



**UNITED NATIONS**

*Department of Economic and Social Affairs*

**WORKSHOP ON GOVERNANCE FOR WSSD IMPLEMENTATION  
IN COUNTRIES WITH ECONOMIES IN TRANSITION**

**WORKSHOP REPORT**

**Istanbul Turkey, 16 – 18 September 2003**

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Workshop on Governance for World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Implementation in Countries with Economies in Transition was convened in Istanbul, Turkey from 16 to 18 September 2003, hosted by the Government of Turkey.

2. The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), which took place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 26 August to 4 September 2002, reaffirmed sustainable development as a central element of the international agenda and gave a new impetus to global action to fight poverty and protect the environment. The understanding of sustainable development was broadened and strengthened as a result of the Summit, particularly the important linkages between poverty, the environment and the use of natural resources. Governments agreed to and reaffirmed a wide range of concrete commitments, in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as well as targets for action to achieve more effective implementation of sustainable development objectives. The views of civil society were given prominence in recognition of its key role in implementing the outcomes and in promoting partnership initiatives.

3. Member States are challenged to ensure that national policies balance short-term economic benefits with medium- and long-term objectives for economic and social development and environmental protection. Public administration and governance have a role to play in achieving this goal through integrating the issues of sustainable development in governmental policy-making in all fields and at the local, national, regional, and global levels. UN General Assembly Resolution 50/225 of 1 May 1996 stated that there was a critical need for improved efficiency and effective public institutions, administrative procedures and sound financial management to address the global challenges in support of sustainable development in all countries. Creating and strengthening institutional frameworks for sustainable development in countries with economies in transition was emphasized in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) that was adopted at WSSD.

4. Countries with economies in transition face the challenge of fully equipping their public institutions to achieve the goal of sustainable development. For that purpose, it is necessary to overcome sector-based approaches and to proceed with an integrated economic, social and environmental approach in order to have a long-term frame of reference, which can serve as a guide to development actions and policies. This integrated approach has to take into account both macro-economic factors and the need for short-term structural adjustments, allow for the possibility of addressing many vital problems (such as health, education, nutrition, water, sanitation, air quality and employment), take into consideration the development of each sector and promote sustainable development at all levels.

5. Prior to WSSD, a Workshop on Capacity-Building in Governance and Public Administration for Sustainable Development in Countries with Economies in Transition was organized by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, (UN/DESA) through its Division for Public Administration and Development Management; this was hosted by the Government of Greece in Thessaloniki from 29 to 31 July 2002. Member states from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia participated and were represented by a senior government official and

an NGO leader. The report of the Workshop was made available to the participants of the current Workshop.

6. The purpose of the Istanbul Workshop was to follow-up the outcomes of WSSD, taking into account the results of the previous meeting held in Thessaloniki. Specifically designed for countries with economies in transition, the meeting aimed to: (a) report on the status of implementation of WSSD outcomes; (b) identify national-level priorities for implementing WSSD outcomes; (c) explore means of implementing WSSD outcomes through options for institutional arrangements, governance and public administration reform, national strategies for sustainable development, capacity building, and promoting the role of civil society in decision-making; and (d) promote intra-regional cooperation through the exchange of national experience in implementing Agenda 21 and expediting progress in implementing WSSD outcomes at national and regional levels.

## II. OPENING SESSION

7. Ms. JoAnne DiSano, Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, UN/DESA, opened the meeting.

8. In his opening remarks, Mr. Halil Ibrahim Akça, Deputy Under-Secretary of the State Planning Organization (SPO), Chairperson of the Workshop, welcomed participants on behalf of the Turkish Government and expressed his pleasure at hosting this regional workshop in Istanbul. He also pointed out the significant contribution of UN/DESA in facilitating the achievement of sustainable development goals throughout the world.

9. After his brief welcome, H.E. Abdullatif Sener, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State, emphasized the importance of the commitment to good governance as put forth in the JPOI. Within this framework, the Minister pointed out the importance of attaining good governance through its basic principles including transparency, accountability, partnership, subsidiarity and the rule of law. Furthermore, the Minister highlighted that the participation of individuals and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the decision-making process was also vital. The public sector needed to work hand in hand with NGOs, private enterprises, employers and trade unions, both locally and globally, with the participation and assistance of local and global organizations. The Minister indicated that public reforms had gained momentum in line with the membership strategy and national programme developed by Turkey following the decision taken on the confirmation of Turkish candidacy to the EU during the Helsinki Summit in 1999. He underlined that the steps to be taken towards achieving this goal were focused on transparency of the political decision-making process and accountability.

