

UNITED NATIONS ACTIVITIES

CSD

Eighth Session of the Commission

The eighth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) met in New York from 24 April to 5 May 2000.*

Participants considered the sectoral theme of integrated planning and management of land resources, and the cross-sectoral themes of financial resources, trade and investment, and economic growth. The session also addressed the economic sector, sustainable agriculture and land management. The final report of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF), together with its conclusions and proposals, was also considered. Delegates further discussed preparations for Rio+10; that is, the preparations for the 2002 review of progress since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

Opinions varied as to whether or not CSD-8 could be viewed as a success, but most delegates were modestly satisfied with the outcome of the session. Although agreement could not be reached on several of the core issues on trade and agriculture, a number of delegates were satisfied with the progress made in some parts of the compromise text and the decision on forests was hailed as one of the most significant in CSD history.

Four multi-stakeholder dialogues were held on 24-25 April, followed by a high-level segment on 26-27 April. Work then commenced in three drafting groups from 1-6 May. Long and difficult negotiations took place within the drafting groups on, among other things, the disputed concept of the multi-functional character of agriculture and land, governance, subsidies, environmental and sustainability assessments, and equal access to land and legal security of tenure. Delegates agreed to adopt 11 decisions.

Organisation of Work

Juan Mayr, Chair of the Eighth Session, outlined the organisation of work and noted that Patrick McDonnell (Ireland) would chair Drafting Group I, on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources, and Agriculture. Chair of Drafting Group II, on Financial Resources and Mechanisms, and Economic Growth, Trade and Investment, was Choi Seok-Young (Republic of Korea); and Drafting Group III on preparation for the ten-year review of UNCED and "other matters" had as its Chairman Zvetolyub Basmajiev (Bulgaria). Chairman Mayr recalled

that the election of one Vice-Chair of the CSD-8 Bureau had been postponed in 1999, and stated that the African States had agreed to nominate Abderrahmanen Merouane (Algeria), who was elected to sit on the CSD-8 Bureau with Chair Mayr and Vice-Chairs McDonnell, Choi, and Zvetolyub.

Following reports on intersessional activities, delegates and representatives from major groups participated in a multi-stakeholder dialogue focusing on sustainable agriculture.

Sustainable Agriculture

This dialogue on best practices in land resource management to achieve sustainable food cycles brought together representatives of industry, trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and governments.

The dialogue centred on four themes: 1) choices in agricultural production techniques, consumption patterns and safety regulations – potentials and threats to sustainable agriculture; 2) best practices in land resource management to achieve sustainable food cycles; 3) knowledge for a sustainable food system – identifying and providing for education, training, knowledge sharing and information needs; and 4) globalisation, trade liberalisation and investment patterns – economic incentives and framework conditions to promote sustainable agriculture.

Sessions commenced with short presentations by each stakeholder group, followed by reactions from two governments, general dialogue and closing recommendations. Chairman Mayr emphasised that the dialogue and the recommendations made by representatives would inform the subsequent discussions of the CSD on sustainable agriculture.

Choices in Agricultural Production Techniques and Safety

Farmers' representatives supported land tenure for farm workers, the establishment of regulatory frameworks for biotechnology and deepening public understanding through multi-stakeholder participation.

Trade unions called for recognition of core labour standards, including the rights of workers to organise and bargain collectively.

Non-governmental organisations (NGO) representatives recommended increased financial resources for research and development of organic agriculture; increased government support and resources to develop environmen-

* Reports of previous sessions of the Commission have all been published in *Environmental Policy & Law*. For the report on CSD-6, see 28(3/4), at pages 116 and 197; and for CSD-7, 29(2/3) at pages 91 and 145.

tal and socio-economic indicators for sustainable agriculture; and increased clarity on liability issues for farmers using biotechnology. Industry stressed support for a needs-driven participatory approach to appropriate innovation. Indigenous people's representatives advocated mechanisms to ensure land tenure; in particular, national and international legal mechanisms to protect indigenous people's land and territory rights. They also supported participation of indigenous people as a distinct major group in the CSE process.

Land Management for Sustainable Food Cycles

Delegates were told that current inequitable patterns of land use and lack of secure access to land reinforced and accentuated poverty and unsustainable practices. Only with secure tenure did farmers know that the investments they made in conservation and land improvement would benefit themselves and their families, said a non-governmental organisation. Poverty and natural resources depletion were tightly linked. Unequal and unfair patterns of tenure enforced ecologically unsustainable practices. The best practice was to place small farmers, especially women, at the centre of national economic development strategies. They must be seen as the engine of broad-based economic growth through their productive activities and as an internal market.

The representative of the Latin American Group on the Protection of Crops, speaking on behalf of the International Agri-Food Network, said the challenge was to feed some six billion people today – predicted to be eight billion within 25 years – without further encroaching on wild habitats and marginal lands. The necessary increased production would have to be achieved almost entirely by greater cultivation intensity and higher yields. That would depend on technological innovation and good practice in land resource management. The best practices were integrated approaches.

The Chairperson of the Women's Group and the PAKISAMA Organisation of the Philippines, on behalf of the farmers' delegation, said that farmers, fisherfolk and peasant women were vital to sustainable development in rural economies like the Philippines. But the status of those groups was now in a "critical phase" due to global climate changes and lack of access to the latest farming technologies. "We produce, but we remain poor," she said. "Food is a basic human right but if it is not sustained that right is delayed or denied." Sustainable agriculture must be promoted in order to produce sustainable development. The international community could support sustainable agriculture by increasing funding, allowing for the equal participation of men and women and equal access to credit for farmers in small countries.

Veronica Ayikwei Kofie, representing trade unions, said that there were various systems of land tenure in Ghana. Most women were engaged in agriculture, but most had no access to land ownership or credit. Land reform must then be the basis for change. There was a need for a new type of agricultural workplace, and a new work culture between employers and their workers.

Responding to opening statements, the representative of Egypt said that the problem facing developing countries was that their increasing populations had now surpassed their food supplies. The question that these countries needed to address was how to increase food production and provide food without affecting the environment. While the solution was not complicated, the application might be difficult.

