

UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM) for CSD-19

New York, 28 February – 4 March 2011

HIGHLIGHTS OF SIDE EVENTS

28 February

Oceans, Coasts and SIDS in Rio+20 Process

sponsored by the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands

The side event On Oceans, Coasts, and SIDS in the Rio+20 Process was organized as an interactive session attended by member-states, featuring panelist presentations by the Co-Chair and Head of Secretariat of the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands (GFO) and the Chief of SIDS Unit, Division for Sustainable Development, UNDESA. The representative of GFO made a presentation on the topic of “The Global Oceans Forum Assessments: How Well Are We Doing?”, while the representative of DSD/DESA spoke on “Supporting SIDS Preparations for the UN Conference for Sustainable Development, UNCSO Rio+20, 2012”. The stated objective of the side event was to provide a venue for discussion on the top issues related to oceans and coasts which SIDS countries would like to see in the Rio+20 process, and on how the Global Forum on Oceans, Coasts, and Islands could help to achieve these goals.

The Global Oceans Forum, with support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF), is mobilizing to prepare a number of assessments of progress achieved (or lack thereof) on oceans and coasts in fulfilling the prescriptions of the 1992 Earth Summit and of the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), with the goal of ensuring that oceans has a prominent role in the 2012 Rio+20 conference. The needs and perspectives of SIDS nations are of key importance in developing this global oceans agenda. It is important to push for oceans to become an important component of the 2012 Rio+20, and in particular, to explore the extent to which SIDS countries may wish to have certain analyses done related to SIDS and oceans for use in the Rio+20 process as part of the Global Forum’s planned assessments. In the last several years, the Global Oceans Forum has prepared a number of analyses related to SIDS and oceans, which we could work to update or reformulate as needed.

Throughout the session, discussion among panelists and the representatives from Micronesia, Australia, and Marshall Islands recognized the need for a broad framework with practical and specific goals at Rio+20 that focuses on green economy and holding accountable the agreements that have already been made. This includes upholding JPOI, mitigating climate change and circulating the most current research regarding such, while also considering the uneven stress put on the SIDS by larger country waste within a long-term strategic vision.

Public Transport and Sustainable Development

sponsored by the International Union of Railways (UIC)

In his presentation the representative of UIC stated that with 200 members worldwide, the UIC plays a major role in the rail transportation of freight and passengers throughout the

world, employing through its members 6.3 million people globally. Incorporated into UICs mission statement is the goal of sustainable development, recognising the importance of sustainable transport solutions within the greater sustainable development debate. The social and economic benefits of rail include the employment from services, the movement of freight and the reduction of congestion in other areas of transport (roads).

Before the GFC, rail freight increased by 25% between 2000-05, showing a greater real increase of the rail market when compared to other forms of freight (road increase being 19%). Although per capita data was not on hand, the passenger volumes per passenger saw 75% of passenger km's being seen in Asia and Oceania, with very few of global passenger km's being seen in North America and Africa. This shows the geographic differences in rail use, and the different levels of reliance and transport policy throughout the world.

Rail transport was also shown to be highly fuel efficient when compared to other forms of freight and passenger transport, particularly in Europe where energy can be sourced from nuclear or hydro-power for electric trains. From a sustainable consumption view-point, the European Environmental Strategy and Targets include the aim of a reduction from 1990 levels of CO₂ emissions by 30% in 2020, to 50% in 2030 and be 'carbon free' in 2050. The subject of carbon-offsetting was raised in discussion as a possible way of achieving a 'carbon free' goal, but it was stated that at the present time, the UIC aims to use the AVOID-SHIFT-IMPROVE framework to achieve targets but did not rule out the future use of carbon-offsetting to reach the 2050 goal.

The Founder of the Institute of Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP) focused on the challenge of sustainable transport holistically. Within the context of rapid urbanization, rapid motorization and an increase in disparate incomes both around the world and within societies, it is vitally important to address public transport within a sustainability and equity framework. Within ITDP's vision for sustainable transport, rail plays a major role but it also recognised the dual importance of bus's, metro, trains and other forms of transport to service the different users. Specifically, the needs for often marginalised groups such as low income, women, children, elderly and the disabled must be incorporated into any national policy as it is often these groups that rely on public transport solely as a means of mobility. Unmanaged motorization was categorised as being encouraged by decision-makers through subsidized motor fuels, investment in high speed roads, motors displacing cyclists on existing roads, chaotic public transport and urban sprawl resulting in inequitable access and use of public transport by all groups. Sustainable transport was seen however through support for public transport and cyclists, rail and bus efficiency and transit organized development, which results in more equitable access to transport. Therefore, the two transport options were presented to decision-makers as being a choice between sustainable and unsustainable transport policies at the national level that cross-cut through institution areas such as planning, transport and energy. AVOID-SHIFT-IMPROVE was also advocated ITDP as the key paradigm through which to address sustainable transport policy.