10. Ms. DiSano made a statement thanking the government of Turkey for hosting the Workshop, as well as others from the UN system that had contributed to its organization. She noted that there were high hopes that the road from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit would lead to higher levels of achievement with respect to economic development, social equity and environmental protection. In the intervening years, the world had encountered shocks and problems not anticipated at Rio. The basic issue facing WSSD after ten years was implementation. The theme

of implementation carried through to the first meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development following WSSD. She noted that the problems of sustainable development had been well defined and prescriptions for their solution clearly spelled out. All that was now required was action. Action would depend on political will, practical results and partnerships for implementation. She emphasized that sustainable development was more important than ever, as countries increasingly identified their national security interests with resource availability. The future could be difficult unless countries took seriously the idea of building a more sustainable economic system based on multi-lateral cooperation and the sharing of responsibility. Hence policies and programmes for achieving sustainable development were essential to survival. Countries in transition had a unique role to play with the opportunity to try new approaches and to put in place new mechanisms that could provide a more sustainable model of development. Since governance was critical to national and regional decision-making, Ms. DiSano expressed her hope that the workshop would make a small but significant contribution to assisting countries in transition to meet the important challenges ahead.

11. Mr. Kemal Madenoglu, Director General for Social Sectors and Coordination of the State Planning Organization (SPO), Turkey, reported on his country's experience with sustainable development and good governance. Since 1960, planned development had been a principle in his country with five-year plans and annual programmes prepared for the efficient use of resources and balanced development. After the 1992 Rio Summit, the sustainable development approach had been integrated within the Five Year Development Plans, which had been prepared in a participatory process. In this period, the Ministry of Environment had been established. Regarding the National Report prepared for WSSD, Mr. Madenoglu drew attention to the participatory process that Turkey had realized. Within the context of good governance, Turkey was undergoing a substantial public reform process. The legal and institutional arrangements regarding public administration reform and restructuring of local authorities were being carried out to promote effectiveness, transparency, subsidiarity and participation in public services. Effective implementation of the e-transformation project in Turkey was one of the requirements for the accomplishment of these reforms. In order to realize the targets stated in the development plans and government's Urgent Action Plan, aiming at maintaining accountability and effectiveness in public services, a *Strategic Planning Guide* for public institutions had been prepared by SPO. In line with Agenda 21, participation - as a pillar of good governance - was taken as the main principle for decision-making processes in Turkey. Within this context, before reaching Parliament, laws were subject to broad consultation with a wide variety of governmental and non-governmental institutions including the private sector. Mr. Madenoglu also highlighted the successful implementation of Local Agenda 21 (LA21), selected as the worldwide best practice in 2001. LA21 is currently being implemented in 50 provinces throughout Turkey.

12. Mr. Lowell Flanders, the Moderator of the Workshop, explained how the workshop would be conducted and delivered a presentation on the outcomes of WSSD and CSD-11.

### III. PANEL DISCUSSIONS

#### **Workshop Session 1: Country Experiences**

13. The session began with presentations from six panelists: three from governments and three from major groups.

14. The representative of Poland explained that the constitution of her country referred directly to sustainable development. A number of long-term national strategies and policies were already in place, such as those for renewable energy and waste management; others were in progress, including those for sewage treatment, production and consumption patterns and climate change. A Board on Sustainable Development had been established, including representatives from a number of Ministries together with scientists, business and industry and NGOs. The purpose of the Board, which reported to the Prime Minister, was to coordinate and monitor the implementation of sustainable development commitments. Institutional arrangements were also present at the local level. Many local governments had developed their own strategic development plans on the basis of Agenda 21 principles. Actions identified for further development in Poland included improved integration of economic, social and environmental issues, the further development of inter-sectoral partnerships and the need to consult more extensively with civil society.