The representative of Japan said that the consumer might not be willing to pay an appropriate price for foods or goods produced in an environment-friendly manner unless sufficient information was provided.

Globalisation, Trade Liberalisation and Investment Patterns

Chee Yoke Ling, speaking on behalf of the Third World Network, said that there was a growing concern that globalisation was deepening inequities and marginalising the weak and the poor. For the vast majority of developing countries, the lowering of tariffs and removal of import controls and domestic support had undermined local food production and farmers' livelihoods in an onslaught of cheap subsidised imports.

There was continuing assertion that globalisation enhanced sustainable development, she said. That was often based upon models and research whose premises and data had proved to be mistaken or manipulated to serve a political or corporate agenda. Liberalisation in trade and investment had resulted in the privatisation of indigenous and public lands.

Sarah Fogarty, on behalf of industry, said that sustainable agricultural development could best be achieved through market-oriented approaches. Open markets improved living conditions in both developed and developing countries, and new channels for partnership should be continually explored. Governments were encouraged to adopt sound policies to eliminate export subsidies and other agricultural trade barriers. Trade in agricultural products would ensure food quality and quantity and contribute to the protection of natural resources.

G.J. Doornbos, on behalf of the farmers, said that today pressures on farmers were global. Trade negotiations and environmental problems had global impacts. There were several elements necessary for a framework to promote sustainable agriculture, including a stable policy environment, a rural infrastructure, an appropriate regulatory framework and increased resources for agricultural development.

Christine Taylor, speaking on behalf of the United Food and Commercial Workers 401 of Canada, said that core labour plans must be at the centre of any plan for sustainable agriculture workplaces. Too many food workers were denied access to the food they needed because they were unable to buy it. The main issues were control and distribution. The rules and agreements that controlled trade and investment would have to change. There were still many who believed that the solution lay in greater trade liberalisation. The evidence – increased malnutrition, a growing

gap between the rich and the poor, a cost/price squeeze on farmers and growing international debt – supported the opposite view. Production was increasingly monopolised by powerful transnational corporations, she said. The goal was to put in place a world trade and investment regime that would stop the destruction of local economies. The Commission must replace rhetoric with action.

Expressing the views of the developing countries, and responding to the presentations made, Dirk Du Toit (South Africa) said the problem was that sustainability, which was the heart of the Rio Declaration, simply did not mean the same thing in different parts of the world. Sustainability as understood in Switzerland was completely different to the way it was understood in Africa. The killer disease affecting sustainable development in the developing world was the debt burden.

Developed countries talked about agriculture and environment as a lifestyle, whereas developing countries talked about agriculture as a livelihood. The objective of Rio, to enhance food security in an environmentally sound way, could only be achieved if trade distorting practices and barriers to the markets of developed countries were exposed as acts against humanity and the planet.

Bernard Wonder, Deputy Secretary, Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry of Australia, said that the most effective solution to poverty was economic growth based on comparative advantage and competitive international trade. It was important that governments continued to work towards the elimination of trade barriers, such as agricultural price support mechanisms and restrictions on imports. The best way of achieving environmental objectives was through policies targeted at specific priorities.

Franz Fischler, speaking on behalf of the European Commission for Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, said that economic, social and environmental objectives of sustainability must be mutually supportive. Such synergies do not occur by default. A balance between those objectives was needed. Meeting the World Food Summit's objective of halving the number of undernourished people living in poverty by 2015 was of utmost importance, he said. He went on to say that the EU was already by far the world's largest importer of agricultural products from developing countries, and further stimulus to trade could best be given by tariff preferences that gave a real advantage to developing countries.

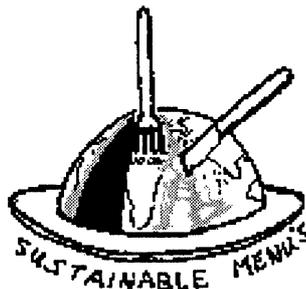
Chairman Mayr said that to make headway in the dialogue, he would raise a question for which he invited comments. One issue that kept resurfacing in all statements was that of subsidies. Were there instances where it was worth keeping subsidies intact to promote sustainable agriculture, he asked.

A representative of farmers said that farmers in the developing world enjoyed very few subsidies. Under the WTO agreement, the low level of existing subsidies could

not be increased. An industry representative said that sustainable agriculture could be helped with the development of prices that truly reflected the costs of production. An NGO representative said that on the question of subsidies, the agriculture agreement in the WTO was unbalanced and unfair to developing countries. An industry representative said that the right policies were needed. The WTO must take up the issue of equity. Specific forms of subsidies were needed. The pace of liberalisation must be slowed down or in some cases reversed. A representative of the World Bank said that the Bank was concerned that high-income countries have reduced incentives to developing country farmers.

The Chairman said that another issue, which had not been considered adequately, was that of investment patterns. He asked how investment in developing countries could be improved to promote sustainable agriculture. A representative of a non-governmental organisation said that the best way to encourage adjustment to trade liberalisation was to promote relative freedom of investment. An industry representative said that there was a time lag in the evolution of an agreed upon systematic matrix. A representative from the World Bank said that savings were necessary for development to

be successful. The Bank was the largest investor in the developing world. The Bank wanted to lend in support of projects, such as adaptive research, infrastructure, telecommunications and electrification. Ultimately, however, the political reality was that low-income people did not have much political clout in low-income areas. That was a great concern of the Bank.



Courtesy: Northern Lights

The High-Level Segment

The high-level segment of the session took place on 26-27 April, and was comprised of expert reports, high-level statements and general dialogue. The Commission had before it the report of the Intersessional Ad Hoc Working Group on Integrated Land Management and Agriculture (document E/CN.17/2000/11). This contained possible elements for draft decisions on the land and agriculture issues, which could serve as starting points for further discussion during the current session, as well as summaries of discussions that will serve as reference material on the given issues.

