

CSD-17 IPM HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2009

The Intersessional Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for the 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) opened on Monday morning, 23 February 2009, at UN Headquarters in New York. Delegates offered opening statements, heard presentations from major groups, and discussed small island developing states' (SIDS) situation with regard to the CSD-17 thematic cluster: Africa, agriculture, desertification, drought, land and rural development.

OPENING PLENARY

Opening the meeting, Gerda Verburg, CSD-17 Chair and Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Netherlands, highlighted the continued relevance of the food and energy crises for CSD-17. She stressed resolving these crises through a sustainable green revolution by: investing in more sustainable agriculture; creating an enabling environment for farmers; developing sustainable production chains; improving market access; and providing food aid and social safety nets for the most vulnerable. She proposed that CSD-17 develop a voluntary set of criteria for the sustainable production of biofuels.

Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, stressed the relevance of sustainable development in addressing current global challenges and crises and called for integrated solutions and addressing climate change.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: Chair Verburg introduced the agenda and organization of work for the IPM (E/CN.17/IPM/2009/1). Delegates adopted both without comment.

Chair Verburg noted that the CSD had not yet elected Vice-Chairs from three regional groups. Delegates agreed to allow the following candidates to act in the capacity of Vice-Chairs during the IPM: Kaire Mbuende (Namibia), Tania Raguz (Croatia) and Ana Bianchi (Argentina). They also agreed that Tania Raguz would serve as Rapporteur of the IPM.

SECRETARY-GENERAL'S REPORTS AND

INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS: Tariq Banuri, Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, introduced the reports of the Secretary-General on the six thematic issues (E/CN.17/2009/3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9).

Vice-Chair Mbuende presented the outcome of the intersessional meeting on African Agriculture in the 21st Century (E/CN.17/2009/14), which convened in Windhoek, Namibia, in

February 2009. Vice-Chair Javad Mansour (Iran) presented the report of the intersessional workshop on capacity building held in Bangkok, Thailand, in January 2009 (E/CN.17/2009/13).

On behalf of the five UN Regional Commissions, Ousmane Laye highlighted each region's challenges and priorities. He stressed agriculture as an emerging priority on the international agenda and the centrality of land in addressing the socio-economic and political crises.

OPENING STATEMENTS: Sudan, for the G-77/CHINA, said the thematic cluster's interlinkages call for equally interlinked policies and measures, and welcomed Brazil's offer to host a Summit in 2012 to review progress made from the Johannesburg, Rio and Stockholm Summits.

The Czech Republic, on behalf of the EU, emphasized: food security; Africa as a global theme, with attention to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), capacity building for civil society and other components of good governance, and development of the Doha Development Agenda; and cooperation between governments and stakeholders active in implementation.

Bangladesh, on behalf of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), underscored, *inter alia*: fulfilling official development assistance (ODA) commitments; cancelling all LDC external debts; and ensuring that the intellectual property regime provides access to appropriate technologies at affordable costs for climate-resilient crops. Grenada, on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), emphasized intergenerational equity and said land and rural development strategies should be "bottom up" and integrate local consultation as well as traditional, cultural knowledge with the achievement of global sustainable development goals. Tonga, for the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS), highlighted challenges to the region's sustainable development and called for solutions that include community participation and taking account of traditional land tenure systems.

Oman, for the ARAB GROUP, drew attention to the region's ministerial resolutions of 2007 and 2009 and the impact of conflicts on its sustainable development, and supported the call for a meeting to address the current financial crisis. Senegal, for the AFRICAN GROUP, recalled past commitments to support Africa and stressed agriculture's enormous potential to reduce poverty. CANADA emphasized the CSD's power as an inclusive convening forum and a focus on the existing CSD programme of work. The US said: food security and sustainable development are top priorities for the newly-elected US Administration; current information and available communication technology

should be employed; capacity for land planning and management should be developed based on ecological conditions; and the CSD should support innovation at the local level.

The RUSSIAN FEDERATION highlighted participatory approaches and food security, and said it is building its donor capacity. AUSTRALIA highlighted food security as a priority and stressed: improving market efficiency and agricultural productivity; providing new investments in rural development in developing countries; and addressing climate change.

DIALOGUE WITH MAJOR GROUPS

The afternoon session opened with statements from the Major Groups identified in the Major Groups' Priorities for Action (E/CN.17/2009/10). WOMEN called for partnerships linking women leaders and women farmers. CHILDREN and YOUTH underscored the importance of pastoralism and indigenous knowledge. INDIGENOUS PEOPLES highlighted participatory processes and the need to integrate traditional knowledge into rural development policies.

NGOs emphasized, *inter alia*, the: needs of small-holder farmers; use of agro-ecological strategies; women's central role in agriculture; and attention to customary land-use practices. LOCAL AUTHORITIES said local-level officials are rising to the challenges under discussion, but need help. WORKERS and TRADE UNIONS stressed green growth and the role of green jobs, the regulation of commodity markets, and the need to shift from informal to formal work in the agricultural sector and to foster protection of workers in the sector.

BUSINESS and INDUSTRY stressed the importance of private/public partnerships. SCIENTIFIC and TECHNOLOGICAL COMMUNITIES highlighted the need to target knowledge and technology to the needs of small farmers. FARMERS identified five key areas for action: agriculture, policies to attract investments, women farmers, rural strategies to promote land tenure and policy focus on desertification.

The EU said CSD-17's policy decisions should reflect the roles of major groups, including in: fostering women's and girls' access to education, protecting indigenous land and traditional livelihoods, improving land tenure systems and land rights, supporting local community food systems, and promoting sustainable production and consumption patterns.

SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

The G-77/CHINA expressed concern with the state of implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action (BPOA) and Mauritius Strategy for Implementation (MSI). AOSIS looked forward to the General Assembly's High-Level Review of MSI in 2010. PSIDS highlighted the importance of direct financing to communities and urged donor partners to continue assistance through training, capacity building and development projects.

Three panelists then presented comments on SIDS' concerns. Djaheezah Subratty, Ministry of Environment and National Development, Mauritius, discussed policy responses to climate change. She described the vulnerability of SIDS in the face of climate change and how livelihoods, land uses and biodiversity are impacted. Donovan Stanberry, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Jamaica, highlighted the role of: high-quality extension services; crop insurance; research and extension services for adaptation on the small level; appropriate technologies to increase productivity; and land tenure reform. Amb. Aliioaiga Feturi Elisaia (Samoa), on behalf of the SIDS of the Pacific Islands Forum Group, suggested identifying which development project pathways are truly cost-effective, and asked if there will be credible statistical data to determine whether progress has been made during the 2010 review of MSI.

The EU recognized the CSD's fundamental role in reviewing challenges of SIDS, and highlighted its Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA). The US underscored the importance of investments in education and science, communication, technologies and extension services in assisting SIDS. JAPAN said adaptation is as important as mitigation, underscored the importance for LDCs and SIDS to take short-term measures to respond to disasters, and discussed Japan's role in strengthening human resources and capacity through assistance programs to PSIDS.

AUSTRALIA discussed its projects with SIDS, including in climate change adaptation efforts. CHINA said special and targeted support should be provided to countries with specific problems, and highlighted the need to prevent a surge of protectionism. SWITZERLAND noted that tourism is a productive sector in SIDS and suggested exploiting ecotourism opportunities.

NIGERIA said he had not heard much new in the presentations, and emphasized the lack of access to funding. JAMAICA underscored how agriculture is key to achieving food security and highlighted the importance of scientific and technological innovation as well as partnerships for capacity building and transfer. He underscored the importance of sustainable agriculture insurance schemes to mitigate natural disasters. MICRONESIA asked what strategies can address the problem of saltwater contamination of groundwater and whether high food prices could become a stimulus for production.

ANTIGUA and BARBUDA welcomed the discussion on practical measures, such as insurance schemes, and their inclusion in the CSD-17 negotiating document.

ARGENTINA emphasized the need to facilitate market access for SIDS. FIJI highlighted the model partnership developed with Italy, Austria and the city of Milan. GUATEMALA said environmental issues should be dealt with in a systemic manner, and that development models must be environmentally and socially sustainable.

INDIA called for SIDS-driven support, said SIDS are affected by the financial crisis and need attention, and highlighted India's financial support to SIDS. NORWAY called for mainstreaming climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction in national development plans and sectoral policies, and linking them to MDGs. CHILE expressed hope that "Copenhagen will favor adaptation and give priority to SIDS and to developing countries."

IN THE CORRIDORS

At the close of the IPM's first day, some highlighted that they had not heard any surprises in country positions and others expressed disappointment with the afternoon's "interactive dialogue that never was," lamenting that discussion with major groups was restricted due to time constraints. Nonetheless, many said they were optimistic that the moment for sustainable development may have finally arrived. Participants argued that the calls for systemic and institutional changes in environmental and financial governance and institutions require an integrated approach and coherent framework, which sustainable development is disposed to provide. As such, some said the proposed 2012 meeting could provide an opportunity to synthesize these aspects and to deliver what the CSD should have delivered two decades ago.

CSD-17 IPM HIGHLIGHTS: TUESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2009

The Intersessional Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for the 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) discussed agriculture during the morning and rural development during the afternoon.

AGRICULTURE

Chair Verburg invited contributions highlighting policies and measures that have worked and why, and how they might be replicated and scaled up. Panelist Norman Uphoff, Cornell University, presented an alternative approach to the green revolution and demonstrated its superior ecological and productivity outputs. Panelist Sarah Scherr, Ecoagriculture Partners, presented a green strategy for food security and proposed that: a global summit be convened to frame such a strategy; Copenhagen place a high priority on agriculture and land-use systems; and a facility to help farming communities plan for agriculture, environment and climate resilience be established.