15. The representative of Hungary explained that the requirements associated with EU integration had changed the national decision-making process and motivated Hungary towards sustainability. The government had incorporated sustainable development principles into relevant sector policies, such as transport and energy. The National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) process - started before WSSD and planned for completion before 2005 – had involved broad public dialogue and consensus building. For improved coordination, it was planned that a National Council for Sustainable Development (NCSD) should be established, including high-ranking officials, local authorities, scientists, workers, employers, youth and environmental NGOs. The government had also started working on a 10-year framework for sustainable production and consumption patterns with broad public participation. Further education and awareness raising were needed as sustainable development principles needed to be more broadly known and understood.

16. The representative of Belarus explained the process of developing the NSDS in his country. A coordination committee ‘think tank’ had been established to discuss ideas. The strategy had also been amended in the light of widespread public consultation involving all interested parties. Various economic and social measures had been taken to implement the strategy, bearing in mind such issues as democracy, poverty alleviation, protection of the environment, international cooperation and health. Positive effects had been that the process of sustainable development has been institutionalized in Belarus, with a concrete framework established, taking into consideration international trends and public opinion.

17. The NGO representative of the Eco-Accord Center, from the Russian Federation, said that new independent states (NIS) commonly lacked a strong environment authority, which was a particular concern given that the Russian Federation had signed very few Multi-lateral

Environmental Agreements (MEAs) in recent years and ratified even fewer. The decision-making process was not considered to be open and transparent, and a NCS in the Russian Federation was needed with full multi-stakeholder participation. The existing multi-stakeholder approach was not yet as effective as it could be; it was often organized very late in the process, senior officials rarely took part and not all stakeholders were equally involved. WSSD had been helpful in placing a number of important issues high on the political agenda in the Russian Federation, such as water and education for sustainable development. She hoped that the same would happen for other issues that were prioritized at WSSD.

18. The President of the Society for Sustainable Living, Slovakia, stated that the decision-making process for implementing sustainable development activities at national and sub-regional levels depended on all relevant partners being involved, such as inter-governmental organizations, Ministries, towns and local associations. Some countries had a more positive attitude than others towards involving non-government actors. One of the main problems identified for the implementation of sustainable development was a lack of interest by decision-makers, media and the public alike. Cross-sectoral programmes were needed at all relevant levels with real support mechanisms. The key features identified were integration, a long-term approach, partnerships, participation and solidarity.

19. The Chairperson of the Board of the Green Network of Vojvodina, Serbia and Montenegro, said that there was no national strategy for sustainable development in her country, nor were sustainable development elements included in other sectoral strategies. Only the Ministry of Environment gave sustainable development any consideration. She felt that the government was indifferent to sustainable development, and made little effort to understand Agenda 21 and related documents. The inadequate legal framework made environmental protection at the local level nearly impossible. Her NGO had been working on a practical project to help rural farmers through educating them on organic food production and community tourism opportunities. She felt that other NGOs could help through public awareness activities such as cooperating with the media, education of decision-makers and helping universities and agricultural colleges to understand sustainable development issues. Countries in transition needed assistance from developed countries, such as through the transfer of technologies, to avoid lagging further behind the developed world.

20. Following these panel presentations, an inter-active dialogue was held with other participants, focusing on concrete steps that needed to be taken at the national level to implement sustainable development. The outcome of this discussion is reflected in the recommendations section of the current report.

## **Workshop Session 2: Institutional Issues**

21. The session began with presentations from five panelists: two from governments, one major group representative and two resources persons.

22. The UN/DESA panelist began the session with a presentation on National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSDS). This comprehensive presentation covered global targets,

initiatives that had been taken in this area by the UN and OECD and the global status of implementation of these strategies, as well as the evolution of NSDS over time, its definition, principles and characteristics. She also explained the process of participation, the reasons why NSDS required constant improvement and, finally, the major challenges that faced governments in the development and implementation of a NSDS.

23. The representative from Belgium (who served as a resource person for the Workshop) described her government's experience with NSDS development and implementation. She explained that a NSDS was not only a decision in itself, but also a framework which defines how decisions were to be taken. In the Belgian Federal Strategy on Sustainable Development, strong involvement of all relevant departments was crucial, as was widespread consultation and coordination. The Interdepartmental Commission on Sustainable Development had formulated the Preliminary Draft Plan at the Federal level, on the basis of the first Federal Report on Sustainable Development. The Council on SD gave advice on the Draft Plan. Thirty per cent of the Preliminary plan was changed as a result of this advice and after a wide consultation process on the Draft. The Belgian Federal Government discussed the Preliminary plan at length and adopted the final plan. When it did not take on board some of the suggestions received from the Council, legislation required the Federal Government to explain why. Belgium had just completed its second Federal Report on Sustainable Development, thus beginning the second strategy cycle at the Federal level.