According to the report, the challenge is, *inter alia*, to develop and promote sustainable and productive land-use management systems as part of national strategies for sustainable development.

The Commission also had before it the report of the fourth session of the Intergovernmental Forum of Forests (document E/CN.17/2000/14). It contained programme elements on matters calling for action by the Commission at its current session, including promoting and facilitating the implementation of the proposals for action of the

Intergovernmental Panel on Forests, and reviewing, monitoring and reporting on progress in the management, conservation and sustainable development of all types of forests.

Among the matters left pending and other issues arising from the programme elements of the Panel are the need for financial resources, trade and environment and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to support sustainable forest management.

The report elaborates on issues that need further clarification, such as the underlying causes of deforestation and forest degradation, forest research, economic instruments, tax policies and land tenure, and the future supply of and demand for wood and non-wood forest products and services (see also *Environmental Policy & Law*, Vol. 29, No. 6, page 216).

Also before the Commission was the report of the Secretary-General on "Preliminary views and suggestions on the preparations for the 10-year review of the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development" (document E/CN.17/2000/15). It states that the main challenge of the 2002 review is to organise an effective and efficient, participatory event of high political profile and visibility. Effective preparations should start from a clear set of ideas about the goals and substantive focus of the review, its desired outcome and the origination of the preparatory process.

According to the report, many governments stressed that there is a need to revitalise the international dialogue on, and the international community's commitment to, sustainable development. While Agenda 21 should not be renegotiated, the review process should identify new and emerging areas that were not included in Agenda 21 and would warrant consideration.

The report also presents governments' views on the format, participation and venue of the 2002 event. While most are of the opinion that the event should be organised as a special conference, some suggested that it should be organised as a special session of the General Assembly. Various governments suggested that the Commission, at its current session, should determine the basic elements for the review process. The Assembly, at its fifty-fifth session, should elaborate on the form, scope and nature of the process and adopt a resolution in that regard.

Another report before the Commission was the report of the Secretary-General on financial resources and mechanisms (document E/CN.17/2000/2) which reviews the progress achieved in the implementation of the objectives for financial resources and mechanisms set out in Agenda 21 and provides inputs for its consideration at the current session. Section II of the report examines recent developments and new policy approaches in external finance, with an emphasis on official development assistance (ODA) and private capital flows.

Section III considers the discussion of domestic finance and sustainable development, focusing on the integration of environmental finance into mainstream public finance and the use of policy instruments and measures. Section IV deals with innovative mechanisms in sector finance,

with an emphasis on the energy, water, transport and forestry sectors.

The report of the Secretary-General on economic growth, trade and investment (document E/CN.17/2000/4), focuses on how the integration of markets on a worldwide scale may influence economic growth, the international distribution of the gains from growth and the environmental implication of growth. It also describes ways in which the traditional objectives of economic growth can be geared towards sustainable development through environment-related trade policies and environmental practices of transnational corporations.

Sustainable Food Systems

The dialogue session brought together representatives of government, industry, trade unions, agricultural workers and non-governmental organisations to express their views on "Knowledge for a sustainable food system: identifying and providing for education, training, knowledge-sharing and information needs."

Food is not just a commodity, it is the most direct link to the natural world; it is the basis of spiritual connection and practice in cultures throughout the world, Maria Jose Guazzeli, of the Centro Ecologico Brazil, said. The knowledge of food production that had developed over thousands of years was truly scientific knowledge; and the central role of farmers in research and development must be recognised by supporting the training programmes of farmers' own organisations.

Roberto Rodriguez, representing industry, said that closer co-operation and co-ordination among farmers, scientists, workers, government, consumers and industry would be the key to ensuring that food continued to be produced and distributed in a safe, economic and sustainable way and responded to consumer concerns and demands.

Responding to the views expressed, the representative of Nigeria, Teniola Olusegun Apata, speaking on behalf of the group of 77 developing countries (G-77) and China, said that the importance of technology generation and dissemination could not be over-emphasised. In many developing countries, once agricultural research was targeted and technology was developed, disseminated and linked to sources of input supply, the productive potential of farmers was enhanced. If farmers did not have access to inputs, it was difficult for them to put the knowledge gained into practice and thus increase their productivity.

Presenting the northern response, Uschi Eid (Germany) said that food security was not just about distribution, but about access. It was not just a question of quantity, but quality. There was a whole range of knowledge that had to be passed on to the consumer. Intellectual property rights were indispensable for private sector involvement, but did involve the risk of excluding farmers from research results.

Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette said that the high-level segment had become an increasingly dynamic part of the Commission's sessions. The timing of the session provided a golden opportunity, as it came on

the eve of a series of millennium events, culminating in the Millennium summit in September. She noted, however, that in the nearly 18 months during which the General Assembly debated which subjects to include in the Millennium summit, environmental concerns did not receive much attention.

The Secretary-General, she continued, in his Millennium Report, had devoted much attention to the environment and development. He had stated that environmental freedom was on a par with the other freedoms for which the United Nations had long struggled. The road map to sustainable development existed in Agenda 21, she told the Commission, and said that, as with economic and social development, the presence of an urgent and unfinished agenda must be acknowledged.

Teniola Olusegun Apata (Nigeria) said that the goals of sustainable development could only be achieved through a holistic approach. Special attention must be paid to addressing the major constraints faced by developing countries in responding to environmental challenges, identifying the specific capacity-building needs of developing countries, and finding a comprehensive solution to the debt problems of those countries. That was absolutely essential for the sustainable use of their resources. In addition, innovative financial mechanisms were not substitutes for other sources of financial resources, such as official development assistance, foreign direct investment and foreign portfolio investment, he said, adding that official development assistance remained the most likely and steady source of resources for the implementation of sustainable development.