1 March

Integrating Financial Considerations in the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste

The side event for Integrating Financial Considerations in the Sound Management of Chemicals and Waste was an interactive session attended by member-states, featuring panelist presentations by the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Basel Convention, the Executive Secretary of the Secretariat of the Stockholm Convention, and

Senior Program Officer of UNEP Chemicals. The central organizing agenda was to help governments find ways to finance sound chemicals management, a historically low-priority area, particularly in LDCs.

The need for a paradigm shift was proposed, in which financing of sound chemicals management will be considered an economic opportunity, rather than a costly burden. In focusing on green economy, steps can be made toward achieving the Millennium Development Goal of poverty eradication, thereby integrating the social, economic, and environmental components of sustainable development. In making moves to a “win-win” situation in which investments are used for sustainability rather than for wasteful products that are unsafely stored, it was noted that:

- 98% of old transformers can be recycled for their steel and copper components, covering part of the PCB disposal costs (which needs to be phased out and not recycled as per Basel),
- Unnecessary care accounts for 40% of healthcare waste, which requires more costly disposal,
- The generation of e-waste (PCs and mobile phones) is increasing with the shorter use-cycle of technology components ; in the next five years, the volume of obsolete PCs generated in developing regions(400-700mil) will exceed that of developed regions (200-300 mil units). However, computers contain valuable material that can be used (steel, aluminum, silver, copper, etc) rather than burned or landfilled.

It was emphasized that attention must be given to the life cycle of products, turning waste into available resources, thereby shifting the mindset in which these substances are perceived as a costly burden.

In managing chemicals, it was suggested that knowledge of the most efficient means of producing, using, and disposing of chemicals be shared between and within countries to “harmonize results” for capacity building. Agreements should be made between countries, which use pesticides and industrial chemicals similarly, to share the data-producing burden for various chemical substances. In this way, they will be better equipped to take advantage of the benefits of chemicals while mitigating risks. In the development of replacements for such chemicals as DDT, a primary agent in the reduction of malaria, strategies for reformulating existing agricultural pesticides can be shared without “reinventing the wheel”.

In pursuing this path, synergies between health, environment, education, labor, agriculture and finance ministries should occur to prevent conflicting policies, as well as build awareness among end-users of chemical risks, thereby grounding and validating work at the governmental level. Such synergies can also lead to good policy formulation in which the full health and ecosystem costs of chemical use and maintenance are considered in relation to the short-term advantages of low-cost chemicals; to garner financial support for sound chemicals management, the costs of healthcare treatment, an inefficient labor force, and taxes lost by lack of measurement of transboundary chemicals movement should be foregrounded. At the national level, monetized analysis of costs of inaction versus benefits of action in which areas as air quality, water quality, crop yield gains, and farm labor loss due to chemicals-related illnesses should occur.

To support policy-makers in identifying, measuring, and reporting “costs of inaction”, a successful model, tested in Uganda, was outlined; a: obtain a Baseline Assessment Report, b: development methods for assessing cost of inaction, c: outline regional projects, d: disseminate the results. Overall, there was consensus that governments must realize the

issues and be made aware of the consequences of minimal action in regard to chemicals management.

Global Outlook on SCP Policies

Sponsored by the European Commission

Sponsored by the European Commission, this side-event was to preview the upcoming report commissioned by UNEP entitled, "Global Outlook on SCP Policies", which aims to review a range of promising policy instruments, business and civil society actions at the regional and national level to promote SCP patterns. This report is jointly published by IISD and UNEP, and comprises of regional chapters written by the different regional offices of IISD, and a global chapter drawing together the regional issues into a global SCP policy outlook. The presentation included the case studies of Mauritius and Brazil, and their challenges and achievements in implementing SCP policies, as well as a brief overview of the reports contents.

The representative of the European Commission framed the discussion on SCP within the context of resource efficiency. This strategy for sustainable development has been a long-standing policy within the European Commission Action Plan on SCP, and encompasses the efficient use of all of the earth's resources whether renewable or non-renewable. Presentations from Mauritius and Brazil followed highlighting their experiences in implementing a SCP framework, and the areas in which challenges arose.

Mauritius, having been an original pilot country for the UNEPs SCP programme in 2007 had the greatest experience with implementation of policy. It was highlighted the need to have a strong political will, a strong umbrella environmental policy, funding and a strong vision such as 'Maurice Ile Durable' to successfully implement sustainable policies. The representative of Mauritius also pointed out the challenges of choosing the right projects to achieve maximum implementation of the seven priority SCP policies outlined. So far, 24 of 45 projects implemented have been successfully completed, but lots of projects were constricted due to inappropriate application to the situation of Mauritius either because of lack of funds, lack of technical capacity or lack of need. Now halfway through the 5 year SCP Programme, Mauritius is looking to review the results so far, reorienting and reengineering projects to greater meet the individual needs of the country. From an organisational standpoint, it was also highlighted that the Ministry of Environment acts as facilitator in the implementation and funding of policies, with other Ministries such as Energy or Waste carrying out the individual initiatives.