24. The representative of Bulgaria explained that sustainable development had been clearly stated as a primary policy objective in two key Bulgarian documents: the National Economic Development Plan (NEDP) and the EU Pre-Accession Economic Programme. Efforts had been made to communicate the goals and priorities of these plans to the general public. The medium-term budgetary framework was interlinked with policies to facilitate sustainable development. Two major institutions were responsible for sustainable development in Bulgaria: the National Commission for Sustainable Development, including Ministers from five departments, and the NEDP Coordination Council, chaired by the Minister of Finance. In terms of challenges, the involvement of civil society groups was still proving hard to achieve, due in part to a lack of education, a passive attitude towards government initiatives and the ongoing effects of the former regime and turbulent transition. Other problems were related to financial resources; for example, EU structural funds needed to be complemented with the countries own assets but it was hard to attract private sector investment in such projects.

25. The representative of the Czech Republic explained that the environment and sustainable development renaissance of the country began in 1990. In 1995, a state environment policy was adopted recognizing the principles of sustainable development and the need to integrate policies into other sectors. This policy was updated every 2-3 years. Sectoral strategic policies incorporating the principles of sustainable development had been developed since 1997 in areas such as energy, regional development and minerals. In 1999, a Council for Social and Economic Strategy was created. Working groups on sustainable development were then formed for the OECD programme on sustainable development (2000-2003) and national preparations for WSSD (2002). From 1998-2001, a UNDP project on building national capacity for sustainable development lead to the proposal for a NSDS (2001). The promotion of sustainable development had been an integral part of Czech policy since 2002. A Council for Sustainable

Development was established in August 2003. The Council, chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister, had 28 members including major groups and Parliamentarians as well as senior government officials. Its main objective in the forthcoming year was the elaboration of a NSDS for the Czech Republic, which should be ready by June 2004.

26. The President of the Association for Sustainable Human Development, Armenia, explained that Armenia faced many difficulties in developing a NSDS. She felt that national mechanisms were very important but local-level councils were also useful. Despite what was said at WSSD, the general situation in many new independent states (NIS) was worsening. The process of transition to sustainable development had to be considered in parallel with the transition period. Social, environmental and economic considerations needed to be combined, but they were still far apart - if not getting further apart - in NIS. Significant training was needed in these countries as they were far behind others in many respects. Given the complexity of the situation, it was necessary to compare the situation with other similar countries. She suggested the need for a different set of indices of sustainable development to be established for developed countries, developing countries and CIT respectively, based on UNDP data, that took into account their different situations.

27. After the panel presentations, the participants convened in breakout groups. The results of their collective deliberations are reflected in the recommendations section of this report.

### **Workshop Panel 3: Civil Society and the Private Sector**

28. This workshop session began with presentations from five panelists, each from a major group organization.

29. The representative of the Institute for Environmental Policy, Czech Republic, explained that - from his experience - dialogue and cooperation between civil society and the public sector were generally easiest at the local level. It was harder at the national level due to the large number of NGOs and the disparity between the narrow focus of their work and the breadth of sustainable development issues. He said it was important to include civil society in the decision-making process for sustainable development, such as through having NGO representatives on National Councils for Sustainable Development and involving stakeholders in the preparation of NSDS. Progress had been made regarding the involvement of civil society at the international level but more needed to be done. It was particularly complicated finding representatives at the international level due to the heterogenic nature of civil society; those involved at this level were often not connected with local groups.

30. The Dean of the Faculty of Horticulture, University of Agricultural Sciences, Romania, discussed sustainable development activities relating to rural and farm communities in Romania. One third of the country's population lived in rural areas and there were over four million farms. Maintaining a sustainable rural society was, therefore, a critical issue for Romania. A judicious use of natural resources was needed for the long-term stability of the agricultural sector. His organization provided a consultancy service to support farmers with technological, ecological and economical practices. He believed that it was important for farms to reach an optimum size



(which varied according to the type of farming) and also to increase the yield per hectare. He also considered that the involvement of civil society at the national level was important.

