

Preparing for the 8th Session

The fourth meeting of the Bureau of the eighth session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development took place in New York on 31 January 2000. The meeting was chaired by Minister Juan Mayr Maldonado (Colombia), the Chairman of the eighth session of the CSD. The following Vice-Chairmen participated in the meeting: Zvetolyub Basmajiev (Bulgaria); Patrick McDonnell (Ireland), Abderrahmane Merouane (Algeria) and Choi Seok-young (Republic of Korea). The meeting was also attended by JoAnne DiSano, Director of the Division for Sustainable Development/DESA, staff from the Secretariat of the CSD and officials from Colombia and Ireland. The following are the main decisions and conclusions reached at the meeting.

Status of preparations for CSD 8:

Documentation

The Secretariat circulated the advance unedited texts of the reports of the Secretary-General and Addenda on the issues on the agenda of the eighth session of the CSD which will be considered by CSD's Ad Hoc Intersessional Working Groups. The Bureau was informed that these texts are being circulated to delegations and posted on the website at the following address <www.un.org/esa/sustdev>. The Bureau reiterated the crucial importance of timely translation of all of the documents and their circulation in all official languages of the United Nations. The Chairman stressed that without translating the documents and their distribution to delegates in the upcoming days the success of the CSD will be put at stake.

Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Segment on Sustainable Agriculture

The Bureau was briefed by the Secretariat on the state of preparations for the Dialogue, and actions undertaken and planned by the organising partners who are coordinating preparations on the part of industry, fanners, trade unions and NGOs and the formation of their delegations (see Annex I).

In follow-up to its previous meeting the Bureau reiterated the need for involving in the Dialogue representatives of the scientific community in order to ensure that both the discussions during the Segment and its outcome benefit from the best scientific knowledge, available. The Bureau noted that, in accordance with its earlier recommendations, scientists are being included in the major groups' delegations to the Segment; and that a number of international scientific organisations, such as the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, are likely to attend CSD 8 and be represented during the Segment. The Bureau agreed that additional steps may be considered to strengthen the participation of scientists in the Segment, such as organising a special panel presentation or involving a delegation of independent scientists in the Segment. It was decided to explore this matter further, in particular with the FAO who has a strong outreach capacity to the scientific experts in the field of agriculture.

The Bureau agreed that the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Segment would be moderated by the Chairman of the CSD and result in the Chairman's Summary of Discussions. The Chairman of the CSD invited the Bureau Members to submit to him comments on his proposals for the *modus*

operandi during the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Segment, which he circulated earlier to the organising partners from Major Groups. It was agreed that the proposals of the Chairman would be discussed with the organising partners at the earliest opportunity.

It was agreed that members of the Bureau would request their respective regional groups to come up with nominations to give initial reactions from developed and developing countries for each of the four themes of the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Segment as soon as possible.

The Bureau reiterated the importance of ensuring geographical balance in delegations of major groups to the Dialogue, in particular the need for effective participation of representatives from developing countries and countries with economies in transition. In this context the Bureau reiterated its earlier appeal regarding raising extra-budgetary resources to facilitate participation in the Dialogue of those representatives of major groups who will require financial assistance. Such assistance can be either provided through earmarked contributions to the Trust Fund to support the CSD or directly through the organising partners. It was agreed that the Chairman will write letters to various potential donors soliciting such support and that the Secretariat will undertake further efforts for mobilising additional financial resources to ensure a balanced participation in the Segment.

The Bureau welcomed the proposal of FAO to have a Special Event "Global Partnership for Sustainable Land Management: Ensuring Food Security". It was agreed that this event will be held in the evening of Tuesday, 25 April 2000.

Preparations for the Day of Indigenous People

The Bureau was briefed by the Secretariat of the state of preparations for the Day of Indigenous People and on various events planned as part of the "Day's" programme (see Annex II). The Bureau agreed that in order to ensure the Day becomes an important part of CSD 8, a Panel on Indigenous People will be included in the programme of work of the High-Level Meeting on Wednesday, 26 April 2000 at 8.15–9.00 p.m..

Co-Chair's of Intersessional Working Groups of CSD 8

The Bureau welcomed the nomination by the Group of Latin American and Caribbean Countries of a representative from Cuba to co-chair the Working Group on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources and Agriculture (28 February–3 March 2000) together with Patrick McDonnell (Ireland). The Bureau invited the Group of 77 to give expeditious consideration to this nomination and also to identify a candidate to co-chair the Working Group on Finance, Trade, Investment and Economic Growth (22–25 February 2000) together with Choi Seok-young (Republic of Korea), so that all Co-Chairs could be involved to preparations for the sessions of the Working Groups.

The Bureau recalled that the organisation of work during the session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Groups was decided at the Third meeting of the Bureau held on Novem-

ber 8, 1999. The Chairman invited the Co-Chairs of the Working Groups to inform him or any additional suggestions they may have regarding conducting discussions and presenting the results of the sessions of the Working Groups.

Organisation of work during the eighth session of the CSD

Opening of the session

The Bureau agreed that the eighth session of the CSD would start on Monday, 24 April 2000 at 10.00 a.m.. The Bureau also agreed on the organisation of work during the session. It was also agreed that the afternoon session on Thursday, 27 April, should provide an opportunity to look at the issue of trade in the overall context of sustainable agriculture.

High-Level Segment

The Bureau reiterated once again the importance of involving in the High-Level Segment, together with Ministers of Environment, the Ministers responsible for finance, agriculture and land planning in order to ensure a multi-disciplinary and integrated approach to the issues on the agenda. The Bureau noted that the Chairman will be shortly sending a letter inviting these Ministers to attend the High-Level Segment.

