of developed and developing coun-

tries and also balanced in reflecting the three pillars of sustainable development.

Much concern was expressed about globalisation, which was acknowledged to have accelerated considerably in the ten years since UNCED. Some countries were concerned that globalisation has resulted in the marginalisation of developing countries and instability in the international economic and financial system. Many countries stressed the critical role of education in achieving sustainable development.

Most countries agreed that the eradication of poverty, including income poverty, hunger, illiteracy and ill health, is central to the achievement of sustainable development and to the goals of the WSSD.

### List of issues and proposals for discussion

The second week was dedicated to the development of the final document. On 4 February, during the tenth meeting Jan Pronk, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the WSSD addressed the delegates. He said that issues such as globalisation, new technologies and breakthroughs in genetics and communication technology had been absent from the agenda of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development. Such new developments and events must be addressed in order for the World Summit to be relevant.

He stressed that a differentiated agenda must lead to concrete proposals dealing with the economic, environmental, social, political and institutional aspects of sustainable development. There could be no stability or sustainability if people felt alienated.

Regarding the environment, he stated that water and oceans were two major concerns. In social affairs, there was major interest in access to drinking water and basic health, in sustainable energy and linking traditional energy and sustainable energy. There was also an increasing realisation that young people must become more involved in policy-making, and a strong emphasis on access to technology.

Moreover, he said, 'there was great awareness that if there were no break-throughs at the upcoming International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, a negative shadow would be cast on the Johannesburg Summit.

'Finance must be linked to sustainable human needs and public goods, perhaps by linking international finance to individual, millennium development goals.'

He considered his primary task to be persuading Heads of State and Government to attend the Summit, as well as

identifying leaders' expectations, soliciting their commitment and encouraging coordinated preparations for the Summit at the national level.



Chair Emil Salim with our Editor-in-chief

### Chair's Paper

The Chair's Paper was developed on the basis of interactive discussions on the Chair's List of Issues and Proposals for Discussion, held during the second week of the session, as well as on the basis of informal consultations over an informal paper on sustainable development governance. The latter was prepared by PrepCom Vice-Chairs Lars-Göran Engfeldt (Sweden) and Ositadinma Anaedu (Nigeria). On 3 February, Chair Salim issued for comment a *List of Issues and Proposals for Discussion*, with an addendum, dealing with governance, which he considered contained certain elements that could constitute the basis for the document to be negotiated at PrepCom-III. He noted that the List had been developed using the Secretary-General's report, position papers submitted by regional groups from their informal consultations, and presentations made during the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues and during general debate.

Emil Salim asked delegates to amend his ideas but 'please do not renegotiate'. Delegates were requested to add to the List if they so wished. Salim stressed that discussion or disagreement should only be about what should be included. There then followed three days of discussion regarding the proposals. Statements were read by many delegations, including the following:

Milos Alcalay (Venezuela), Chairman of the Group of 77 (G-77) and China, said that the headings proposed by the Group on the proposed issues were:

- 'Making globalisation work for sustainable development;
- Poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods;
- Changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production;
- Promoting health through sustainable development;
- Conservation and management of resources for development;
- Means of implementation;

- Sustainable development initiatives for Africa;
- Strengthening the system of international governance for sustainable development.

'Concerning the item entitled "Conservation and management of resources for development", the Group feels it is more inclusive and can accommodate the various issues considered important by member countries. The list of issues is by no means final, but gives a clear indication of where the thoughts of developing countries are directed right now:

- Atmosphere; energy; fresh water; oceans; desertification; land management; ecosystems, including forests; vulnerability, natural disasters and minerals and mining.

'Finally, regarding the means of implementation, G-77 feels that the issue should be tackled in a more holistic manner; finances, technology transfer and capacity building are integral and indivisible tools for achieving sustainable development, and should not be dealt with separately. Therefore, our proposal is that "Means of implementation" be discussed under each and every item of the accepted themes and be a theme by itself.'

Maria Jesús Fraile (Spain) spoke on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union (EU), Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta aligned themselves with the statement. She said that 'the main area of challenge and concern that has emerged so far with a large consensus from all regions is that of poverty eradication, which has also been identified as the overarching objective by the ministerial statement of the ECE region, together with sustainable consumption and production patterns. A gender perspective should permeate all preparation for the Summit. Good governance is a prerequisite for sustainable development.

'The EU priorities in the run-up to the Summit for sustainable development are the following:

- Poverty eradication and sustainable livelihoods;
- Making globalisation work for sustainable development;
- Sustainable patterns of production and consumption;
- Protecting the natural resource base of economic and social development;
- Strengthening governance on sustainable development at all levels, including public participation;
- Means of implementation.'