31. The President of the EKO Environmental Youth Association from Bosnia and Herzegovina explained how her youth organization had been involved in a number of small-scale sustainable development projects, many related to raising awareness. One of their education projects had resulted in environmental education being included in schools' curriculum, providing a good example of how youth groups could be effective at a practical level. She explained that many environmental NGOs in her country had no paid staff or equipment, so they had to raise their own funds for projects. The role of civil society was particularly important in her country where great efforts were needed to improve the environment so that displaced persons could return back to their homes.

32. The President of the Liberal Society Institute, Ukraine, focused on gender issues within the sustainable development process. International women's networks worked closely together, developing common positions to maximize the effectiveness of their lobbying. They had achieved some success on gender issues at WSSD, but were disappointed that most gender references related to education and health issues rather than forming a central concept running throughout the JPOI. Women in countries in transition (CIT) had faced a number of particular problems since economic liberalization and most women found it hard to retain or find stable jobs. With privatization, men still held 92% of ownership in CIT countries. Women still faced discrimination in the workplace. She noted that young women were increasingly being exploited by the intra- and inter-country sex trade; women were also the victims of domestic violence. They were under-represented in the new political system, particularly at the national level. Their absence at senior policy levels meant their concerns and priorities were often ignored. Many CIT countries had action plans to improve women's status so that they could be considered equal social partners and actors.

33. The representative of business from Georgia explained how her consultancy company was involved with sustainable development issues. For example, they had helped communities find alternative sources of water supply and undertaken projects on joint monitoring of trans-boundary water sources. They had also worked on a new approach to food quality based on a hazard approach, and tried to resolve energy issues, which led to deforestation and land degradation. From her experience, Georgia had good environmental legislation including responsibilities for government, businesses and developers as well as requirements for transparency. However, this legislation did not seem to translate into reality, and people tended not to become involved as they felt their efforts would have no impact. She suggested that mechanisms were needed to educate people and to empower well-informed communities to influence decision-makers.

34. During the ensuing inter-active discussion with other workshop participants, a number of proposals were made relating to the role of civil society and the private sector which are included in the recommendations section of this report.

#### **Workshop Session 4: Governance and Public Administration**

35. Six panellists from a variety of governments and organizations opened the discussion on this topic.

36. The UN/DESA panellist made a presentation on governance and sustainable development related to the follow-up to the WSSD. He discussed the challenges of sustainable development as reflected in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI). The importance of good governance for sustainable development, both within each country and at the international level, was highlighted. He also described several important elements of governance, including institutional arrangements, tools, techniques and institutional processes, such as partnerships and networking. The nexus between governance and sustainable development was reviewed.

37. The representative from the World Bank underlined his organisation's commitment to implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the JPOI. World Bank calculations showed that achieving MDG7, relating to the environment, would necessitate substantial additional aid to transitional countries over the next 15 years. Experience and analysis showed that there was a strong causal relationship between good governance and good development results. While there was no "one size fits all" solution, some elements were generic for good governance, including responsiveness through inclusive and transparent decision-making, efficiency and reliability in providing basic social services, accountability in the way resources were being used and monitoring results. Through its lending operations and analytical work, the World Bank contributed to strengthening policies and institutions, such as through regulatory frameworks, strengthening Ministries of Environment, improving social and environmental safeguards and cooperating with NGOs.

38. The representative from the Republic of Moldova stressed that activities devoted to the implementation of sustainable development principles in his country were coordinated by the Supreme Economic Council under the President of Moldova and the Ministry of Ecology, Construction and Territorial Development. The Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy had been formulated. This included such issues as the integration of sustainable development principles into every sector of the national economy, combating poverty, the creation of civil society and restoration of environmental and biodiversity conservation. Since WSSD, the government had taken steps to attract donors and investors to support programme implementation. He said that international cooperation played an important role in sustainable development. Most sustainable development problems could effectively be solved only in the regional and global context.

39. The Deputy Mayor of the Municipality of Bourgas, Bulgaria, explained that his municipality had developed a strategy for sustainable development which was being implemented at all levels of society. In 2002, the municipality started a new initiative to establish an Advisory Committee on Sustainable Development, which would be responsible for the development and implementation of the strategy. Members of different parties and stakeholders of the city would participate in the decision-making process. In May 2000, a new Municipal Strategy for Sustainable Development was introduced and approved by the City Council covering the period 2002-2006. The strategy set out the main policy goals and priorities for the municipality's future

development. To implement the strategy, the Municipality had developed a number of projects in different priority fields of activity. The Deputy Mayor stressed that good governance had to be introduced and consolidated through such tools as sustainable strategies, local leadership, national policies and networks. He suggested that national and regional sustainable development criteria should be developed such as those existing in EU countries.