The G-77/CHINA underscored the need for a green revolution, and elaborated requisite national and global policies. The European Commission, on behalf of the EU, highlighted some of the challenges under the Johannesburg commitments. He also expressed support for a Global Partnership for agriculture, food security and nutrition and commitment to securing a comprehensive, balanced and ambitious Doha Development Agenda (DDA) deal. Senegal, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, underscored its support for NEPAD programs and urged the CSD to consider recommendations from the Windhoek Declaration. Jamaica, on behalf of AOSIS, highlighted how a prudent approach to biofuels could solve, rather than aggravate, development challenges. Papua New Guinea, on behalf of PSIDS, underscored the role of participatory techniques and the need to strengthen extension services.

Oman, for the ARAB GROUP, emphasized developing drought-resistant plant strains, reducing post-processing losses, and developing laboratories to improve food safety and quality control. The US highlighted: promoting enhanced productivity; improving livelihoods and linking producers to markets; and empowering communities to grow markets. INDONESIA suggested five areas for reforming the agriculture sector, including by ensuring better synergies between agriculture and development policies and strategies, and establishing a Regional Food Security Framework.

CANADA highlighted conservation tillage, and said agriculture must contribute environmental goods and services that society values and depends on. CHINA emphasized: food security as a primary strategy; attention to rural development from all aspects; and strengthened dialogue and coordination.

MICRONESIA highlighted its threatened food security, appealed for international support, and outlined national measures to address the situation.

SOUTH AFRICA highlighted the need to make CSD a results-oriented process. INDIA underscored the need for South-South cooperation and for greater emphasis on organic farming, trade barriers and small farmers. SWITZERLAND supported the role of sustainable commercial and agriculture policies, small-scale farming and local/regional production. MEXICO highlighted agrosystems in promoting good ecological practices and improving soil productivity.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA highlighted its pledge to provide US\$100 million for food aid and agricultural assistance to developing countries. PAKISTAN highlighted the importance of financing, technology transfer and fair trade. The NETHERLANDS: emphasized the need for investments to make agricultural patterns sustainable and to stimulate markets; said women and youth should be an integral part in the allocation of resources; and suggested increasing investments in second generation biofuels. FAO agreed with India on the need for an integrated approach incorporating both organic methods and fertilizers, and suggested broadening food crops.

Children and Youth emphasized solutions that incorporate local and traditional knowledge. NORWAY emphasized: increasing agricultural production in a sustainable and climate-resilient manner; strengthening cooperation between relevant, existing institutions rather than establishing new structures; and supporting *in situ* use and preservation of genetic resources.

MALAWI emphasized policies and evidence-based strategies and incentives to stimulate small-scale agriculture, and supported the 2009 Windhoek Declaration. ARGENTINA cautioned that unilateral initiatives to measure transport costs could place high costs on agriculture exporting countries and may be inconsistent with WTO rules and, with ALGERIA, said distortionary agricultural policies undermine agricultural production in developing countries. Business and Industry underscored the role of technology in meeting future food needs, noting the inability of organic agriculture to do so without extensive environmental degradation. IRAN highlighted policies targeting improved water management in agriculture. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed, *inter alia*, considering biofuel risks and sustainability criteria and enhancing knowledge and technology cooperation and exchanges. NIGERIA highlighted existing global policy frameworks for agriculture and noted the need to link them.

NGOs highlighted: the role of agroecology; the need to integrate livestock in agricultural policies; and the importance of traditional and local knowledge. JAPAN noted the role of biofuels in mitigating climate change and revitalizing agriculture and rural development, as long as their production is compatible with food security concerns. CHILE expressed

support for a DDA breakthrough and liberalized international trade. LIBYA highlighted the recommendations from the “Water for Agriculture and Energy in Africa: the challenges of climate change” conference held in Sirte, Libya, in December 2008.

Panelist Scherr highlighted the importance of getting investments to farmers and farmer organizations, and emphasized the need to restore degraded agricultural lands. Panelist Uphoff said agriculture needs to be climate-proofed, including through focusing on soil biology and plants’ root systems.

FIJI, on behalf of PSIDS, highlighted the establishment of the project implementation and monitoring unit within the Ministry for Rural Development to accelerate project implementation and coordination with other stakeholders. KAZAKHSTAN underscored the decision to pledge US\$1 billion to support domestic agriculture and livestock infrastructure. The MARSHALL ISLANDS stressed providing direct access to funding mechanisms and mainstreaming climate change challenges in future policies.

PALESTINE said conflict creates hardships for agriculture. AUSTRALIA noted that open markets allow farmers to respond to high food prices and supported integrating adaptation to climate change through policies and programmes.

BRAZIL said it is willing to discuss biofuels in a scientific and open manner, and the establishment of a global market for biofuels could contribute positively to current challenges. ISRAEL said applied research and extension services that recognize the farmer as end user are needed. BARBADOS said its efforts to provide incentives to the agricultural sector have led farmers to invest in new technologies.

The Scientific and Technological Community emphasized its partnership with the farming and industry communities with a view to put the farmer at the center of agricultural dialogues, and urged that Copenhagen include agricultural carbons in both mitigation and adaptation. Farmers called for information about market demand for organic products and highlighted resource limitations. CAMBODIA urged broadening market access and partnerships for agricultural production and supporting a 21st Century green revolution. NAMIBIA described its weather-related agricultural challenges and the value of markets, technology transfer and infrastructure.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Panelist Tim Hanstad, Rural Development Institute, stressed the importance of pro-poor land policies. He highlighted the importance of: empowering local communities and governments, and land ownership by women. Panelist Rosalud de la Rosa, WOCAN (Women Organizing for Change in Agriculture and Natural Resource Management), recommended reforming agricultural extension institutions and using incentives to increase the number of women enrolled and trained.

The G-77/CHINA highlighted the need for viable, realistic and implementable policy options to address rural development, including options that empower women and promote gender equity. The EU said: its Common Agricultural Policy is contributing to a stronger, more dynamic and sustainable agri-food sector; and sustainable forest management is an integral part of sustainable development.

The ARAB GROUP said greater efforts should be made to promote efforts to achieve the MDGs, especially the reduction of poverty and malnutrition, and improved education, health and empowerment of women, and to strengthen the capacity of women in villages. Tonga, for AOSIS, said climate adaption should strengthen the resilience of vulnerable rural communities and improve infrastructure. COLOMBIA emphasized the importance of an objective, well-informed approach to biofuels.

FIJI, on behalf of PSIDS, highlighted the importance of promoting infrastructure development, agroforestry practices, cultural enhancement and proper management of natural resources. CANADA supported initiatives that increase economic

diversification, strengthen capacity and promote sustainable resource management. GUATEMALA highlighted the need for policies promoting the use of traditional knowledge in handling natural resources. She also welcomed policies and regulations that implement the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

SWITZERLAND highlighted the need for long-term commitment for agro-pastoral productivity in economically sustainable ways, integrated crop-livestock systems and access to education, particularly for women. BOLIVIA said the prevailing development model is unsustainable and proposed structural transformation to a new model of development. Noting the impact of the current financial crisis on the poor, INDONESIA proposed including rural development in stimulus packages, enhancing social safety nets for the poor and empowering rural communities. The US underlined, *inter alia*, investing in science and education and empowering local communities, and highlighted several lessons learned to promote rural vitality.

Workers and Trade Unions highlighted special attention to youth, education and vocational training, and the rights to free association and collective bargaining. ARGENTINA said it promotes water basin management policies. NIGERIA emphasized access to land and inheritance rights for women, and said the Global Environment Facility (GEF) replenishment should increase funds for sustainable land management.

JAPAN argued for a “community-based human security approach” to rural development, and presented the outcomes of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) IV, held in Japan in 2008, and their implementation by Japan. NORWAY called for strengthening female influence and power in the agricultural sectors, and women’s position in agriculture, including through promoting their rights and property ownership. IRAN emphasized the plight of nomadic communities and handicraft makers, and proposed various policy measures, including fair income distribution and social insurance coverage. BURKINA FASO announced that it would host the Seventh World Forum on Sustainable Development in October 2009.

MEXICO suggested promoting micro- and medium-sized agricultural enterprises and services that can ensure adequate management of natural resources by combining modern technologies with indigenous and traditional knowledge. Local Authorities said the role of urban market infrastructure is key in rural development. MOROCCO called for: a multilateral fund for capacity building; financing climate change adaptation measures and technology transfer in developing countries; and a green revolution for Africa to increase agricultural production and boost economic growth and food security.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On the second day of IPM, many participants speculated about the proposals that are likely to come out of the session. Some highlighted that biofuels have come up in statements and corridor conversations, particularly in reference to the Chair’s suggestion to explore the development of a voluntary set of criteria for biofuels. Others are pleased to note that the debate has moved beyond past international discussions of these issues, with many speakers acknowledging that new approaches to agriculture are needed, for example.

Meanwhile, others are giving the Chair high marks for beginning each meeting on time and for signaling that speakers should conclude after three minutes. Yet some are still wishing that the discussion could involve more dialogue, particularly after what they describe as successful dialogue experiences during the UNEP Governing Council meeting last week. As a starting point, one participant noted that speakers should realize that reading one page of a printed speech will fill the allotted three minutes. Some participants hoped that the warm atmosphere at the Dutch-hosted reception Tuesday evening would carry over to the second half of the IPM.