Land and Agriculture

Robert Hill, Australia's Minister for the Environment and Heritage, speaking on behalf of the Cairns Group (18 agricultural fair trading countries), expressed concern at the reintroduction of protectionism, under the guise of the concept of multi-functionality, which would be counter-productive to achieving the goals of sustainable development. Multi-functionality was being used to justify high levels of protectionism by some countries, and trade distorting policies reduced the availability of efficient resources for global food production.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union, Franz Fischler said that agriculture had a multiple role to play, encompassing the production of food and fibre, ensuring food security and safety, maintaining the countryside, as well as preserving natural resources, biodiversity and soils.

The Union supported an open multilateral trading system, as well as a significant and progressive reduction of all forms of export support for agricultural commodities, he said.

Statements followed by Iceland, Samoa, China, Argentina, United States, Ireland, Sri Lanka, Uruguay and Tonga.

Gordon Conway of the Rockefeller Foundation and Miguel Altieri of the University of California, Berkeley, made expert presentations.

The former said that one of the problems with the con-

cept of sustainable agriculture was that it meant all things to all men and all things to all women. That meant problems when it came to implementation on the ground. He defined sustainable agriculture as an agriculture that was resistant to shocks and as one that persisted. There were serious trade-offs between sustainability and productivity. The challenge was to find a system that combined both.

Miguel Altieri said that in the years to come, 70 per cent of the world's poor would live in rural areas. If the rural poor were not dealt with, sustainable agriculture would not be possible. While biotechnology held many promises, it also had its limitations, he said. There was an unrealised potential for increasing yields, but other natural resource management programmes were needed to complement that increase.

These presentations were followed by statements from several States.

Mostafa Tolba (Egypt) asked what the Commission was trying to achieve on the issue of sustainable development. The two sides – North and South – had agreed on the target of achieving 50 per cent fewer undernourished and poor people by 2015, he reminded delegates. Was it enough to endorse decisions already taken or should the Commission look into the methodologies of achieving that? What was the role of the Commission and how could those clear-cut targets be reached? Was the Commission in the process of setting targets that could be achieved? The presentation had shown that the techniques for achieving sustainable development could be achieved. Could the targets of Agenda 21 be looked at in light of those presentations?

Lawrence van Brinkhorst (the Netherlands) said he was concerned that global trends in agriculture and rural development were leading to a lack of interest. There was a serious decline in official development assistance spent on agriculture. Confidence-building was also an important issue. He was surprised that the Cairns Group could not endorse further work on multi-functionality. It was not a question of trade distorting subsidies. Follow-up was needed with regard to the multi-stakeholder dialogue and the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and World Bank should be entrusted with creating a consultative forum on agriculture.

Statements were also delivered, *inter alia*, by Hungary, Bolivia, Mexico, Austria, Tunisia, Belarus, the Republic of Korea, Indonesia, France, Canada, Japan and Ireland. Some of the representatives made what were considered by others to be contentious statements, repudiating some of the views given.

Mostafa Tolba (Egypt) took the floor again to say he was surprised that some delegates objected to the views of other delegates. He appealed to his colleagues to refrain from attacking one another's positions. Focus should be on helping poor farmers, who constituted the majority of undernourished people, if the goal of halving the number of such people by 2015 was to be achieved.

Chairman Juan Mayr said he was frustrated, since the session had not been able to move from a series of speeches to a real dialogue. The purpose of the Commission was,

after all, to find solutions together through dialogue. He recommended that a mechanism for follow-up be established, so that delegates could continue the discussion and then move forward towards concrete action.

Rio+10 Review

Delegates discussed the barriers to the full implementation of the 1992 Rio commitments. Representatives put forward their positions regarding the venue, nature and desired outcome of the review, as well as the preparatory process preceding it.

Ten years after Rio, new impetus was the goal all could agree upon, Jürgen Trittin, Germany's Minister for Envi-

ented agenda was critical to attract high-level participation.

While it was generally agreed that the review should be held in a developing country, preferably in Africa, delegations differed as to its exact location. Also, the establishment of a trust fund for voluntary contributions was suggested by some to facilitate the attendance of representatives from all States.

The Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Nitin Desai, said the most important question about Rio+10 was what did countries expect to achieve from the review process? He suggested that the focus of the preparatory work be on how to ensure an effective

Courtesy: Leila Mead, ENB



Under-Secretary-General, Nitin Desai and Juan Mayr, Chairman of CSD, consulting

ronment, Nature Protection and Nuclear Safety, told the Commission, adding that, compared with the expectations raised in 1992, much remained to be done. The most important issues to focus on were poverty, the environment and resource efficiency. One of the review's main outcomes should be a world-wide sustainable energy strategy.

Among other topics suggested by delegates were the link between poverty and environment, the reversal of the decline of natural resources, and the move towards sustainable production and consumption patterns. The majority of delegates felt the review should not renegotiate the agreements made in Rio, but rather focus on further effort for its implementation.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union, Jose Socrates Carvalho Pinto De Sousa, Portugal's Minister of Environment and Land Use Planning, said the review should highlight progress made, as well as address the new challenges and opportunities that had emerged since Rio. Also, the active participation of civil society, including non-governmental organisations, the scientific community and the business sector, was crucial not only for the review but also for the preparatory process. Further, an action-ori-

analysis of the barriers to the full implementation of the Rio commitments, and ensure effective undertakings to overcome those barriers. Issues that had not been dealt with in the prior review should now be addressed, such as linkages, financial resources and technology transfer.

Yolanda Kakabadse, President of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, said that in 1992 a process had been launched to strengthen the link between environment and development. "What did we want in 2002?" she asked. "Did we wish to have a follow-up or make an evaluation? Or should a new vision for the next 10 or 20 years be developed?" It must be defined, she said, whether or not the conference would review all of Agenda 21 or just the concept of sustainable development. It was important, in considering 2002, that focus not be on the event but rather on the process from now until then.

Klaus Töpfer, UNEP Executive Director, said that while it was necessary to assess progress made since Rio, the review should not be overloaded. He added that the name of the conference should also be discussed to ensure that it conveyed a meaningful message about the purpose of the conference. ➤

The Co-Chairman of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, Ilkka Ristimäki of Finland, introduced the report of the Forum's fourth session.