40. The representative of the Kyrgyz Republic explained that his country's National Strategy for Human Development included issues relating to public administration and good governance. As a pilot country, Kyrgyzstan - in cooperation with the World Bank - had drafted the Strategy for the Complex Development Framework. This document was approved in May 2001 by the National Assembly and included representatives of state authorities, NGOs, political parties, mass media and local authorities. The main pillars of the Framework were efficient and transparent public administration, equitable human development and sustainable economic growth. The National Poverty Reduction Strategy also emphasised effective administration and good governance. After independence, Kyrgyzstan had undergone public administration reforms, particularly regarding transparency, accountability and the redistribution of power between central and local levels. Recently the country established a National Council on Good Governance, headed by the Prime Minister and including representatives of public authorities, political parties, NGOs, the scientific community and mass media.

41. The representative of the Russian Federation explained that the President had approved the Concept Framework for Transition to Sustainable Development in April 1996. The government paid significant attention to issues of governance and sustainable development. A Department of Sustainable Development existed within the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade. In cooperation with other departments, this Ministry had been preparing the Russian Federation for the transition to sustainable development. It had also developed the Short- and Medium-Term Economic Development Strategy. The government had paid particular attention to economic and environmental safety, public procurement and the use of economic and legal instruments to ensure a healthy environment. Russian science had enormous potential that was being harnessed for sustainable development through government programmes.

### **Workshop Session 5: The Role of Regional Organizations**

42. Presentations were made by representatives of four regional organizations that worked closely with countries with economies in transition.

#### UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

43. The representative from ESCAP explained that the role of regional commissions and other regional organisations had been recognised in the JPOI and CSD-11 decisions. A well-established architecture of regional and sub-regional organisations existed that could effectively assist countries in the implementation of the JPOI. He said that ESCAP could make important interventions at three levels: policy, institutional and partnerships. It was playing a vital role in enhancing the capacity of policy-makers and institutions, particularly in the planning and management of natural resources and the environment, the development of NSDS and in

cohesive policy implementation. Important issues such as the nexus between poverty reduction and sustainable development were being addressed in an integrated manner by promoting public-private partnerships for the delivery of services to meet the basic needs of the poor, such as in the key areas of water, energy, health and biodiversity. Pro-poor policies and partnerships were being promoted and multi-stakeholder partnerships developed for the sustainable development of cities and improvement of the urban environment. ESCAP had also demonstrated the efficacy of cooperation among countries in transition. For example, in Central Asia, countries were cooperating in developing a sub-regional strategy for the management of water and energy resources. There had been very active cooperation between ESCAP and other regional and sub-regional organisations in promoting good governance for the implementation of the JPOI.

#### United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

44. The representative of UNDP explained that her organization had addressed the challenges of economic transition through the provision of technical and financial support and advisory services to programme countries. Since WSSD, the focus of UNDP's activities in Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region had been on helping countries to develop the capacity for implementing WSSD outcomes and reaching the MDGs, while promoting democratic governance and sustainable local development. She said that this implementation approach reflected the widely recognized demand for concrete actions towards sustainable development. UNDP had a local presence in 24 countries in Europe and the CIS. Its work in the region fell into three main areas: promoting democratic governance with a particular emphasis on enhancing good local governance and effective local development; reducing poverty and supporting economic development and viable local economies; and protecting the environment. She further explained that UNDP assisted programme countries to analyze their priority needs, develop programmes and monitor their implementation. She described Capacity 2015, a new UNDP initiative launched at WSSD to help countries to develop their capacity to benefit from globalisation and meet the MDGs.