Vinci N. Clodumar (Nauru), on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum Group, said that 'the key issues for our Group, which is in our Pacific Regional Submission and reflected in the *Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific* paper and for the Pacific SIDS (small island developing States) the *AOSIS* (the Association of Small Island States) *Singapore Declaration* includes: oceans, climate change, island vulnerability, sustainable energy, conservation and management of natural resources, people's health and governance

issues, capacity building, tourism, freshwater, information and communications technology (ICT) and financial resources.'

In its statement, IUCN (the World Conservation Union) called for a widening of the scope to natural resource, ecosystem and landscape management, including the many political, social and economic dimensions that allow and enhance sustainable access to these natural assets for the poor. 'One particular item is the emphasis on sustainable agriculture. We need to recognise the importance of all natural resources in sustainable livelihoods, which also includes forestry, fisheries and the general use of many natural resources by especially the poorer rural communities ... We would also like to highlight the importance of ecosystem restoration where wise use of natural resources is a proven tool for poverty alleviation.'

The Canadian statement, given by Gilbert Parent, Ambassador for the Environment, noted that '...since Rio, Canada and the other Arctic countries have established the Arctic Council, which has adopted sustainable development as its overarching focus ... the Arctic Council and its working groups provide interesting models for advancing sustainable development.'

Thorsteinn Ingólfsson (Iceland) said that, in his country's view, the focus on oceans in the Secretary-General's report could have been stronger. 'We suggest that a new cluster of actions on oceans, coasts and islands be added to the existing ten. In doing so, the important linkage of oceans, coasts and islands to the other clusters such as poverty eradication, health and sustainable management of ecosystems and biodiversity should be maintained.'

At the start of the Plenary discussion on the List, Brazil, on behalf of the G-77/China, stated that all the thematic cluster titles contained in the list should be deleted, which was agreed. However, for ease of reference, delegates subsequently referred to them as 'non-clusters'.

### Final documents

Chair Salim briefed Plenary on the four documents prepared as a result of the meeting. He noted that the Chair's summary from this Second PrepCom Session reflects the discussions during the Session.

Regarding the second document, the Summary of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue, Emil Salim identified the main outcome as being the identification of the goal of new and accountable, responsible, innovative and equitable global partnerships in all Agenda 21 programme areas, as well as a framework to enhance multi-stakeholder participation and interactions with governments.

In this regard, a third document, 'Proposals for Partnerships/Initiatives to Strengthen the Implementation of Agenda 21', was presented.

The Chairman then gave a forceful introduction to the fourth document, the Chair's Paper, which will form the basis for negotiations at PrepCom-III. He noted that it incorporates the outcomes of the sub-regional and regional preparatory committee meetings as well as inputs from the multi-stakeholder dialogues and the discussion of the Chair's List, although the governance issue would only be taken up at PrepCom-III.

Against the background of the Summit's overarching goal of poverty eradication, Emil Salim emphasised that the Chair's Paper must be a workable programme: not another Agenda 21 but, rather, an invitation to a programme of action that gives additional substance to Agenda 21.

The Paper contains nine sections:

- Introduction;
- Poverty Eradication;
- Changing Unsustainable Patterns of Consumption and Production;
- Protecting and Managing the Natural Resource Base of Economic and Social Development;
- Sustainable Development in a Globalising World;
- Health and Sustainable Development;
- Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;
- Sustainable Development Initiatives for Africa;
- Means of Implementation.

### Closing Plenary

On 8 February, the Chairman invited the Committee, acting as the Preparatory Committee for the WSSD, to transmit the Chair's Paper to PrepCom-III as a basis for negotiation. The Commission agreed and adopted the Chair's Report, to which are annexed the Chair's Summary of the Second Preparatory Session, the Chair's Summary of the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue Segment, and the Proposals for Partnerships/Initiatives to Strengthen the Implementation of Agenda 21.

There was rousing applause for the Chair's Paper and great appreciation that Emil Salim had been able to produce such a quality paper within a very limited time span. Many delegates expressed cautious hope at the end of the session, having agreed on a Paper for the forthcoming PrepComs, which they hoped will eventually form the political 'outcome' document at Johannesburg.

While criticised by some as still being a broad 'wish list', the Paper's initial success lies in its reflection of the key issues of interest to the various regions: that is, poverty, means of implementation, consumption patterns and sustainable development governance for the G-77 and China; oceans and a separate section on small island developing States for AOSIS; poverty, partnerships and voluntary outcomes for the EU; domestic governance, markets and voluntary outcomes for the JUSCANZ group of developed countries (Japan, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, now expanded to include Switzerland, Norway, Mexico and Iceland); and the incorporation of energy issues within a broader theme for Saudi Arabia.