Portugal's Secretary-of-State, Vitor Barros, speaking on behalf of the European Union, told the Commission that sustainable forest management was an integral part of sustainable development. The primary responsibility for sustainable forest management rested with individual countries. Therefore, he encouraged all countries to establish and implement national forest programmes. In addition, making the United Nations Forum on Forests operational should be a priority on the international community's agenda. The Forum, he continued, should be open to all States and regional economic integration organisations, and allow for the active involvement of relevant international and regional organisations identified in Agenda 21. Stressing the need for the early establishment of the Forum, he said it should have high visibility, political status and authority, taking into account the need for a transparent, cost-efficient and dynamic structure.

Nigeria's representative, Anne Ene-Ita, speaking on behalf of the G-77 and China, said that the international community would only be paying lip service to environment and sustainable development unless it established a global financial mechanism to address, in concrete terms, all the recommendations on forests. The momentum of synergies between different international organisations and instruments dealing with forest issues must be maintained. Also, relevant organisations of the United Nations system, other international and regional organisations, institutions and conventions should form a collaborative partnership to support the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

The representative of Costa Rica said that addressing the issue of forest management should not be postponed. While the Commission continued debating the structure and operational aspects of the Forum, more and more forests were being destroyed. The Forum should open as soon as possible, perhaps as early as January 2001, and begin with the commitment of all countries to provide it with adequate information on the condition of their national forests.

Finance and Investment

Trends in sustainable development finance had fallen considerably short of the targets and expectations set during the 1992 Earth Summit, Jose Antonio Ocampo, Executive-Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), and one of two experts, told the Commission. He said it was important to avoid investments addressed to sectors that made intensive use of natural resources, a trend in developing countries. The emergence of "environmentalised markets" had created some distrust and concern in developing countries. Many of them feared that the environmental dimension might give rise to new conditions and non-tariff barriers. It was essential that the attitude of the developing countries be proactive rather than reactive.

Konrad von Moltke, Director of International Envi-

ronment Affairs, Dartmouth University (USA) and Senior Fellow, International Institute for Sustainable Development told the Commission that, while private investment flows had grown exponentially over the past few years, their direction and substance were crucial to sustainable development. International financial investment must move towards sustainability. While private actors and markets had been extraordinarily creative in developing the structures of foreign direct investment, public policy, particularly international public policy, had not kept up with those developments.

Government ministers and representatives, including the following, made statements:

Speaking on behalf of the European Union and associated States, Pedro Silva Pereira (Portugal) said that insufficient international flows in themselves were not the principal barrier to sustainable development. National governments had to create a predictable, stable and non-discriminatory environment to encourage appropriate domestic and foreign investment. Developed countries should help to build the capacity needed to create and maintain such an environment, which included good governance and sound policies.

Hassan Adamu, Minister of Environment of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the G-77 and China, said that unless the recurrent problem of financial resources and mechanisms were addressed, the implementation of Agenda 21 would not gain the desired momentum. Although the financing for its implementation was expected to be met from domestic resources, it had been obvious that the economies of developing countries, particularly the least developed countries, lacked the capacity to implement the programme of sustainable development as envisaged in Agenda 21.

India's Minister of Environment and Forests, T.R. Baalu, said that foreign direct investment still concentrated on the developed world and a handful of developing countries. This investment, by definition, sought profit and so did not go to either the social or environmental sectors. Therefore, even if the quantity of foreign direct investment increased, and if it was more widely distributed among recipients, it could not be a substitute for official development assistance.

Trade

The high-level segment was concluded with a discussion on trade. Government ministers and representatives from many countries participated in the discussion on trade issues.

Michael Moore, Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), addressing the meeting through a videotaped presentation, said that the objectives of the WTO were fully compatible with Agenda 21. He said that while sustainable development was one of the objectives of the WTO, it was not an environmental protection agency. It had to remain sensitive to the needs of its members, the majority of which were developing countries. Further trade liberalisation could put developing countries on a firmer footing in the global economy. Assuring that trade and

environmental policies were put in place in a mutually supportive manner could not be done without the support of developing countries.

Martin Khor, Director of the Third World Network, said that a one-size-fits-all approach clearly did not work in the area of trade liberalisation. Developing countries were in the unfair position of having to cancel their quantitative restrictions and reduce their agriculture tariffs and subsidies. It was necessary for developed countries to rapidly reduce and eliminate their high export subsidies, eliminate unjustifiable domestic support and substantially reduce tariffs. Trade had to change, but in a fair way, on the basis of common but differentiated responsibility. The Commission was the guardian of the interrelation of environment and development and could play a useful role in the trade policy process, he said.

With regard to trade and environment, he said there were legitimate concerns that unbridled free markets and trade could and had contributed to unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.

Speaking on behalf of the G-77 and China, Hassan Adamu (Nigeria), said that trade was one of the best channels by which to achieve and promote sustainable development. However, that was only possible when the pursuit of trade and environmental policies complemented one other and environmental measures were not an unnecessary obstacle to trade, or protectionist in intent.

He was concerned that certain environmental requirements might adversely affect access to the markets of developed countries, since developing countries could lack the technical and financial ability necessary to comply with the environmental regulations of industrialised countries. Hence, there was an urgent need for the full participation of developing countries in the decision-making process on issues relating to trade and environment.

James Currie, European Commission Director-General of Environment, speaking on behalf of the EU and associated states, said that trade liberalisation encouraged a more efficient use of natural resources and a broader availability of environmental goods, services and technologies. To promote a mutually supportive relationship between trade and environment policies in favour of sustainable development, it was essential to avoid using environmental measures for protectionist purposes. It was also necessary to make the WTO more responsive to environmental concerns.

Plenary – Penultimate Session

In his closing remarks, CSD-8 Chair Juan Mayr outlined his vision for the CSD and the Rio+10 process (see below). He noted that the new millennium raises new challenges for governments, the private sector and civil society that need to be analysed from the perspective of sustainable development. Among other things, he called for a transparent framework for decision-making to contribute to greater confidence in a revitalised consultation process in the wake of the Seattle meeting of the WTO.

