

Preparations Begin for WSSD

Following the closing of CSD-9, the tenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-10) acting as the Preparatory Committee for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (PrepCom-1) began at UN headquarters in New York on 30 April and lasted for two days. After introductory statements by the Chair of CSD-9, Bedrich Moldan, and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Nitin Desai, delegates elected by acclamation Emil Salim, the former environment minister of Indonesia, and ten further Bureau members according to a balanced regional representation.

The newly elected Chairman then proceeded to read a statement, extracts of which are reprinted below:

“There are objective forces responsible to create this imbalance between material growth and environmental development.

1. Population has grown more in the last 50 years compared with the preceding 4 million years;
2. Consumption has grown faster than the regeneration capacity of the consumed renewable resource;
3. Production has raised the pollution level higher than the absorptive capacity of the ecological system.

There are of course brighter sides in this development, such as

1. Concepts and theories of sustainable development have been advanced;
2. Stakeholders on Sustainable Development have been

broadened into major groupings of the private sector and civil society.

The bottom line however is the fact that, development that we pursue this far is not sustainable in economic, social and environmental sense [sic].

Second, why is development not sustainable? Because sustainability of social, economic and environmental considerations are together not in the main stream of development.

...

Major features of Agenda 21 are not embraced as priorities in development. What went wrong?

1. Prices fail to capture the trilogy of social, economic and environmental consideration through the market. Especially the environment is considered as [a] free good;
2. Policy matters responsible for development fail to develop linkages between environment and development. The rejection of Kyoto Protocol for the sake of economic development is a recent example. The rejection of environmental conditionalities for economic development by several countries is another example. In brief, environment is separated from development;
3. While sustainable development cut across various sectors of development, such as agriculture, industry, mining, etc, the institutional arrangement of international and national organization are along sectoral line [sic]. And International Financial Institutions consider environment as an *ad hoc* issue rather than treating it as an integral part of development.

There are however also positive sides of development, ...

To develop this architecture, we need to joint forces together, development and developing countries."

The provisional agenda and organisation of work was subsequently approved. The Chair also drew attention to a series of thematic reports by the UN Secretary-General (which are available at www.johannesburgsummit.org).

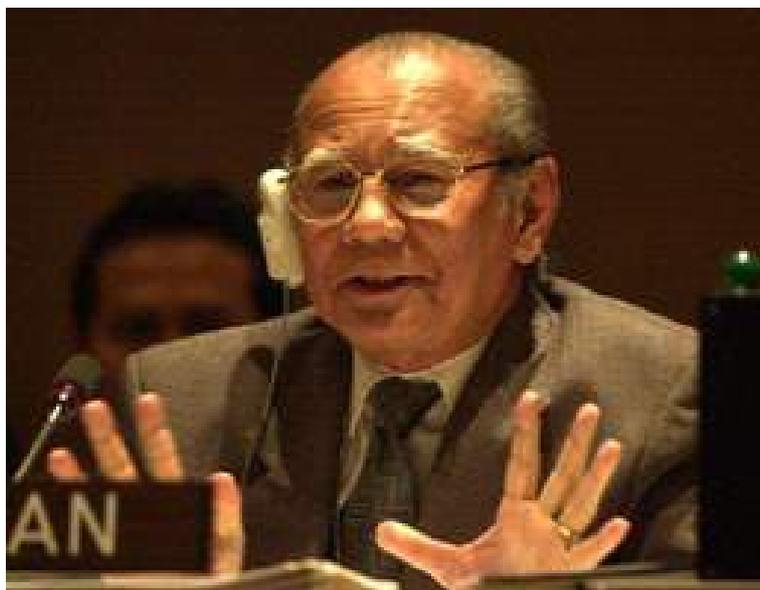
After hearing presentations by Major Groups on their activities in preparation for the Johannesburg meeting, a general discussion was held, which commenced with statements by the G-77/China and the European Union. These were followed by statements from State delegations who presented their views of how the Summit should be organised and what goals to concentrate on. In the ensuing talks, it soon became evident that participants were more

interested in questions of process than substance. Some delegates even raised doubts whether the Earth Summit could realistically produce any concrete results, or whether resources could be better spent on other processes. Delegates then considered the Rules and Procedures for the WSSD on the basis of Draft document (E/CN.17/2001/PC/24) prepared by the Department on the Department on Economic and Social Affairs and which are based largely on the rules of procedure of the United Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992.

Deliberations on the draft provisional rules continued on the second day of the meeting. The main bone of contention was the proposed size of the Bureau that is to manage the Summit proceedings. The Russian Federation along with the European Union (EU) favoured a small bureau encompassing approximately nine members, while the G-77/China and Mexico felt it was necessary to expand the number of bureau members to as many as thirty-nine. After informal consultations, which took place later in the afternoon, delegates reached middle ground by agreeing that the number of Vice-Presidents for the Summit should be twenty-five. The rest of the draft document remained largely unchanged, except for three minor amendments, and was approved in order to submit it for adoption by the next session of the UN General Assembly (see Decision 4 on page 187).

Delegates then heard reports on the preparatory activities for setting the agenda of the Summit at the local, national, regional and international levels. A representative from South Africa reported on the ongoing preparations for the meeting, and confirmed that the agreed on dates are from 2–11 September 2002. Recommendations for the continuing preparatory process are summarised in Decision 1: Progress in the preparatory activities at the local, national, regional and international levels as well as by major groups. Three further draft decisions on *Specific modalities of future sessions of the Preparatory Committee*, on the *Tentative organisation of work during the World Summit on Sustainable Development*, and on *Arrangements for accreditation and participation in the preparatory process and in the Summit of relevant non-governmental organisations and other major groups* were then considered and adopted. These are reprinted in full on pages 186-188.

At the closing of the session, the Chair expressed satisfaction at the outcome and hoped that the co-operative spirit of PrepCom-1 would last throughout the continuing preparatory process leading up to Johannesburg. The second session of the PrepCom will take place at UN Headquarters in New York from 28 January to 8 February 2002. A third session, also taking place in New York, is scheduled for 25 March – 5 April 2002 and the fourth and final session at the Ministerial level is to be held in Bali, Indonesia from 27 May to 7 June 2002. (MAB)



CSD-10 Chair Emil Salim (Indonesia)

Courtesy: IISD