It was agreed that the High-Level Segment will have five formal meetings organised around five main themes on the agenda of CSD8. Each of the formal meetings will start with a short panel presentation (about 20 minutes) involving 2–3 "key note" speakers who will "kick-off" the discussion. That presentation will be followed by statements of ministers (who would be invited in advance to decide on which of the themes they want to focus their statements). After that the floor will be open for an interactive dialogue among the participants. It was agreed that the Chairman will write a letter to Ministers outlining all the details of organisation of work during the Segment.

National Presentations

Bearing in mind that the time will be very limited during the High-Level Segment and that so far only two countries have been nominated to make national presentations, the Bureau agreed with the proposal of the Chairman to invite countries concerned to make their national presentations not during the High-Level Segment but during the meetings of the *Ad Hoc* Working Groups under respective agenda items.

Future meeting of the Bureau

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Bureau will take place in New York on Saturday 4 March 2000.

Preparations for the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Sustainable Agriculture

A steering group composed of 5 network organizations from the farmer, NGOs, business and trade union sides as well as the CSD Secretariat continues to coordinate the preparations for the MSHD. The Steering Group

'meets' via conference calls every four weeks. Updates by major group as follows:

Trades Unions: The network of ICFTU submitted the trade union position paper on 17 January. The paper is now in editing, translation and printing process. The paper will be uploaded on the DSD web site. The trade union delegation might include participants from, among others, the following developing and in-transition countries: Barbados, Brazil, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, S. Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

NGOs: Extensive consultations on the paper involved over 100 NGOs (some with very large international constituencies). The final draft of the NGO position paper will be submitted to the CSD Secretariat by end of Friday, 28 January. Consultations on the participants are continuing. Participants might be drawn from, among others, the following developing and in-transition countries: Brazil, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Peru, Russia, South Africa, Senegal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Trinidad, Uruguay, and Zimbabwe.

Farmers: Separate inputs from the two coordinating partner organizations (one for the small farmers and peasants the other larger farmers) have been received by DSD. Currently the Division is working with the two partners to combine the inputs into one paper. This paper will be finalized by 3 February. The farmers delegation might include representatives from, *inter alia*, the following developing and in-transition countries: Brazil, Central America (Honduras, Nicaragua, or Costa Rica), India, Lithuania, Mexico, Senegal, Egypt, Belize, Ecuador, India, Kenya, Nicaragua, Philippines, Russia, Senegal, and Zambia.

Business: Different members of the International Agri-food Network, the organizing partner, have taken on the preparation of the four parts of the business paper. The sustainable development committee of the Network discussed the drafts to consolidate the inputs on 26 January. The final paper is expected soon. The Network reported that participant selection is continuing and a preliminary list is expected in the next few weeks.

Funding for travel costs continues to be a concern particularly for the NGOs, farmers and trades unions. DSD is working on generating some support through Governments. Partners are also looking for funding separately through their own contacts and networks. Support from the Bureau and the Chairman appears to be highly desired.

The organizing partners have also requested DSD to inquire whether the Chairman, or someone he designates, could participate in the next conference call of the MSHD steering group or alternatively join the steering group in a short meeting that could be organized during the inter-sessional working group meeting (late February-early March). Partners feel this will start building a closer rela-

tionship between the coordinators of the major groups and the Chairman as the moderator of the dialogue.

The Day of Indigenous People at CSD 8

A steering group of five indigenous peoples organizations, as well as UNCHR and DSD is coordinating the planning and preparations for the Day. The group meets every four weeks by way of conference calls. The Day of Indigenous People will focus on the overarching theme of Land rights and will consist of a series of events as follows:

A total of three panels on the following topics:

Panel 1 – Traditional Knowledge and Sustainable Development (with linkage to Article 8j of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD))

Panel 2 – Participation of Indigenous People in Sustainable Development: Lessons Learned

Panel 3 – Trade and Indigenous People (focus on agriculture, and/or forests, and/or mountains)

The timing of the panels is contingent on the final structure and programme of the CSD. It is expected that at least one panel will overlap with the High Level Segment, one will take place around the Dialogue Segment and the third during the second week of the CSD session.

An exhibition focusing on land rights disputes and innovative resolution mechanisms. This will be an electronic exhibit with 5 computers each focusing on cases of land rights disputes and examples of their resolutions from the five regions. The electronic depictions of the cases (using maps) will be projected to large screens. Partners are currently in the process of collecting the cases to be used in designing the exhibit.

Educational activities: These will include a daily video hour in the Learning Centre to share information on indigenous lifestyles as well as concerns and views on various sustainable development issues (such as forests). A total of 8 videos produced by NGOs and other entities in collaboration with indigenous peoples' organizations have been identified for viewing. Also in the Learning Centre books, studies, brochures and newsletters by and about indigenous people and sustainable development issues will be made available to CSD participants.

Partners are currently identifying the panellists and other indigenous participants. Invitations to the participants will be sent out in the next two weeks. As far as possible and practicable, participant selection is being coordinated with the Agriculture Segment participants to optimize the presence of the participants at CSD 8. Funding is a serious concern. The Government of Canada has been approached formally and others are being contacted informally for funding support. The partners also would like to have a reconfirmation from the Bureau that at least one of the Panels will overlap with the High Level Segment as was decided by the September meeting of the Bureau. □

(A report on CSD 8 will be published in the next issue).