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The Chairman's Vision

This is a particularly challenging moment for the international community and national governments: eight years down the road from Rio and having entered the new millennium we are faced with market forces and technology that have spurred the information revolution and globalisation. In all of the above areas, the current thinking is highly advanced from within the respective communities working on them, but there is a glaring lack of analysis from the sustainable development perspective.

The other challenge that we are facing is a lack of confidence in international decision-making processes. The demonstrations which took place during the trade and finance meetings at Seattle and the International Monetary Fund showed that discussions on matters which are of great importance to the public need to be opened up to ensure broader participation of the involved sectors. This will contribute towards building confidence in the decision-making processes as well as in achieving realistic decisions and making possible their implementation.

At the Millennium Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations referred also to this issue and made the point that the UN system should also open out to as many actors as possible and, depending on the issue being discussed, should include organisations of civil society, the private sector, parliamentarians, local authorities and the scientific community, among others.

In this context, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) is uniquely placed as the only international forum mandated to carry out an examination of the key economic, developmental and environmental issues being examined in the international arena, from a sustainable development perspective. The CSD could therefore provide a space for policy-makers from diverse backgrounds to discuss and build their ideas into recommendations that will both anchor and guide future policy development.

The CSD8 agenda addressed key issues for the future of our planet such as agriculture, investment and trade, in the overall framework of sustainable development. Each of these areas is at a critical stage of formation and re-examination at a multilateral level. The CSD8 therefore had a unique opportunity: there was no better time to examine the different currents within these areas with a sustainable development approach.

The CSD8 had also to consider the 'Preparations for the 2002 review of progress since UNCED: Rio+10' and the 'Outcome of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests'. After hearing my colleagues and other participants, I am convinced that the 2002 review process has the potential of increasing the level of commitment to sustainable development by governments and civil society.

This paper contains my views on the CSD as well as on the Rio+10 process based on my experience as Chairman of the Eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. I hope it can contribute to enrich the ideas on how to strengthen our institutions for the benefit of the global community and our beautiful blue planet.

The CSD in the Future

The Commission on Sustainable Development has been changing in recent years, incorporating positive changes such as the multi-stakeholder dialogue and a high-level segment which is increasingly taking the form of an interactive dialogue at the highest level, with a multi-sectoral focus. Bearing in mind the foregoing, and only two years away from the review process of Rio+10, a number of proposals follow on the role which CSD could play in the future:

- The multi-stakeholder format has proved to be a setting in which the various sectors of civil society can sit down with governments and express their views on a particular item in an open and frank manner. This makes the process more transparent and thereby improves levels of trust among the various participants.
- The high-level segment should aim to be a forum in which ministers not only for the environment, but also for the various areas related to the items of the agenda, participate. This makes it easier to approach the item under consideration from a multi-sectoral perspective.
- CSD should be the place in which alternatives are generated to contribute to the solution of problems which arise in negotiations in other forums. Therefore, the emphasis should not be on negotiations, but on dialogue.

On the Rio+10 Item

I have also considered it important to give some views on the preparatory process for Rio+10 and the 2002 event.

The ten-year review would be an opportunity to mobilise the political support of the international community for the further implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of UNCED. The 2002 re-

view process would have the potential to increase the level of commitments to sustainable development by governments and civil society partners.

It is crucial that governments, the UN system and the private sector, non-governmental organisations, youth groups, the scientific community and other major groups identified in Agenda 21 participate in a co-ordinated and mutually supportive manner in the organisational process of the 2002 event in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to ensure an efficient and successful process.

The preparatory process also needs to establish as soon as possible an intergovernmental forum that focuses its agenda in the different components of the 2002 review process, such as the assessment of Agenda 21. The Commission on Sustainable Development could be the appropriate body to undertake this task. It should be noted nonetheless that, in order to enable the full participation of all governments and stakeholders, the Commission needs an open-ended mandate, as well as a focused agenda and the possibility of convening several meetings in the 2000-2002 period.

The 2002 event should have a focused and action-oriented agenda containing issues to be determined as part of the preparatory process. Some of the options include poverty, energy, access to financial resources, consumption patterns, technology transfer and capacity building. It could also include a review of existing environmental institutions and instruments. In this regard, it is very important to maintain the concept of sustainable development as the main theme of the 2002 event. Issues such as poverty eradication and globalisation should be considered as components of sustainable development, but not as independent issues.

There was also an understanding that the 2002 event and its preparatory process should not renegotiate Agenda 21 but, instead, evaluate progress made in its implementation, and explore areas where further effort is needed and where new challenges and opportunities have emerged since UNCED. In order to ensure that the assessment of Agenda 21 is timely and of good quality, it should be carried out in the context of the preparatory process and not at the 2002 event.

The assessment of Agenda 21 could be undertaken at national and regional levels. The process should be started as soon as possible by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), with the support of other UN regional agencies and the CSD Secretariat, which could facilitate and co-ordinate the regional processes and aid in developing a common format for national and regional preparations, in order to promote greater comparability of reviews and assessments undertaken. The elements identified during the national and regional preparatory processes should serve as inputs to the intergovernmental preparatory process.

The CSD Secretariat, in close co-operation with UNEP and other agencies of the United Nations system, and with the help of a full-time co-ordinator, could support the facilitation of the overall 2002 process. The Secretary-General could appoint this co-ordinator.

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Closing Plenary

Vice-Chair Choi Seok-Young introduced the informal papers containing the negotiated outcomes on the Agenda 21 sectoral theme of Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources, and on the economic sector of Agriculture.

Drafting Group I Chair McDonnell stated that, after initial negotiations in the group, intensive negotiations had been concluded in a contact group facilitated by Navid Hanif, and consensus had been reached on all outstanding paragraphs. He reported that the papers on land and agriculture had been adopted by the Drafting Group and thanked the facilitator, the Secretariat and delegates.