CSD-17 IPM HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2009

The Intersessional Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for the 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) concluded its discussion of rural development and discussed land during the morning, and addressed the issue of drought during the afternoon.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA underscored mainstreaming rural development in national development frameworks. PAKISTAN highlighted the need to focus on real life examples and praised the work of the Aga Khan Rural Support Program in rural communities in Pakistan. Youth and Children expressed hope for a successful Doha Development Agenda.

LAND

Panelist Harold Livings, International Fund for Agricultural Development, underscored the importance of land tenure security for economic growth and poverty reduction. Panelist John Bruce, Land and Development Solutions International, discussed shared-use resources and proposed demarcating and registering common-use areas, instituting model by-laws, and providing community-level technical assistance. Panelist Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), presented a framework to address land degradation, and underlined the role of land in carbon sequestration.

The G-77/CHINA outlined several policy options to harness land for poverty eradication and food security, and said financing remains the main hurdle. The EU: emphasized proper land use and management, equitable access to land, enforceable land rights and transparent land policy; called attention to the 2004 FAO Voluntary Guidelines that support the progressive realization of the right to food and the 2004 EU Land Policy Guidelines; and said efficient and sustainable use of water resources is fundamental. Micronesia, on behalf of AOSIS, said: small island States' management of land, coastal-zones and oceans need to incorporate climate change adaptation strategies; and fiscal measures and financial instruments could be targeted to help optimize land use. The ARAB GROUP suggested: undertaking land censuses and developing data bases; adopting legislation to protect water resources and land against degradation; enhancing the capacity of scientific research organizations; and developing long- and short-term policies for the use of underground water.

Tonga, on behalf of PSIDS, underscored its UN General Assembly (UNGA) draft resolution on Security and Climate Change (A/63/L.8), which stresses the security implications

for the disappearance of territory. CHILE proposed the use of mechanisms like payments for environmental services for sustainable land management (SLM). SOUTH AFRICA said efforts to formalize and secure land rights must be supported by policies. The US emphasized coherent land policies and scientifically sound management practices for sustainable land productivity, and highlighted good land governance principles, strategic technology use and women's land rights. CANADA prioritized measures to increase compatibility of land use practices with landscape capacity and to expedite appropriate information development, management and application. SWITZERLAND emphasized tenure rights and payments for ecosystem services for SLM, and called for an international instrument on the sustainable use of soil.

Indigenous Peoples emphasized the need to involve indigenous peoples in land reforms and to involve women in all stages of programme development, implementation and evaluation. INDONESIA said preservation of forest resources must not be overlooked, and linkages between SLM and climate change and conflict over land should be considered. NIGERIA, supported by IRAN and GHANA, proposed that UNGA's high-level discussion on climate change in September include attention to the nexus between climate change, land degradation and desertification.

FAO said the Clean Development Mechanism should include soil carbon sequestration in agricultural lands in a post-2012 regime. ISRAEL emphasized policies that promote land ownership, economic growth and sustainable management of natural resources. UN-HABITAT suggested a shift to a focus on security of tenure.

IRAN underlined the use of satellite technology for land-use planning, and emphasized land tenure systems in SLM. ECUADOR highlighted national efforts to address land, and supported Bolivia's proposal to designate a UN International Day for Mother Earth. MALAWI highlighted its latest land reform processes and highlighted measures for SLM, including payments for ecosystem services.

GUATEMALA called attention to conflicts over land, particularly when organized crime has taken over protected areas, and indicated a role for international assistance with this problem. NGOs suggested using a human rights framework to address the unequal power relationships behind unjust land tenure structures. NORWAY emphasized the importance of: SLM and equitable access to land for sustainable development and poverty reduction; soil protection in ensuring food security; protection of productive areas to reduce soil loss; and local adaptation through participatory processes.

BOLIVIA said its constitution has incorporated traditional and indigenous knowledge, gender and participatory processes in land and natural resource management. CAMBODIA expressed

support for land reform policies, community-based management of land and diversification of crops. MEXICO highlighted how conservation agriculture incorporating agro-ecological practices can be the solution to land and water conservation, and noted the importance of promoting payments for ecosystem services and mechanisms to appraise policies.

GHANA supported discussion of the climate change-desertification nexus in Copenhagen, and invited support to complete its ongoing land and water management programs. Business and Industry described replicable land management practices, including conservation tillage, development corridors, and integrated crop management. CUBA underscored the importance of political will in implementing policy proposals with examples from its response to extreme weather events in 2008. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA emphasized that appropriate water policies are important for agriculture and SLM. ARGENTINA supported an integrated approach to the components of this issue and incorporation of climate change, and said payments for ecosystem services should be in accordance with WTO agreements.

Panelist Liversage highlighted that land rights may involve family and group rights and can be linked to water rights. Panelist Bruce emphasized that, in the long run, it is better to focus on creating incentives than to focus on enforcement in relation to property rights. Panelist Gnacadja emphasized that land is a win-win way to address many of the current crises.

DROUGHT

Panelist Constance Neely, Heifer International, highlighted the role of grazing and agro-ecological practice to manage ecosystems. Panelist Jeffrey Herrick, US Department of Agriculture, noted the importance of integrating scientific and local knowledge in responding to drought. The G-77/CHINA said this session should focus on means of implementation. The EU emphasized that the UNCCD is a powerful tool to provide a framework for the protection, sustainable use and management of water resources.

Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of AOSIS, suggested upgrading infrastructure for water access and storage, organizing public awareness campaigns regarding water use and efficiency, and studying ocean desertification. BARBADOS said it is seeking alliances to help with drought monitoring and water harvesting technologies. CANADA noted benefits from developing and maintaining agreements on drought and climate variability. CHILE said the development of drought-tolerant plants or rehabilitation of resources requires safeguards.

MEXICO underscored the need to develop capacity to generate sustainable development systems and drought-resistant plants. NGOs noted that investing in sustainable practices is crucial to improving drought mitigation. The US highlighted the shift in its drought policy from an emphasis on drought relief to a forward-looking stance of preparedness to reduce vulnerability. The G-77/CHINA, EU and MEXICO highlighted the importance of integrating drought into national plans. NORWAY recommended, *inter alia*, building capacity for climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction, particularly in vulnerable farmer and pastoralist communities and prioritizing drylands issues in national development plans. SOUTH AFRICA said priorities should include investment in research and development, especially for disaster scenario planning.

AUSTRALIA highlighted the role of governments in providing frameworks that allow producers to adopt self-reliant approaches for drought. SWITZERLAND called attention to gaps in the tools, methodologies and coordination efforts at national and regional levels, and said the Sahara and Sahel Observatory is a model for other regions concerned with drought. The ARAB STATES proposed developing early warning systems, supporting forecasting through field observation and

remote sensing, defining adaptation measures, and developing policies and strategies to protect coastal areas from sea-level rise and increased salinity of sea water.

IRAN highlighted, *inter alia*, the need to implement multi-dimensional policies and to examine how public bodies, households and businesses can reduce the impacts and costs of drought. The World Meteorological Organization highlighted some of the recommendations on coping with increasing droughts from the International Workshop on Drought and Extreme Temperatures held in Beijing, China, in February 2009. The Scientific and Technological Community provided recommendations on how to, *inter alia*, improve early warning systems for drought. MALAWI suggested that CSD-17 encourage new initiatives concerning drought-resistant crops, water harvesting and individual household and community mitigation.

GUATEMALA stressed synergies between the three Rio conventions, and highlighted involvement in regional programmes, and its national measures to address drought. JAPAN said climate change will increase drought and stressed implementing appropriate agricultural measures for drought-preparedness, and using the UNCCD to promote linkages between desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). He proposed: integrating drought reduction measures into sustainable development and poverty eradication programmes; accumulating scientific data for evaluating risk and predicting drought occurrences; and strengthening international cooperation. Business and Industry said engagement with all stakeholders is essential to addressing drought. NIGERIA underscored: the existence of complementarities among SLM, biodiversity and integrated water resource management policies; the “material” enhancement of the UNCCD as the focal point for DLDD; and the need for more GEF funds to implement SLM projects.

Children and Youth elaborated the ecological and political dimensions of drought, and called for: early warning systems to facilitate preparedness and adaptation; inclusion of diverse voices in policy development; and information and communication technologies to empower drought-affected communities. Women highlighted the role of women as environmental managers, custodians of biodiversity and family providers, and said women are the primary victims of drought. She called for gender analysis on drought and desertification activities before instituting policies, and use of women’s accumulated knowledge to inform policy. KAZAKHSTAN called attention to its large-scale land restoration project, and said its experience could be applied to other countries in the Central Asian Region.

Panelist Neely highlighted the interlinked nature of the themes, and emphasized the need to consider how policies would work across sectors and to address root causes. She also stressed the importance of participatory research that engages local communities in identifying research priorities. Panelist Herrick emphasized “localizing scientific knowledge” and “generalizing local knowledge,” stressing the benefits of communication between scientists and farmers. He also highlighted comments calling for increased data collection, standardization and sharing.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While participants expressed general contentment with the exchange of positions and said they would withhold judgment of the session until the Chair’s IPM summary is distributed on Friday, some contemplated what might be learned during the lunch time briefing that Chair Verburg is slated to hold on Thursday in Conference Room 2. The briefing is reportedly being organized to solicit feedback on the planned organization of work for CSD-17, in particular whether and how to allocate issues to the working groups and the approach to be taken by the High-Level Segment. Options for the latter are reported to include the presentation of statements and the organization of interactive round-table dialogues.

CSD-17 IPM HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 26 FEBRUARY 2009

The Intersessional Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for the 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) discussed desertification during the morning, and addressed the issue of Africa during the afternoon.