#### UN Economic and Social Commission for Europe (UNECE)

45. The representative of UNECE discussed a number of ways through which regional organizations such as UNECE contributed to sustainable development, including: support to national and regional governance; enabling civil society; promotion of integrative and harmonised policies and strategies; and fostering partnerships at national, sub-regional and regional levels. She stated that one important tool to support national governance was the Peer Review process, carried out through the Environmental Performance Review Programme. Civil society had been significantly empowered through the Aarhus Convention, for which the UNECE is Secretariat, through partnerships with Major Groups in intergovernmental processes, both within UNECE and through the Environment for Europe Process, and through a number of workshops and other activities. Through its five regional conventions and a number of soft-law instruments, UNECE had strengthened regional governance for sustainable development and, by implementing these instruments, national governance as well. Harmonization and integration had been furthered through the Environment for Europe process. She stressed that many activities in the UNECE region were facilitated by strong partnerships among other organizations in the region.

### The European Commission

46. The European Commission representative presented the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, which had been endorsed in 2001 as the main tool for EU implementation of WSSD commitments. The Strategy built on the EU's Lisbon Strategy on economic and social renewal by adding the third dimension of sustainable development: environment. The strategy was a major step forward for integrated policy-making, since social, economic and environmental objectives would be discussed together at the highest political level. An external dimension was added to the strategy in the run-up to WSSD addressing trade and development policies, external relations and the impact of the EU's internal policies on third countries. In the 2003 annual review of the strategy, specific attention was paid to the implementation of WSSD commitments through the strategy. In 2004, there would be a more thorough review of the strategy with improved stakeholder consultations. The special nature of the relationship between the EU and the transition countries, as well as other European neighbours, would also be taken up, especially in view of the enlargement of the Union with ten new Member States in May 2004.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

47. Based on its discussions, the Workshop made the following recommendations:

### **I National Experiences**

- (a) Better understanding of sustainable development should be promoted at all levels, including within and between the various Ministries of government;
- (b) A change of outlook is needed within governments, not just to make laws but to ensure that they are properly implemented, including with civil society participation;
- (c) Implementation plans should be prepared with operational objectives and human resource implications;
- (d) There should be greater attention to, and promotion of, the social dimension of sustainable development, including priority for decent jobs and safe working conditions;
- (e) Measurable goals and timetables should be established for achieving a critical mass of women in environmental decision-making in order to ensure gender balance in environmental decision-making in all governments, national and international agencies, and in environment and sustainable development-related policies and programmes;
- (f) Additional training and international cooperation are needed, more generally;

- (g) More information should be made available to the public, such as being posted on websites and included in official documents with concrete examples of best practices and possible actions;
- (h) Education and raising public awareness about the importance of sustainable development should be undertaken at all levels, including among Parliamentarians, politicians, government officials and the public in general, including at the workplace;

## **II National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSDS) and Institutional Issues**

- (a) Governments are accountable for implementing the NSDS, including the establishment of goals and targets and systems for monitoring their implementation. Civil society, the scientific community and expert groups should also play a role in monitoring and reporting progress, including alternative reports by civil society groups;
- (b) Countries should consider how their sustainable development strategies correspond with other national and sectoral strategies in order to promote policy coherence and avoid overlap;
- (c) Strong leadership and political commitment should be provided to ensure that implementation of national sustainable development strategies (NSDS) starts no later than 2005 and further develops successfully;
- (d) Decision-makers across departments should be trained on sustainable development issues, methodologies and tools for implementing NSDS;
- (e) NSDS awareness-raising and capacity-building should be undertaken at all levels so that everyone can understand and contribute to the process;
- (f) NSDS should place equal weight on the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social and environmental);
- (g) The NSDS process should incorporate a balanced, cross-sectoral approach, and be linked, where appropriate, to existing international guidelines and strategies;
- (h) The NSDS process should be structured so that changes of government do not interrupt its implementation. In particular, long-term concepts of sustainable development should be developed;
- (i) The NSDS development and implementation process should be fully transparent, inclusive and participatory;

- (j) Environmental management systems (ISO, EMAS) and other tools (IPPC, EIA, integrated resource management and green procurement programmes) should be fully integrated into national systems for monitoring and reporting on sustainable development;
- (k) A strong, national coordinating body, such as a National Council on Sustainable Development (NCSD) with adequate autonomy, in the context of an appropriate legal framework, should be established and include all relevant stakeholders;
- (l) Support should be increased for improved monitoring systems, including better statistical information that would show progress against sustainable development objectives and goals with greater coordination of statistical efforts;
- (m) Governments should design and develop indicators and targets related to sustainable development implementation drawing on the international work already completed on national indicators of sustainable development, including assessment of data availability and the use of available data for the compilation of such indicators. Gender-disaggregated data should be included in any monitoring, information and reporting system on sustainable development at the local, national and regional levels;
- (n) International peer review for facilitating the implementation of sustainable development policies and programmes should be considered;
- (o) Strategic environment assessments (SEA) are an important tool for decision-makers to assess, at an early stage, the potential impact of policies and plans on the environment. To promote sustainable development, the application of SEA should also assess social impacts;