Choi Seok-Young introduced the informal paper containing the negotiated outcomes on the sectoral themes of financial resources and mechanisms, economic growth, trade and investment. He reported on the negotiations that led to the production of two papers, one on financial resources and mechanisms and another dealing with economic growth, trade and investment. He reported that both

papers contained bracketed text (For further details see above and pages 155 and 163 respectively).

The Vice-Chair then moved on to Agenda Item 9, the provisional agenda for CSD-9 (L.8, see p. 158). The agenda includes the sectoral themes of energy and atmosphere, the cross-sectoral themes of information for decision-making and international co-operation for an enabling environment and the economic sector of transport. The G-77/China called for streamlining the number of themes to be addressed by the CSD. Delegates approved the provisional agenda and went on to adopt the report of CSD-8.

Decisions Adopted

Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources

The draft decision, negotiated in Drafting Group I, addressed the importance of a holistic approach to sustainable development, including integrated watershed management and the application of an ecosystem-based approach that takes into account the necessary balance between environmental conservation and rural livelihood.

The contact group dealing with both land and agriculture convened on numerous occasions to deal with the still outstanding land and agriculture issues. Debate over language on good governance, proposed by the EU and opposed by the G-77/China, was resolved during "informal-informal" negotiations. Delegates agreed to text on transparent, effective, participatory and accountable governance conducive to sustainable development and responsive to the needs of the people.

The final decision notes that the main objectives of activities in this area must be pursued in full accordance with Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 (for further details, see p. 151).

Agriculture

The Commission's decision focuses on SARD (sustainable and rural development), recognising the special and important place of agriculture in society for food and fibre production, food security and social and economic development.

It addresses, among other things, poverty eradication, priorities for action, access to resources, finance, biotechnology, genetic resources and international co-operation. The introduction to the final decision (see p. 149) sets out the basis for achieving SARD in international agreements and calls for its full implementation at all levels. It focuses on SARD in accordance with, *inter alia*, the principles of the Rio Declaration; Chapter 14 of Agenda 21; the Rome Declaration on World Food Security; and the World Food Summit.

Financial Resources and Mechanisms

The decision negotiated by Drafting Group II highlights major challenges and areas of particular concern, including definitions of governance, trade-distorting and environmentally harmful subsidies, trade liberalisation and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC).

The G-77/China made several proposals relating to the issues of debt and financing for Agenda 21 implementation. Throughout the negotiations, they stressed that developed countries should honour Agenda 21 financial commitments. The United States suggested that growth in private capital flows and the decline in Official Development Assistance (ODA) are trends that are unlikely to be reversed, and this has implications for meeting Agenda 21 commitments.

On the issue of debt relief, the G-77/China proposed text urging countries unable to provide debt cancellations because of legal provisions to provide "equivalent relief." The EU noted that a unifying principle for the mobilisation of ODA is the eradication of poverty through sustainable development in the framework of the international development targets derived from UN conferences and summits.

Many issues led to intense debate among delegates. Extensive discussion surrounded the issue of governance. The EU preferred using "good" governance, whereas the G-77/China and Cameroon supported governance "responsive to the needs of the people, based on efficient, participatory, transparent and accountable public service, policy-making processes and administration," text from General Assembly Resolution 54/231.

Following informal consultations, the group accepted text referring to transparent, effective, participatory and accountable governance, conducive to sustainable development and responsive to the needs of the people.

Delegates had great difficulty in reaching agreement on text regarding subsidies. The EU, supported by Australia, the Republic of Korea and Norway, suggested referring to "trade-distorting and environmentally harmful subsidies." The G-77/China, the US, New Zealand and Japan all opposed this. The phrase was eventually deleted, removing all reference to "the gradual phasing out of trade-distorting and environmentally harmful subsidies."

Extensive debate also concerned the language referring to the creation of an *ad hoc* intergovernmental panel to undertake an analytical study of the lack of progress in the fulfilment of financial commitments. The final text reflects that no agreement could be reached on convening such a panel.

The introduction to the final decision notes that activities regarding financial resources and mechanisms should be pursued in accordance with Agenda 21, that the approach to sustainable development should be holistic and that States have common but differentiated responsibilities; and new and additional financing for Agenda 21 implementation will be required (see page 155).

Economic Growth, Trade and Investment

This decision addressed the promotion of sustainable development through trade and economic growth, the strengthening of institutional co-operation and actions toward making trade and environmental policies mutually supportive.

In the introduction to the final decision, the text notes, *inter alia*, that activities regarding economic growth, trade and investment should be pursued in accordance with Agenda 21 and the outcome of UNCTAD-X (see page 153).

Ten-Year Review of Progress Achieved in Implementation of the Outcome of UNCED

The Commission agreed on recommendations to be brought to the attention of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the UN General Assembly regarding preparations for the ten-year review of progress achieved in implementation of Rio+10.

During discussions on the text of the relevant decision, a number of contentious issues arose. These included, among others, defining the Rio+10 agenda; the nature of the relationship between Rio+10 and Agenda 21; and defining which Convention secretariat should be involved in the participatory process.

The final decision (see page 157) stresses that the ten-year review should focus on the implementation of Agenda 21, the programme for the further implementation of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of UNCED. The decision stressed that Agenda 21 should not be renegotiated, and that the review of progress should result in action-oriented decisions and renewed political commitment for sustainable development.

The Commission recommends the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session consider organising the 2002 review as a Summit-level event, preferably in a developing country.

Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF)

As noted above, during the high-level segment many delegates endorsed the report and outcomes of the IFF, particularly the creation of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). The United States announced a voluntary contribution for the transition from the IFF to the UNFF. The draft decision was introduced in Drafting Group III, but there was no discussion on the issue.

The final decision welcomes the report of the IFF, invites ECOSOC and the General Assembly to take action on the proposed terms of reference for an international arrangement on forests and invites the President of ECOSOC to initiate informal consultations on options for placing the proposed UNFF within the UN system.

Canada highlighted the IFF as one of the best examples of what the CSD can do when it focuses on an issue. The G-77/China, the EU and many delegates congratulated the IFF Co-Chairs on their work.