DESERTIFICATION

Panelist Alemneh Dejene, FAO, discussed the constraints to the desertification challenge and emphasized, among other options, combining organic and non-organic land inputs, maximizing synergy between agriculture and livestock management and increasing national investment and international cooperation. Panelist Melchiade Bukuru, UNCCD, highlighted the global benefits of combating desertification and proposed options that include prioritizing the issue at all levels and mainstreaming it in national development, financial, climate change, biodiversity, water and poverty programmes.

The G-77/CHINA highlighted the potential of the UNCCD to address poverty, and underlined the need for capacity building, and technical and new, additional and predictable financial resources. The EU proposed that CSD-17 urge enhanced synergies among the Rio Conventions, and said the Committee on Science and Technology conference should mobilize the scientific community. The ARAB GROUP emphasized the need, *inter alia*, to increase participation in implementation of relevant sub-regional programmes.

CAPE VERDE called on CSD-17 to propose concrete outcomes. FRANCE highlighted the need to assist farmers and pastoralists in arid areas to rehabilitate land and harness local knowledge. SPAIN emphasized that desertification, drought and food security need a global response. The US highlighted the importance of a bottom-up approach in combating desertification, with emphasis on people and habitats, lessons learned and local solutions.

SOUTH AFRICA said: the Global Mechanism (GM) should be more active in making available and mobilizing resources; political commitment and good governance should be ensured to enhance efforts to combat desertification, including through NEPAD programmes; and traditional governance is critical for the delivery of programmes. Indigenous Peoples supported the panelists' recommendations and highlighted the importance of alternative livelihoods. CANADA emphasized the importance of a robust scientific base for the UNCCD, and the need for secure access to land. BARBADOS looked forward to identifying partners with whom to share its experiences during CSD-17.

CHILE expressed concern that the GEF is not allocating funds for the rehabilitation of degraded lands and said funding for OP15 should be increased.

INDIA highlighted its National Afforestation Program and said the current global crisis should not dilute commitments. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION proposed abandoning sector-based strategies in favor of an integrated approach. Business and Industry highlighted the need for reward schemes for effective agricultural practices. SWITZERLAND said the UNCCD's ten-year Strategy is a new opportunity for signatories to prevent desertification through sectoral policies.

NIGERIA expressed concern that GEF funding for land management is less than that for other areas, and said the work of the GM as a broker of funds should be placed under the UNCCD Secretariat's leadership. ALGERIA highlighted the need for support by the international community, including for implementation of the Sahara-Sahel Green Wall project. ARGENTINA announced that it will host the ninth Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD from 21 September-2 October 2009. CHINA suggested that, *inter alia*: specialized agencies should treat desertification as a priority and create rational scientific recommendations; and developed countries should help developing countries build their capacity to respond to drought and desertification, especially disaster prevention and management.

JAPAN noted the effectiveness of traditional knowledge in combating desertification. MOROCCO highlighted that protecting oases is central to the fight against desertification. MEXICO stated the need for integrated sustainable management of ecosystems in arid zones. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA highlighted the importance of regional cooperation, especially when transboundary issues are involved.

MALAWI noted the need for improved land productivity and reduced soil loss and soil erosion, and said policies should link land uses and livelihoods. IRAN highlighted a carbon sequestration project that involves 31 villages and is designed to develop participatory resource management, and said sandstorms and sand dune movements are an issue for his country. NGOs said biochar is not a carbon sequestration silver bullet, and the UNCCD should continue to support agro-ecological practices for SLM and be holistic in its approach to carbon dynamics.

SAUDI ARABIA said his country is spending US\$500 million to fight desertification, and will help many African countries that are suffering from food shortages, and noted efforts to bolster cooperation with Latin American countries. ISRAEL proposed that CSD-17 address relevant policies and adopt measures, including innovative ways for integrating cross-cutting issues in addressing desert and dry-land development. The Scientific and

Technological Community suggested integrating land and water considerations in an interdisciplinary and multi-level study of deserts. LIBYA highlighted the work of NEPAD and stressed the need to increase GEF funding for these issues. BOLIVIA noted interlinkages between desertification, poverty and global warming. Children and Youth stressed involving children and youth in the initiatives presented at the IPM.

BRAZIL highlighted the value of UNCCD in addressing desertification, but noted that the issue of desertification is broader than the UNCCD's scope of operation. She called for support to the UNCCD and GM and for regional and South-South cooperation. Farmers stressed the need to attract investment in degraded areas and to use best practices to recover degraded areas, supported Mexico's Plan of Action and urged Saudi Arabia to expand support beyond Africa. Women called for gender-disaggregated analyses of desertification, women's involvement in policy making, and the establishment of an adaptation fund for women to assist in coping during crises.

AFRICA

Panelist Kobie Brand, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, Africa Secretariat, highlighted the need for coordinated policies and planning for implementation at the local level. She noted the role of education in building leadership. Panelist Kaddu Sebunya, African Wildlife Foundation, underscored the importance of policies on large-scale conservation and the need to strengthen local incentives for coexistence between people and wildlife. The G77-CHINA highlighted ensuring that land policy reforms guarantee women's rights to land. Senegal, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, noted that urgent measures are needed, *inter alia*, to: diversify agriculture; preserve the environment and natural resources; and allow free access to markets. The EU recommended, *inter alia*, a "financial re-mobilisation of concerned African States and the international community towards sustainable rural and agricultural development."

Solomon Islands, on behalf of AOSIS, said the continued health of SIDS' and African countries' coastal and marine ecosystems offers an important development pillar for food security and rural development. ITALY said its goals as G-8 President include: incorporating issues related to Africa and development in the agenda; putting into effect a mechanism to examine the impact of G-8 initiatives; and establishing the Global Partnership on Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition.

MOROCCO emphasized South-South cooperation and said NEPAD offers the African continent scope for regional cooperation. PORTUGAL discussed activities undertaken in the context of cooperation among Portuguese speaking countries. INDONESIA said, *inter alia*: conflict resolution in Africa must be treated as a top priority; the structural imbalance in Africa's agriculture sector must be addressed; and development of basic infrastructure in agriculture and the rural sector should be treated as a priority. The ARAB GROUP stressed the development programmes and plans launched by NEPAD.

The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO stressed the importance, *inter alia*, of strengthening local and national governance and improving the living conditions of rural communities. The US said a comprehensive approach is required to improve agriculture and coordinated efforts among donors are important. LIBYA highlighted Africa's need for more financing. FRANCE said it is essential to improve agricultural and food security policies and strengthen institutional capacity. Workers and Trade Unions highlighted the recommendations from the First African Trade Union Conference on Labour and the Environment held in Johannesburg in July 2009, including the call to improve the accountability and transparency of multinational enterprises.

MALAWI supported regional initiatives as promoted by NEPAD. INDIA highlighted the offer to extend credit lines to African countries. NIGERIA emphasized the importance of policy capacity building and financing. Children and Youth emphasized the need to address African children and youth in national policies. JAPAN noted it would host a high-level African ministers' conference in March 2009 in Botswana to discuss the implementation of commitments made at TICAD IV. ARGENTINA highlighted the need to liberalize markets and create more access to credit.

SOUTH AFRICA emphasized the importance of integrated planning, good governance and support from the international community, and called for a successful conclusion of the DDA and urgent implementation of the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building. ISRAEL highlighted its experience in improving the quality of its agricultural production, and noted the challenge of adapting traditional practices to issues such as crop production, post-harvest techniques and marketing. CANADA: said it will keep its G-8 commitment to increase assistance to Africa; noted the relevance of the outcome of the Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness; and indicated support for increased sustainable agricultural production, better nutrition and gender equality. Business and Industry emphasized access to inputs, markets, training and information sources, and highlighted its Farming First policy platform developed in cooperation with the Scientific and Technology Community and Farmers major groups.

MEXICO noted the need to support diversification of the African economy. NGOs drew attention to a lack of emphasis on fisheries and livestock. NORWAY said the three main pillars (equitable access to land, improved governance in the land sector and reduction of land related conflicts) in the guidelines for tenure adopted by the Economic Commission for Africa in September 2008 will promote sustainable development. The Scientific and Technological Community noted that institutional capacity exists, but actions need to be coordinated and inputs need to inform policies. Women urged pursuing vocational training for women based on the train-the-trainer model. Farmers endorsed the Windhoek Declaration and urged African governments to honor their commitments in the Maputo Declaration.

IN THE CORRIDORS

During an informal lunchtime briefing, Chair Verburg explained the process of developing the IPM Chair's text to be distributed Friday afternoon and outlined the bureau's proposed organization of work for CSD-17. On the latter, she said: two parallel working groups will be established on agriculture, rural development and cross-cutting issues, and on land, drought, desertification and Africa; and the Partnership Fair, Learning Centers and side events will be held. To raise the profile of the CSD, the Bureau is planning a High-Level Segment (HLS) targeting ministers of agriculture, rural development, development cooperation, environment and finance and eminent persons. The HLS will consist of topic-specific roundtables and dialogues between ministers and major groups and the policy-research community, and dialogues between ministers and heads of UN agencies and Chairs of Governing Councils or Executive Boards. Keynote speeches by eminent personalities will also be offered. One participant suggested including practitioners of traditional and local knowledge.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of the CSD-17 IPM will be available on Monday, 2 March 2009, online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/csd/ipm17/>

SUMMARY OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: 23-27 FEBRUARY 2009

The Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) took place from 23-27 February 2009, at UN headquarters in New York. The IPM's role was to provide a forum to discuss policy options and possible actions to enable the implementation of measures and policies concerning agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa – the thematic issues under consideration during the CSD-16/CSD-17 two-year “implementation cycle.”

