

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.

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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.

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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.

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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