CSD-9 First Plenary Session

Following the close of CSD-8, Choi Seok-Young declared open the first meeting of CSD-9 to elect the Bureau.

He announced that Bedrich Moldan (Czech Republic) had been nominated by the Eastern European Group as Chair of CSD-9. Bedrich Moldan was elected by acclamation, and he announced that David Stuart (Australia), Alison Drayton (Guyana) and Matia Kiwanuka (Uganda) had been nominated to serve as Vice-Chairs. He explained that the Asian Group had not yet nominated a candidate for the Bureau. Delegates elected the Vice-Chairs by acclamation, and the meeting was adjourned. (MJ) ➤

Room for Improvement?

Prof. Mostafa Tolba (Egypt) is a former Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). In recent years he has acted as Head of his country's delegation to the sessions of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. With his years of experience in the field of environment and development, he is in a unique position to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the CSD's performance so far.

We asked Prof. Tolba, therefore, not only for his personal view of the latest session of the Commission, but also for proposals which he thought might contribute positively to the CSD's agenda of work.

The Commission on Sustainable Development is uniquely placed as the only international forum mandated to carry out an examination of the key economic, developmental and environmental issues being examined in the international arena, from a sustainable development perspective. The CSD could therefore provide a space for policy-makers from diverse backgrounds to discuss and build their ideas into recommendations that both anchor and guide future policy development.

The CSD8 agenda addressed key issues for the future of our planet such as agriculture, investment and trade in the overall framework of sustainable development. Each of these areas is at a critical stage of formation and re-examination at a multilateral level. The CSD8 had therefore a unique opportunity: there was no better time to examine the different currents within these areas with a sustainable development approach.

One of the problems that still persisted in CSD8 deliberation is the lack of an interactive dialogue, with reactions to what has been said by others, proposing alternatives or solutions which go beyond the speeches or statements which have already been delivered in other forums.

On the other hand, one of the most successful activities that are held during the CSD meeting is the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue on Sustainable Agriculture which brought together NGOs, farmers, trade unions and agro-industry representatives from all regions to provide a multi-stakeholder perspective on sustainable agricultural production, land resources management, information systems for agriculture and the implications of globalization for agriculture. Representatives from the Indigenous Peoples and the scientific community were also present at the dialogue. Governments also had an opportunity to participate.

The multi-stakeholder event produced various lessons which should be noted:

- All the participants in the multi-stakeholder dialogue helped in ensuring that more importance was accorded to a more open, interactive and frank dialogue, and less emphasis to reading out speeches.
- Participation and statements by the largest possible number of organizations and countries, including ministers, was permitted. The experience of the multi-stakeholder dialogue this year showed that the various views of the sectors of civil society, inter-governmental institutions and Governments made it possible to have an even more realistic approach to the discussions on the item of sustainable agriculture.
- It is important to better integrate the results of the multi-stakeholder dialogue into the other discussion bodies

of CSD such as the high-level segment and the second week of the drafting groups.

During the informal ministerial meetings that preceded the formal meetings of the High Level Segment of CSD8 there was no reading of speeches: the statements were more spontaneous and gave rise to real interaction among the participants. This also made it possible to gain a clearer idea of the positions of each country. Most of the ministers were satisfied with the dynamic of the informal meetings and even proposed adopting the same format for the whole of the high-level segment. For future CSD events, it is important to consider devoting a whole day for an informal Ministerial meeting after the Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue ends and before the formal sessions of the High Level Segment start.

At the CSD8, the delivery of statements took up, as usual in previous CSD meetings, most of the meeting time. For example, the delivery of statements at the meeting on agriculture and land management exceeded the 90 minutes allotted, leaving only 10 minutes for the interactive dialogue.

Although the formal statements helped in understanding the views of the various Governments, most of the ministers agreed that 90 minutes or more of reading out statements was too much and discouraged the continued presence of ministers and other heads of delegations in the meeting room. It is very important, therefore, for future meetings, to give serious consideration to the possibility of reducing the time for reading out statements. This could be achieved in various ways:

- The distribution and delivery of statements during the inter-sessional meetings, or
- The distribution of statements before the beginning of the high-level segment.
- The possibility that when delivering statements, questions could be put to the audience, which could then be answered during the dialogue.

The Commission on Sustainable Development has been changing in recent years and incorporating positive changes such as the multi-stakeholder dialogue and high-level segment which is increasingly taking the form of an interactive dialogue at the highest level, with a multi-sectoral focus. Bearing in mind the foregoing, and only two years away from the review process of Rio + 10, a number of proposals follow on the role which CSD could play in the future:

- The multi-stakeholder format should continue to be a setting in which the various sectors of civil society can sit down with Governments and express their views on a particular item in an open and frank manner.
- The High Level Segment should aim to be a forum in which ministers not only for the environment, but also for the various areas related to the items of the agenda, participate. This makes it easier to approach the item under consideration from a multi-sectoral perspective.
- CSD should be the place in which alternatives are generated to contribute to the solution of problems which arise in the negotiations in other forums. Therefore, the emphasis should be not on negotiations, but on dialogue.

The ten-year review of Agenda 21 and other outputs of the Rio Conference was seriously considered at CSD8. It was considered to be an opportunity to mobilize the political support of the international community for the level of its commitment to sustainable development.

It is crucial that governments, the UN system and the private sector, non-governmental organizations, youth groups, the scientific community and other major groups identified in Agenda 21 participate in a coordinated and mutually supportive manner in the organizational process of the 2002 event in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of efforts and to ensure an efficient and successful process.

The 2002 event should have a focused and action-oriented agenda with a few issues that would be determined as part of the preparatory process. Some of the options would include poverty, energy, access to financial resources, consumption patterns, technology transfer and capacity building. It could also include a review of existing environmental institutions and instruments. In this regard, it is very important to maintain the concept of sustainable development as the main thematic framework of the 2002 event. Issues such poverty eradication and globalization should be considered as components of sustainable development, but not as independent issues.