Building on CSD-16, which conducted a “review” of these issues in May 2008, CSD-17 will be a “policy” session, during which delegates will negotiate decisions regarding measures related to the thematic areas. The IPM discussed each thematic area and delegates proposed policy options and actions for adoption at CSD-17. Delegates also considered inter-linkages, cross-cutting issues and means of implementation, as well as small island developing states (SIDS). The IPM's deliberations were reflected in a Chair's Negotiating Text that was distributed on the final afternoon of the meeting. The document was developed with the expectation that it could form the basis for further discussions and negotiations during CSD-17, scheduled to convene from 4-15 May 2009, in New York.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CSD

The Commission on Sustainable Development emerged from Agenda 21, the programme of action for sustainable development adopted in June 1992 by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the “Rio Earth Summit.” Agenda 21 called for the creation of the CSD to ensure effective follow-up of UNCED, enhance international cooperation, and examine progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the local, national, regional and international levels. In 1992, the 47th session of the UN General Assembly adopted resolution 47/191, which established the

CSD's terms of reference and composition, organization of work, relationship with other UN bodies, Secretariat arrangements, and guidelines for the participation of Major Groups. The CSD is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and its decisions are forwarded to ECOSOC for the latter body's action. The CSD has 53 member states, although all UN member states are invited to participate in its sessions. The Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), within the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), serves as the CSD's Secretariat.

The CSD held its first substantive session in June 1993 and has convened annually since then at UN headquarters in New York. During its first five years, the CSD systematically reviewed the implementation of all chapters of Agenda 21. In June 1997, five years after UNCED, the 19th Special Session of the UN General Assembly (UNGASS-19), also known as “Rio+5,” was held to review the implementation of Agenda 21. Negotiations produced a Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. Among the decisions adopted at UNGASS-19 was a five-year CSD work programme organized around sectoral, cross-sectoral and economic thematic issues.

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CSD-8: The eighth session of the CSD met from 24 April to 5 May 2000. Participants addressed: integrated planning and management of land resources; financial resources, trade and investment and economic growth; and sustainable agriculture and land management. The decision on land resources 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 livelihoods. The decision on agriculture recognized the important place of agriculture in society for food and fiber production, food security and social and economic development.

WSSD: The World Summit on Sustainable Development met from 26 August to 4 September 2002, in Johannesburg, South Africa, and adopted two main documents: the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development. In their consideration of desertification, delegates agreed to call on the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Assembly to designate land degradation as a focal area of GEF and to consider the GEF as a financial mechanism for the UN Convention to Combat Desertification. The JPOI chapter on the Sustainable Development of Africa affirms the international community's commitment to support sustainable development in Africa, through addressing the special challenges by taking concrete actions to implement Agenda 21 in Africa, within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). A section on means of implementation calls for, among others, the fulfillment of World Trade Organization (WTO) members' commitments, notably on market access, and the fulfillment of a commitment to comprehensive WTO negotiations initiated under the Agreement on Agriculture, aiming, *inter alia*, to phase out all forms of export subsidies.

CSD-16: CSD-16 convened at UN headquarters in New York from 5-16 May 2008, to review the thematic cluster of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. Delegates "reviewed" constraints and obstacles to implementation, as well as lessons learned and best practices, in relation to the thematic cluster, and highlighted the connections with the global food crisis and climate change. CSD-16's review of the issues highlighted the drivers of food prices, including land degradation, high energy costs, climate change, poor harvests, speculation in agricultural commodities, inequitable terms of trade, decline of investments in agricultural development, and increased production of biofuels from food crops. Speakers also tied their discussions to upcoming meetings, such as: the June 2008 Food and Agriculture Organization's High-level Conference on Food Security and the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy; and ongoing processes, particularly the Doha Round of negotiations in the World Trade Organization and its treatment of agricultural subsidies; and NEPAD.

REPORT OF THE IPM

The Intersessional Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for the 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) opened on Monday morning, 23 February 2009, at UN headquarters in New York. Gerda Verburg, CSD-17 Chair and Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Netherlands, welcomed participants and highlighted the continued relevance of the food and energy crises for CSD-17. She stressed resolving these crises through a sustainable green revolution by: investing in more sustainable agriculture; creating an enabling environment for farmers; developing sustainable production chains; improving market access; and providing food aid and social safety nets for the most vulnerable. She proposed that CSD-17 develop a voluntary set of criteria for the sustainable production of biofuels. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, stressed the relevance of sustainable development in addressing current global challenges and crises and called for integrated solutions and addressing climate change.

Following the adoption of the agenda and organization of work, and opening statements, IPM delegates proceeded to discuss the thematic cluster for the current CSD cycle, devoting half a day to each topic. They also addressed the needs of small island developing states (SIDS) in relation to the thematic cluster during a half-day discussion, and inter-linkages, cross-cutting issues and means of implementation during a half-day discussion. On the final afternoon, a "Chair's Negotiating Text" was distributed, and delegates offered initial comments. This report is organized chronologically, summarizing the discussions as they were organized during the IPM.

OPENING PLENARY

On Monday morning, Chair Verburg introduced and delegates adopted the agenda and organization of work for the IPM (E/CN.17/IPM/2009/1). Chair Verburg noted that the CSD had not yet elected Vice-Chairs from three regional groups. Delegates agreed to allow the following candidates to act in the capacity of Vice-Chairs during the IPM: Kaire Mbuende (Namibia), Tania Raguz (Croatia) and Ana Bianchi (Argentina). They also agreed that Tania Raguz would serve as Rapporteur of the IPM. The final Vice-Chair, Javad Mansour (Iran), was elected at the first meeting of CSD-17 in May 2008.

A number of speakers then presented the background documentation for the meeting. Tariq Banuri, Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, introduced the reports of the Secretary-General on the thematic issues (E/CN.17/2009/3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9). Vice-Chair Mbuende presented the outcome of the intersessional meeting on African Agriculture in the 21st Century (E/CN.17/2009/14), which convened in Windhoek, Namibia, in February 2009. Vice-Chair Mansour presented the report of the intersessional workshop on capacity building held in Bangkok, Thailand, in January 2009 (E/CN.17/2009/13).

OPENING STATEMENTS: Opening statements were delivered on behalf of various regional and interest groups, specifically by Sudan for the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), the Czech Republic for the European Union (EU), Bangladesh for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Senegal

for the African Group, Grenada for the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), Tonga for the Pacific Small Island Developing States (PSIDS) and Oman for the Arab Group. Canada, the Russian Federation and the US also delivered opening statements.

Among the issues highlighted were: the need for inter-linkages in policy options and proposals for the themes under consideration; capacity building for, and cooperation with, civil society organizations; good governance; intergenerational equity; solutions that include community participation and take account of traditional land tenure systems; the relationship between conflict and sustainable development; food security and the potential for agriculture to reduce poverty; the successful completion of the Doha Development Round; and climate change concerns.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* coverage of these discussions can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol05/enb05266e.html>

MAJOR GROUPS' PRIORITIES FOR ACTION: On Monday afternoon, Major Groups identified their Priorities for Action (E/CN.17/2009/10). Women called for partnerships linking women leaders and women farmers. Children and Youth underscored the importance of pastoralism. Indigenous Peoples highlighted integrating traditional knowledge into rural development policies. NGOs emphasized, *inter alia*, the needs of small-holder farmers. Local Authorities said local-level officials are rising to the challenges, but need help. Workers and Trade Unions stressed green growth. Business and Industry stressed the importance of private/public partnerships. The Scientific and Technological Community said knowledge and technology should be targeted to the needs of small farmers. Farmers identified five key areas for action, including rural strategies to promote land tenure.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* coverage of these presentations can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol05/enb05266e.html>

POLICY OPTIONS AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS TO EXPEDITE IMPLEMENTATION

From Monday afternoon to Friday morning, the IPM discussed policy options and possible actions to enable the implementation of measures and policies concerning the six thematic issues under consideration during CSD-16 and CSD-17. In addition, there were two other substantive plenary sessions: the first focused on options for addressing barriers and constraints facing SIDS in the six thematic areas; and the second addressed inter-linkages, cross-cutting issues and means of implementation in relation to the thematic cluster. Each session began with panel presentations, followed by input from delegations. CSD-17 Chair Verburg chaired the discussions throughout the week.

SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES: This session was held on Monday afternoon, and discussed SIDS' situation with regard to the CSD-17 thematic cluster. Key issues discussed included: the vulnerability of SIDS to climate change; direct financing to communities, and partnerships for training, capacity building and development projects; land tenure reform;

agriculture as key to food security; sustainable agriculture and crop insurance schemes; and market access. The G-77/China and AOSIS emphasized the need to implement the Mauritius Strategy for Implementation. The EU highlighted its Global Climate Change Alliance.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* coverage of these discussions can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol05/enb05266e.html>

AGRICULTURE: This discussion took place on Tuesday morning, and was preceded by two panel presentations highlighting new and alternative approaches to the Green Revolution that could meet the food needs of the world's population of 9 billion people by 2050. Presentations highlighted various approaches to agriculture, ways to enhance crop productivity, the knowledge bases that enhance agricultural productivity, competition between agriculture and other resource uses, and required policy changes.

On approaches to agriculture, participants highlighted conservation tillage, the Green Revolution, organic agriculture, the combined use of organic agriculture and high inputs, and agro-ecological approaches. Proposals to enhance crop productivity included the use of genetic technologies, development of drought-resistant crops and diversifying food crops. On the knowledge required, emphasis was placed on sound science, traditional knowledge, applied research and experience. Risks from high demand for water resources in agriculture, and the food security threat from biofuel production were also highlighted.