### PrepCom-III

The third session of the Preparatory Committee met from 25 March to 5 April at UN Headquarters in New York, to address ways of strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development, and to agree on a document containing review and assessment, as well as conclusions and recommendations for future action.

During the two-week meeting, which had approximately 1500 participants, delegates met primarily in three working groups. Working Groups I and II considered the Chair's Paper, and Working Group III considered sustainable development governance. WG-I was co-chaired by Vice-Chairs Kiyotaka Akasaka (Japan) and Maria Viotti (Brazil), and WG-II by Vice-Chairs Richard Ballhorn (Canada) and Ihab Gamaleldin (Egypt). WG-III was co-chaired by Vice-Chairs Ositadinma Anaedu (Nigeria) and Lars-Göran Engfeldt (Sweden).

The first week of discussion was devoted to preliminary consideration of the Chair's Paper. During discussions, new text was proposed for all nine sections of this Paper and several new sub-sections were created in some of them. The Paper grew rapidly in size, becoming unwieldy and double its original volume. It soon became obvious that the Chair's hope of producing a negotiated text for PrepCom-IV was unlikely to be realised.

### Sustainable development governance

The following week was taken up with preliminary discussions on an informal paper on sustainable development governance (SDG), prepared by the Bureau on the basis of comments made during PrepCom-II.

Discussions on this topic were based on an informal paper prepared by Vice-Chairs Anaedu and Engfeldt. It was revised following input from informal consultations held in New York during the intersessional period. A consolidated version of the paper was then issued, based on informal consultations during the first week of PrepCom-III. This paper, '*Strengthening Governance for Sustainable Development at the National, Regional and International Levels*', is expected to become Section X of the text to be negotiated at PrepCom-IV.

The paper was generally welcomed and accepted as a basis for further work. However, the G-77/China complained that its concerns were not fully taken into account in the new text and promised to submit substantive amendments in the intersessional period.

The roles of the UN General Assembly, ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) and, in particular, the CSD, were debated at length. With regard to CSD, proposals concerned, *inter alia*, refocusing its mandate and programme of work toward policy integration, assisting stakeholder dialogue, and limiting negotiation of decisions.

There was general agreement to incorporate the results of UNEP's International Environmental Governance (IEG) process into the final SDG text (see page 68).

At the end of the Working Group session, the Vice-Chairs called for early submission by delegations of written amendments to the SDG paper, which will be considered informally at the start of PrepCom-IV, and then negotiated.

The Chair recalled that in UN/GA resolution 55/199, the session was meant to agree on recommendations for further actions and that it was expected to propose a specific time-frame for measures to overcome constraints preventing implementation of Agenda 21. As the text had to be action-oriented, concise and based on converging views, he announced that Indonesia would host informal-

informal consultations in Bali prior to PrepCom-IV, with regional group consultations scheduled for 24 May and informal-informals on 26 May.

The G-77/China made a proposal, which was supported by many delegations, that Emil Salim should prepare a text that is not a compilation text and does not contain normative aspects but which will lead to consensus and, in accordance with the relevant UN resolution, is concise and action-oriented.

Thus, at the end of PrepCom-III, a revised text could not be distributed. Delegations have been given time to submit additional comments on certain text sections. The Bureau and the Chair will then draft new text for consideration and negotiation at PrepCom-IV.

The failure of PrepCom-III to fulfil its mandate was blamed on a number of factors: the work of the PrepCom, which was considered to be badly organised and managed; weak political commitment; and the many delegations who were quite obviously not adequately prepared for the session. In addition, the Bureau was blamed for an absence of any guidance concerning the work of the session.



The Spanish delegate speaking on behalf of the EU

Courtesy: IISD

However, all agreed that the time available for the PrepCom was insufficient, due to UN budgetary constraints. In spite of the difficulties, delegates were still optimistic of a successful outcome to the WSSD. Undoubtedly, much will depend on the outcome of the Bali meetings from 24 May to 7 June, and whether a concise and focused document, calling for 'an integrated and strategically focused approach to Agenda 21 implementation', can be agreed upon. (MJ)

### Note:

1 The principal outputs of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) were the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, a 40-chapter programme of action, which presents a set of integrated strategies and detailed programmes to halt and reverse the effects of environmental degradation and to promote environmentally sound and sustainable development. Chapter 38 of Agenda 21 called for the creation of a Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to ensure effective follow-up to UNCED, enhance international cooperation and rationalise intergovernmental decision-making, and examine progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at all levels. In 1992, the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly set out, in resolution 47/191, the terms of reference for the CSD. The CSD held its first meeting in June 1993 and has since met annually.