### **III Civil Society and the Private Sector**

- (a) Civil society in countries in transition should increase networking and make greater use of modern technologies such as the internet, email and online discussions to enhance coordination;
- (b) Greater coordination should be encouraged between trade unions and other major groups, because the workers' movement embraces many elements of society. Decent employment for young people should be given special attention;
- (c) Governments should make greater effort to work with youth groups. There were several key areas where they could benefit from such collaboration, including education, sustainable production and consumption, HIV/AIDS, trafficking in women, poverty alleviation and youth employment programmes;
- (d) Effective cooperation should be managed through partnerships between governments and major groups;

- (e) Major groups should move beyond providing criticism to developing constructive solutions to help governments formulate appropriate policies and programmes;
- (f) Civil society groups should be more informed about their rights of participation and potential role so that they could be more active in the government's decision-making process;
- (g) The Local Agenda 21 process provides a good model and means for the involvement of civil society and consideration should be given to adapting this for use at the national level;
- (h) Assistance from governments and intergovernmental organizations was needed for establishing and strengthening local youth councils.
- (i) Corporate social responsibility and accountability in relation to environmental regulations should be encouraged to promote business ethics and corporate behaviour that is environmentally-friendly and enhances sustainable development;
- (j) Partnerships between business, other civil society groups and government are instrumental for the implementation of sustainable development policies and programmes and should be encouraged and actively promoted;

#### **IV Governance and Public Administration**

- (a) Sound macro economic policies, functional democratic institutions and proactive civil society initiatives, including the role of youth, should be promoted as the basis for sustainable development, poverty alleviation and employment generation;
- (b) Most countries in transition have developed good new framework legislation, but the main concern now is developing the sub-laws and regulatory framework for implementing that legislation. Governments and civil society should take more responsibility for facilitating and monitoring implementation;
- (c) Coordination, coherence and dialogue between all relevant government departments and other stakeholders should be a priority at all stages of implementing sustainable development, especially for national strategies and plans;
- (d) Economic instruments should be developed that would provide people with incentives to protect the environment;
- (e) The needs of the poor and marginalized groups should be clearly defined and policies should be more effectively designed to improve their living conditions with special emphasis on the land restitution process;



- (f) The capacity of national public administrations to formulate and implement pro-poor policies should be strengthened, including through professional rather than political appointments at appropriate civil service levels;
- (g) Governments should explore measures that could mobilize additional internal resources to implement sustainable development. Adequate financial resources, technology transfer and technical assistance should be provided by bilateral and multi-lateral donors at the national and local level - including civil society as appropriate - to support countries in transition in this process;
- (h) To overcome resource constraints, public-private partnerships should be facilitated and fostered for the delivery of services to meet the basic needs of the poor, particularly for providing them with access to clean water, affordable energy and health services;
- (i) An enabling environment should be created for local business development and investors, both domestic and foreign, including promotion of active labour market policies;
- (j) To address the issue of extreme poverty, access to credit should be enhanced for micro and small businesses, with clear guidelines and mechanisms for the disbursement of such credits;

## **V The Role of Regional Organizations**

- (a) The essential role that Regional Commissions and other regional/sub-regional organizations have been playing to enhance national capacities at the policy and institutional levels for promoting good governance for the implementation of the JPOI has proved effective and should be further strengthened.
- (b) Based on countries' institutional arrangements, decentralization should be promoted. Local authorities should be empowered to collect local taxes to enable them to provide high quality public services and to make financial planning more predictable and realistic;
- (c) Implementation of Local Agenda 21 plans should be strengthened at all stages, from planning to realization;

## ANNEX I

**Workshop on  
Governance for WSSD Implementation in Countries in Transition  
Istanbul, Turkey, 16-18 September 2003**

**List of Participants**

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Lucy Westcott	Associate Expert, DSD
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