Among the proposed policy measures offered were the successful conclusion of the Doha Development Round, trade liberalization and market access, empowerment of women, agricultural reforms, integration of agriculture and livestock production and "climate-proofing" agriculture.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* coverage of these discussions can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol05/enb05267e.html>

RURAL DEVELOPMENT: This discussion took place on Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday morning. Panelists spoke of empowering local communities and reforming agricultural extension institutions. Key issues discussed included: the need for implementable policy options to address rural development; strengthening the capacity of women; a well-informed approach to biofuels; infrastructure development; sustainable resource management; the use of traditional and indigenous knowledge; integrated crop-livestock systems; and land ownership.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* coverage of these discussions can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol05/enb05267e.html> and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol05/enb05268e.html>

LAND: This discussion took place on Wednesday morning. The panel presentations highlighted the benefits of land tenure security, ways to institutionalize shared-resource use, and use of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) as a framework for land management. Among the concerns raised were: land as a mechanism for poverty reduction; equal access and rights to land; land management; territorial losses by SIDS from sea-level rise; good land governance; and food security.

On access, emphasis was placed on measures such as land ownership, enforceable legislation and women's access to property, and land-related conflicts. Some of the land management concerns highlighted were: water resource use; application of scientifically-sound management practices; compatibility of land use practices; the involvement of women and indigenous peoples in land reforms; forest conservation; and linkages between sustainable land management (SLM) and climate change.

Among the policy proposals were land reforms, equitable access to land, enforceable land rights, fiscal and financial instruments to optimize land use, attention to climate adaptation strategies, financing, and payment for ecosystem services.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* coverage of these discussions can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol05/enb05268e.html>

DROUGHT: IPM delegates discussed drought on Wednesday afternoon. Panelists spoke of agro-ecological practices and integrating scientific and local knowledge. Key issues discussed included: means of implementation; water access and storage; the development of drought-tolerant plants; capacity building for adaptation and disaster risk reduction; preparedness to reduce vulnerability; investment in research and development; institutional and methodological gaps; and early warning systems.

The G-77/China, EU and Mexico highlighted the importance of integrating drought into sustainable development strategies and plans. Switzerland called attention to the Sahara and Sahel Observatory as a model for other regions concerned with drought. Japan highlighted the role of the UNCCD in promoting linkages between desertification, land degradation and drought.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* coverage of these discussions can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol05/enb05268e.html>

DESERTIFICATION: This discussion took place on Thursday morning. The panel presentations highlighted measures to address desertification. Discussion focused on the role of the UNCCD and more general measures and issues. Issues highlighted for the UNCCD include: its role in poverty reduction; the need for the conference being organized by its Committee on Science and Technology to mobilize scientists; generation of robust science for the Convention; increased allocation of funds by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to SLM; and the Convention's promotion of agro-ecological methods.

Concerning desertification more broadly, emphasis was placed on, *inter alia*: a global response and regional cooperation to address its effects; land rehabilitation through approaches such as integrated land management and use of traditional knowledge and bottom-up approaches; oases protection; and attracting investments to degraded areas.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* coverage of these discussions can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol05/enb05269e.html>

AFRICA: Delegates discussed Africa on Thursday afternoon. Panelists spoke of the need for coordinated policies for implementation at the local level and policies on large-scale

conservation. Key issues discussed included: women's rights to land; free access to markets; food security; conflict resolution; strengthening local and national governance; policy capacity building; financing; sustainable agricultural production; and building infrastructure.

Italy highlighted its priorities as G-8 President, including the establishment of a Global Partnership on Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition. Many speakers, including Morocco, Malawi and the Arab Group, emphasized the role of NEPAD. Japan noted it would host a high-level African ministers' conference in March 2009 in Botswana to discuss the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) commitments. Canada underscored the relevance of the outcome of the Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness.

The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* coverage of these discussions can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/vol05/enb05269e.html>

INTER-LINKAGES, CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION: On Friday morning, 27 February, the IPM discussed inter-linkages, cross-cutting issues and means of implementation. Panelist Nnimmo Bassey, Environmental Rights Action, discussed the concept of water as a human right, food security and sovereignty, and the need to provide for equal opportunities in policy-making. Panelist Erick Fernandes, World Bank, highlighted, *inter alia*, the importance of sustainable agricultural strategies in national action plans and the need to harness traditional knowledge. Panelist Paul Collier, Oxford University, said that developing countries have to adapt to the changing climate by moving into sectors that are less vulnerable, and highlighted a role for genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in agriculture.

The G-77/China said policy options must be multi-disciplinary and reflect inter-linkages between thematic clusters. She also highlighted the importance of women farmers and heads of households. The EU highlighted the need to, *inter alia*, improve integration of the thematic clusters into national plans. He also stressed the sovereign right to make decisions on GMOs in accordance with prevailing values, sound science and international law.

Grenada, on behalf of AOSIS, stressed challenges related to food production, climate change, the global financial crisis and the SIDS' capacity needs for technical assistance programmes. Tonga, on behalf of PSIDS, emphasized climate change, gender and food security. Nigeria noted that the US did not talk about good governance and human rights when it implemented the Marshall Plan, and said biofuels are not wrong as long as they do not affect the food people need. Canada emphasized science and technology, education and sustainable development, gender equality, good governance, and food security. Micronesia noted the need for detailed meteorological data, and said ocean acidification and rising temperatures are threatening its coral reefs and an international commitment to end unsustainable fishing practices is long overdue. Mexico said a follow-up mechanism and information to evaluate progress is missing.

The US called for, *inter alia*: a more unified approach to research, education and extension, and participatory land-use planning. Chile underscored strategies for sustainable development that address, *inter alia*, participatory public policies and policies with women as the driving force. France said national coherence tools have to be adopted to integrate national policies in a cross-cutting process. Local Authorities highlighted projects that build resilient communities.

Norway emphasized the food crisis, biofuels, climate change and disaster risk reduction, and land rights and empowerment of women. On biofuels, she suggested that international guidelines should be developed by relevant UN organizations, in particular through close cooperation between the United Nations Environment Programme and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization. Guatemala said it has doubled its national budget for natural resource management. India stressed the need for equitable access to economic and social services. South Africa said water remains central to addressing all of the issues in this cycle. Indigenous Peoples called for a holistic and rights-based approach addressing inter-linkages through national plans. Tanzania noted that adoption of GMOs, if not well managed, could also raise the costs of inputs and acquiring GMO seedling varieties. Indonesia underscored designing incentive-based national policy frameworks. The Solomon Islands highlighted the need for community-based solutions.

Switzerland emphasized integrated water resources management strategies, prioritizing research, capacity building and improved water infrastructure, and welcomed the opportunity for a Rio+20 or Stockholm+40 meeting in 2012. Barbados noted links between agriculture and tourism, and the need to maintain reefs and harvest and store water. Cambodia emphasized ensuring access to clean water and enhance sanitation for all. Austria called attention to the Global Forum on Sustainable Energy, which will hold its next meeting from 22-24 June 2009, in Vienna, under the theme "Towards an Integrated Energy Agenda Beyond 2020: Securing Sustainable Policies and Investments."

Bolivia underscored its recognition of water as a fundamental right of people. Workers and Trade Unions noted that social dialogue is indispensable. Tuvalu highlighted streamlining climate change across all sectors. Senegal recognized the advantages of GMOs but noted the need to be cautious. Women emphasized water, the precautionary principle, food security, and rights to land, water and sanitation, and food. Business and Industry emphasized a knowledge-based approach. Brazil said: the multiple crises we are facing offer the opportunity for a paradigm shift; official development assistance (ODA) commitments have to be fulfilled; and factors that distort trade should be removed. NGOs said GM crops will not help farmers adapt to climate change. In closing, panelist Bassey highlighted the ecological dimension of consumption. Panelist Fernandes noted that good agriculture can play a role in climate change mitigation. Panelist Collier stressed thinking of GMOs in terms of calculus of risk not ideology.

CHAIR'S DRAFT NEGOTIATING DOCUMENT

On Friday afternoon, a 17-page "Chair's Negotiating Text" was distributed to delegates. After a two-hour break to examine the draft, delegates were invited to offer "factual" corrections to the text.

The EU highlighted that biofuels production should be based on sustainability criteria according to a life-cycle approach. He underscored promoting economic growth in Africa, said water issues should be integrated throughout the text, suggested that private capital flows should be consistent with sustainable development, and said the CSD should not compete with other negotiation processes, but provide sustainable development input instead. He also said references to the precautionary principle, organic farming, the Global Partnership for Agriculture, plant genetic resources and the environmental impacts of agriculture were missing. Canada said the text is a summary document and not a negotiating text, and said omissions include references to: disaster risk reduction in Africa; the role of ecosystems services; and good governance. The Russian Federation said the text is balanced and focused on deliverables.

Norway said the following items were missing: distribution, access to and the right to food; the development of biofuels guidelines by actors in the UN system; and disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in the section on desertification. Mexico said its approach was reflected in the draft. The US supported Canada and said the text should focus more on links to sustainable development, and suggested adding text on communication technologies and two-way communication paths for extension services, pollinators, and farmer-based cooperatives and local decision-making.

Switzerland said the text did not reflect all of its messages, including on payment for ecosystem services, the economic value of land, the need for sustainability standards, the regulation of biofuels through an international framework, and secure land tenure. Japan said the text should include references to the commitments made at TICAD IV, as well as good governance, ODA, debt relief and trade-distorting subsidies. Barbados, on behalf of AOSIS, expressed concern with the lack of references to SIDS' issues.

Women said their group was not adequately reflected in the text. Children and Youth said the text contained few references to youth as actors. Indigenous Peoples suggested adding references to capacity building, education, information and communication. NGOs said the social and economic dimensions of farmers were missing and the language on biofuels did not capture the threat of biofuels to food security. Local authorities expressed satisfaction but suggested a greater focus on urban and rural linkages. Workers and Trade Unions noted the absence of language on promotion of decent work to improve living conditions. Business and Industry looked forward to furthering dialogue on the issues addressed in the text. The Scientific and Technological Community stressed the importance of a knowledge-based approach to agriculture and access to education, especially for youth and women. Farmers emphasized the need for effective investment in agriculture.

The G-77/China said text was missing regarding the challenges faced by people under occupation, water and sanitation, and financial commitments, technology transfer and debt relief. She said generalizations regarding commitments reached in processes outside the UN, especially the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, were a concern for her Group, as was the responsibility given to the Global Mechanism to implement the UNCCD 10-Year Strategic Plan. The Arab Group said the text overlooked the Group's concern regarding the impediments faced by countries under occupation.

Botswana said it was encouraged by the focus on partnerships. Jamaica, on behalf of the Caribbean Community, expressed disappointment with the treatment of issues relevant to SIDS, including crop insurance. PSIDS suggested adding text on: food security as a cross-cutting issue; better funding conditions for SIDS and PSIDS; and the links between conflict and land degradation. Nigeria questioned the proposal to "mobilize new and additional financial resources for the Global Mechanism for the implementation of the UNCCD 10-Year Strategic Plan," which he said was not consistent with the Convention.

Australia concurred with Canada and the US, and noted three omissions: capturing the urgency of the food security crisis and its underlying conditions; emphasizing open markets and trade liberalization in all parts of the world; and recognizing good governance. Venezuela emphasized the effects of liberal policies and financial adjustment programmes on the environmental crisis, and said water requirements for biofuel production should not be at the expense of food security. Bangladesh said the document does not capture the concerns of LDCs as a group or low-lying country concerns about territorial loss from climate change. Argentina stated anxiety about the comments by Australia, Canada and the US, observing that the IPM agenda had stated the IPM outcome would be a negotiating text. Brazil expressed a willingness to work with others to produce "an excellent text" in May and inquired about the procedural implications of considering the Chair's text a summary, as opposed to a negotiating text.

Concluding the discussion, Chair Verburg said: the points made would be taken into consideration, as appropriate; the document was the Chair's text to be used as a basis for negotiations in May; and factual omissions would be incorporated into the text. She invited the plenary to "take note of the Chair's text for consideration in May." There was no objection and plenary agreed to annex the text to the report of the IPM.

CLOSING PLENARY

Following the discussion of the Chair's Negotiating Text, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur Raguz introduced the report of the IPM for CSD-17 (E/CN.17/IPM/2009/L.1). She said the report would be updated and completed to reflect the actions taken at the IPM and would incorporate the Chair's Negotiating Text, to be transmitted to CSD-17 in May 2009. The report was adopted without comment.

In her closing remarks, Chair Verburg said the recent multiple crises would have an impact on sustainable development in all parts of the world and the intersessional meetings held in

Thailand and Namibia had revealed the timeliness of the CSD-17 themes in tackling these challenges. She said that at CSD-17 she would focus on concrete, action-oriented recommendations and bottom-up participatory approaches involving major groups. In concluding, Chair Verburg said a green revolution for sustainable agriculture needs to become a reality, stressing "yes we can, yes we should and yes we will make it happen." She gavelled the IPM to a close at 6:30 pm.

CHAIR'S NEGOTIATING TEXT

The Chair's Negotiating Text was distributed on Friday, 27 February, at 3:00 pm. Delegates examined it for two hours, following which they were invited to offer "factual" comments, to be incorporated into the text and forwarded to CSD-17. The following section summarizes the text distributed at the IPM.

PREAMBLE: The Chair's Negotiating Text begins by reaffirming a number of UN agreements and principles that frame the CSD's deliberations, including the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Agenda 21, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The text notes deep concern that the international community is challenged by the severe impact on sustainable development of multiple, interrelated global crises and challenges, including instability of food and energy prices, climate change and a global financial crisis. It recognizes that this situation calls for a sustainable green revolution with farmers and rural communities at the center, appreciates that the key challenge is to replicate, adapt and scale up what we know works, and calls on governments and the UN system, working in partnership with major groups and other stakeholders, to take responsibility for implementation of the actions identified.

AGRICULTURE: This section states that agriculture lies at the heart of sustainable development, and that the issues have risen to the top of the national and international policy agendas, highlighting its consequences for food security and poverty eradication. It emphasizes the need for farmers, especially small farmers, to be central actors in a "sustainable, home-grown green revolution." The policy proposals are organized under four subsections on enhancing agricultural productivity and sustainability, creating a strong enabling environment for agriculture, managing competing uses of water and land resources, and providing secure access to food and social safety nets. Included among the 33 proposals are policy options and actions to:

- enhance science-based agricultural management methods and new technologies, which capitalize on, *inter alia*, existing plant genetic potential and undertaking research and development on further genetic improvement;
- raise the share of government budgets for agriculture and increase agriculture and rural development's share of ODA, and mobilize new and additional resources;
- seize opportunities offered by sustainable biofuels production to raise farmers' incomes, and conduct further research and develop second and third generation biofuels;
- promote a multilateral trading system, regional trading arrangements and eliminate trade distorting subsidies in developed countries; and

- strengthen analysis and oversight of food commodity and future markets to limit impacts of speculation on price volatility.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT: This section states that rural development is crucial for eradicating poverty, stresses the rural-urban relationship and the need for investments in rural infrastructure, and lists recommendations necessary to: build social capital and resilience in rural communities; strengthen the capacity of rural people; and invest in essential infrastructure and services for rural communities and stimulate the creation of new jobs and income opportunities.

On the issue of building social capital and resilience, recommendations include empowering women and small-scale farmers and effectively using traditional and indigenous knowledge for the management of natural resources.

LAND: This section states that SLM provides multiple benefits and that land policies should promote SLM, effective administration, integrated planning and equitable access to land. The 34 proposals are organized under subcategories on: promoting sustainable and integrated land planning and land management practices; reducing land degradation and rehabilitating degraded land; managing water and land resources in an integrated manner; establishing clear and secure land tenure; and developing and implementing equitable access to land systems. The options proposed include:

- developing a set of global land policy indicators for policy review, and monitoring and evaluation;
- developing risk management tools that build landscape resilience;
- implementing policies to address direct and indirect drivers of degradation, such as desertification, erosion, salinization, pollution and urbanization;
- reducing coastal erosion and land losses caused by sea-level rise, particularly in SIDS;
- establishing a clear land tenure and registration system along with an effective land administration system to help promote investments and good land management, making use of latest information technologies; and
- establishing accessible land registration, particularly for the urban and rural poor.

DROUGHT: This section states that drought is a threat to livelihoods and it must be addressed in a way that integrates the other CSD themes. It lists the recommendations necessary to: create a robust and enabling environment for drought preparedness and mitigation; strengthen the knowledge base and information sharing on drought; and enhance communities' resilience to drought and capacity building, technology transfer and financing. On the latter, it recommends providing technical and financial means to implement national and regional early warning systems.

On the issue of creating a robust and enabling environment, one of the recommendations is to prepare national drought risk reduction strategies.

DESERTIFICATION: This section states that: combating desertification and land degradation requires policies that link land-use and livelihoods to the goals of sustainable development, taking into account the impacts of climate change on land

degradation and desertification; and combating desertification is an essential part of adaptation and mitigation of climate change as well as mitigation of biodiversity loss. The 22 proposals clustered under three subsections on strengthening the institutional framework for policy implementation, implementing practical measures to combat land degradation and desertification, and enhancing capacity building, technology transfer and financing include: supporting implementation of the provisions of the UNCCD and the 10-Year Strategic Plan; promoting sustainable land-use and livelihoods, enhanced soil productivity, water use efficiency, and greater tenure security for people living in drylands; and mobilizing new and additional financial resources for the Global Mechanism for the implementation of the 10-Year Strategic Plan.

AFRICA: This section states that Africa still faces great challenges and that it needs a uniquely African green revolution to boost its agricultural productivity and food security and to lay the foundations for addressing rural poverty, land degradation, drought and desertification. The goals of the recommendations are to revitalize agriculture for sustainable rural development, integrate African farmers into supply chains, promote an enabling environment, ensure Africa's integration into world trade, and continue to reduce the debt burden. On the issue of revitalizing agriculture, the text recommends the implementation of the ministerial declaration on African agriculture adopted in Windhoek, Namibia, in February 2009. On the issue of world trade, one of the recommendations encourages the conclusion of the Doha Development Round in a way that advances the interests of developing countries, especially African countries.

INTER-LINKAGES, CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION: This section identifies 32 actions to expedite implementation. Actions related to revitalizing agriculture and promoting rural development include proposals to improve funding of public health systems, promote universal primary education in rural areas, promote secure tenure for women farmers, and strengthen capacity of SIDS. On promoting sustainable patterns of production and consumption, the text proposes that: developed countries should take the lead; support should be given to sustainable agricultural production, including alternative methods of farming; and science-based, life-cycle approaches should be encouraged.

On climate change, the text identifies actions to: upscale and mainstream climate change adaptation measures in agricultural and rural development strategies; monitor and assess the impact of climate change on agriculture; support the development of improved and resilient crop varieties and soil management methods; and optimize agricultural practices to increase soil carbon content, including through the use of biochar.

The text also identifies actions to enhance the availability of finance for sustainable development, to make the world trading system more equitable, to enhance capacity-building efforts and transfer of technologies and to follow-up the CSD-17 decisions. Actions identified in these sections include: adhering to the "Paris Principles for Aid Effectiveness"; enhancing multilateral support from the GEF; developing more efficient institutional mechanisms for debt management and sustainability; promoting a multilateral trading system that is supportive of agriculture;

implementing capacity-building programmes in areas relevant to the thematic cluster; and implementing the Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity Building.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE IPM

The Commission on Sustainable Development's Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) convened to set the stage for the development of international policy recommendations on agriculture, land, rural development, drought, desertification and Africa – the thematic issues for the current implementation cycle. This brief analysis highlights the achievements of the session in preparing delegates for the negotiations on these policy recommendations at the seventeenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) in May. It reviews elements related to the IPM's process and thematic cluster, and highlights areas where delegates may find diverging views and what they may need to consider when preparing for CSD-17.

PROCESS MATTERS

The 2009 IPM was the third such session to meet since the two-year thematic cycle approach was developed following the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. While CSD sessions have taken place every year since its creation following the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, IPM sessions are currently held biennially, prior to the CSD's policy session. When asked to compare this year's meeting with the IPMs prior to CSD-13 and CSD-15, participants suggested that the CSD-17 IPM showed marked improvement over the previous two in terms of time management and convergence in the identification of policy options and actions. Participants were pleased to note that, in a departure from past IPMs, participants avoided the "trap" of revisiting the preceding CSD's "review" of the issues. Rather, they focused on identifying policy options. They also said the intersessional meetings organized by the Division for Sustainable Development were well integrated into the IPM's work. Additionally, they welcomed the continued use of panel presentations to frame the debate, and indicated that they found the greatest value in those presentations that examined specific policy options, suggested novel alternatives or were provocative, even if one disagreed with their arguments.

Nonetheless, the lack of interactive dialogues, including with Major Groups, left some wondering whether the IPM had delivered its full potential as a "preparatory" meeting for the CSD-17 negotiations. They acknowledged the perennial challenge of interactive dialogue, which they attributed in part to the nature of the issue itself, as well as situational factors such as group size, conference room structure, and the conduct of the IPMs in New York, predisposing countries to send career diplomats rather than issue experts.

Looking forward, some participants privately noted examples that have stimulated more interaction. For example, efforts by the Chair to solicit comments on specific issues from particular delegations were noted to have been effective at past sessions. Some observed that opportunities for informal dialogue, for example during side events with high-level experts and poster sessions, also can have positive spill-over effects in the

negotiating rooms. Regardless, some stressed that delegations have the ultimate responsibility to respond to each other's comments.

On a practical note, some said the CSD-17 Bureau's ambition for a variety of interactive high-level dialogues with ministers from various sectors, eminent persons, experts, heads of agencies and the governing bodies of intergovernmental organizations is refreshing. Yet, some still wondered whether this would be enough to motivate renewed commitment and implementation of the CSD's recommendations. They note that a major dilemma for the Bureau and delegations is convincing governments of the value of investing in such broad participation.

A THEMATIC CLUSTER AT THE HEART OF GLOBAL CRISES

The CSD-16 "review" session of the thematic cluster in May 2008 coincided with the emerging food and energy crises. Several months later, the financial crisis overtook the other two, and the interconnections of all three with the issue of climate change have been stressed in the lead up to the December 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Conference. While many IPM participants stressed the links to the food crisis, and others underlined the window of opportunity that the current crises offer to meaningfully address the CSD-17 themes, some suggested that the sense of urgency during CSD-16 to address the food security issue had receded. While the debate at CSD-16 focused on causes for high food prices, including market speculation and biofuel production, the discussions at the IPM incorporated drought-related forces, including climate change, and participants noted that the IPM had not advanced specific international responses to the food crisis as far as some had hoped it would.

Efforts to link issues such as the food crisis, sustainable climate change adaptation and mitigation options, and conflict over land in the Middle East to the CSD-17 agenda met resistance, with some participants objecting to attempts to "forum shop." Instead, they preferred to address each issue in its appropriate intergovernmental body. Underlying these arguments are fundamental divergences in participants' interpretation of the CSD's role. Some view it as a convening forum for the exchange of experiences and learning. Others seek to use it as a setting for advancing the sustainable development agenda, while still others believe it should serve as a venue for monitoring implementation. Reaching agreement on policy options within the context of these different approaches will be a key challenge for CSD-17 delegates.

Despite these underlying tensions, participants indicated general satisfaction with the IPM's progress until the closing plenary when the Chair's Negotiating Text – the main outcome of the IPM – was discussed. Delegates diverged over its status, with some delegations, including the Russian Federation and Mexico, stating that the text offered a good starting point for negotiation. Others, including Australia, Canada and the US, said they had expected a Chair's Summary as the outcome, on which delegates could comment at the start of CSD-17. As a result of the different interpretations of its status, delegates presented numerous preferred additions rather than focusing simply on the "factual" changes that the Chair had invited. The Chair's

reiteration that the outcome was the Chair's Negotiating Text and would be transmitted to CSD-17 as is, where it would then serve as a basis for negotiation, left participants still wondering about the possibilities of incorporating their preferred changes during negotiations at CSD-17. Based on the stream of comments, some suggested that delegates could look to the final plenary as having provided insight to the potential issues of contention at CSD-17, such as genetically modified organisms and the nature of the green revolution in Africa, biofuels, land and conflict, aid, trade, debt and agricultural subsidies, governance, gender, transparency and implementation, as well as the inter-linkages with climate change.

SWORDS INTO PLOUGHSHARES, WORDS INTO ACTION

As participants huddled in small groups to review the events of the closing plenary and others rushed from Conference Room 4 to catch their flights home, many turned their focus to areas where action is needed prior to delegates' arrival in New York in May. Many expected there would be a small window of opportunity at the start of CSD-17 for delegations to add proposals to the Chair's Negotiating Text, especially those proposals that were submitted in writing or presented in plenary at the IPM. Participants also seemed to be in agreement that the proposals in the Chair's text were still very broad and did not clearly identify which actors would be responsible for implementing various proposals. As Chair Verburg stressed in her opening and closing statements, a key challenge for the CSD will be to make these recommendations as concrete as possible: "swords into ploughshares, words into action."

UPCOMING MEETINGS

FIRST GEF-5 REPLENISHMENT MEETING: This meeting will convene from 17-18 March 2009, in Paris, France. At the November 2008 meeting, the Council requested the Trustee of the Global Environment Facility, in cooperation with the CEO and Chairperson of the Facility, to initiate discussions on the fifth replenishment of resources of the GEF Trust Fund. For more information, contact: Maureen Shields Lorenzetti, GEF Spokesperson; tel: +1-202-473-8131; e-mail: mlorenzetti@thegef.org; internet: http://www.thegef.org/interior_right.aspx?id=48

FIRST MINISTERIAL FOLLOW-UP MEETING ON TICAD IV: This meeting will follow-up on the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV), which met in Yokohama, Japan, from 28-30 May 2008. The follow-up meeting will convene from 21-22 March 2009, in Gaborone, Botswana. For more information, contact: Botswana Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; tel: +267-360-0700; fax: +267-391-3366; e-mail: mofaic-admin@lists.gov.bw; internet: http://www.mofaic.gov.bw/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=388&Itemid=31

UNESCO WORLD CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT – MOVING INTO THE SECOND HALF OF THE UN DECADE: The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, in cooperation with the German Commission for UNESCO,

are organizing this conference, which will take place from 31 March - 2 April 2009, in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: e-mail: ESDconference2009@unesco.org; internet: <http://www.esd-world-conference-2009.org/en/home.html>

G8 AGRICULTURE MINISTERS MEETING: This meeting, which will convene from 18-20 April 2009, in Cison di Valmarino, Treviso, Italy, will feed its results into the annual summit of the group of most industrialized nations (G8), which will deal with financial stability and macro-economic coordination as well as newer agenda items on development in Africa and the environment. For more information, go to <http://www.g8italia2009.it>

G8 ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS MEETING: This meeting, which will convene from 22-24 April 2009, in Siracusa, Italy, will feed its results into the annual summit of the group of most industrialized nations (G8), which will deal with financial stability and macro-economic coordination as well as newer agenda items on development in Africa and the environment. For more information, go to: <http://www.g8italia2009.it/>

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY PANEL (STAP) OF THE GEF: This meeting will convene from 28-30 April 2009, in Rome, Italy. STAP-convened meetings are held normally every six months, prior to GEF Council meetings. For more information, contact: Douglas Taylor, Secretary, STAP; tel: +1-202-974-1318; e-mail: stapsec@rona.unep.org; internet: <http://stapgef.unep.org/>

FIRST SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE UNECA: This meeting will be held from 28 April-1 May 2009, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and will address the theme of "Scientific Development Innovation and the Knowledge Economy." The Committee on Development Information, Science and Technology is one of the seven subsidiary bodies of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). For more information, contact: Paul Belanger; tel: +251-11-54 43 247; fax: +251-11-55 10 512; e-mail: Pbelanger@uneca.org; internet: <http://www.uneca.org/codi/>

CSD-17: The seventeenth session of the CSD will convene from 4-15 May 2009, in New York. This policy session will focus on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. For more information, contact: DESA Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/csd/csd_csd17.shtml