Brazil's experience with SCP policy implementation was not as far along as Mauritius', but equally crosscutting institutionally with initiatives encompassing the retail sector, consumer consumption, public procurement and planning. Next month the government, based on the two core existing policies' National Climate Change Policy and Solid Waste Policy will release an Action Plan on SCP. Brazil currently has a strong ongoing environmental policy, with ongoing initiatives addressing SCP themes, including a very active voluntary aluminium-recycling programme. The representative of Brazil highlighted the importance of the plenary discussion of Marrakech process in helping to define policy and frameworks for SCP to create synergies with other ministerial areas. Although in Brazil there is no key SCP facilitating ministry, the key themes are ministerial priorities through avenues such as environment, finance, energy and trade.

The brief summary of UNEP report showed the key strengths of SCP in the different regions, but also the areas in which IISD was unsure as to the progress being made, highlighting

business implementation, enforcement of implementation and impact analysis of implementation that could be improved in the different regions. At a global level however, a policy consensus on the importance of key issues within SCP appears to have been reached.

The issue of Civil Society inclusion and participation in the SCP process was raised during the interactive discussion, but no case studies were presented representing an example of civil society consultations at the regional level. One key reason given for this was the varying levels of interest at the national level in civil society participation and the restraints this placed on regional level consultations. One EU example was the web-based 'Your Voice in Europe' that had a very strong response from Civil Society, but was very taxing at an institutional level to adequately process responses.

Other issues raised during the discussion include the disaggregating of women's and children's data and role in SCP programmes, and how the implementation may differ for these vulnerable groups. Issues such as these are best addressed at the national level through specific programmes, but the data available is scarce. Also, the issue of chemicals was raised, and although this is an area in which SCP on a macro scale addresses in the pursuit of sustainable development and environmental quality, no specific SCP policy directly addresses it. Additionally, although the issue of chemicals is unlikely to be addressed through the 10 YFP, there is a need to address demand-side of chemical use as it is not adequately addressed in international agreements at this time. Rural SCP policies were also addressed during the discussion, as they were not addressed through a non-agriculture agenda in the presentations. It was indicated that UNDESA/CSD had a greater focus than UNEP on rural issues and SCP policies were likely to be more holistically addressed through that avenue.

2 March

Mining - an integrated sustainable development perspective

Sponsored by the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining (IGF)

The purpose of this side-event sponsored by the Intergovernmental Forum on Mining (IGF) and chaired by the Minister of natural resources of Malawi, was to reflect on the Global Dialogue where it originated and to gain some perspective on the direction the Forum should go in the future.

In its presentation the SG of IGF stated that the Forum is a voluntary partnership that began as a Global Dialogue instigated by Canada and South Africa in 2003/2004 that aims to maximise the contribution of mining to Sustainable Development through enhancing the capacity for good governance (CGG), and influencing governments on global mining policy development. By enhancing the CCP of governments with mining interests, the IGF aims to face mining related sustainable development challenges through collaborative work with governments, intergovernmental groups and multilateral organisations. During WSSD in Johannesburg in 2002, mining was able to be successfully tied to the themes of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) process by ICMM, ensuring the continuation of global dialogue through the inter-governmental process until 2012. As one of its main themes, CSD-19 in May this year will be an important session for IGF, where key mining and sustainable development issues shall be addressed in a policy context. The CSD Mining Policy Framework is the outcome of an extensive survey of Forum members in 2009 to try and pinpoint what good governance is, how mineral resources are managed, and what best practice is. The objective of this document is to advance the understanding and implantation

of CGG in mining, and fill the capacity 'gaps' in implementation experienced by some member countries.

The ensuing discussion showed good understanding that CGG was an agreed upon top priority for governments, the IGF and NGOs alike, but the implementation process provided many of challenges for developed and developing countries alike. Countries such as Canada, Australia and Chile have shown that with CGG, the positive effects of mining can be great, but negative case studies from past exploration were acknowledged. Attention was drawn in discussion to the issue of informed consent by the local communities directly affected by mining, and how and to what level their considerations should be taken into account when dealing with vulnerable groups. It was agreed that informed consent was vital, but also recognised that the capacity for some communities (and nations) may not have the human resources to process the information provided. One initiative highlighted by the representative of Canada was the Mining Information Guide for Indigenous Communities. This guide lays out in plain language the life-cycle of mining, and the key decision-making points in the process. The success of this in Canada has led to the translation of the document into 5 or 6 other languages, and provides a good example on how to simplify technical information for community use.

The issue of civil society, and the varying positions different community groups have at the local level was also raised, as well as who constituted different groups, for instance who is 'indigenous' and what qualified as 'local'. The main issue in overcoming this however is access to funds to raise the level of consultations within IGF consultations. It was also acknowledged that including civil society must come through enshrined legislation at the national level, as it is unrealistic to expect private companies to take on this role. The vulnerabilities of local communities are not doubted, but for many developing countries natural resource endowment is an advantage that is very difficult to ignore. The issue of free and informed consent was raised, but as the representative from Ethiopia pointed out, it was covered in detail at the last meeting of the Forum.

The important role of Environmental Impact Assessments was also raised in plenary discussion, and the potential for these current mechanisms as a base for further community consultation processes. The value of these well-understood systems that integrates social, environmental and economic concerns, already have well-established best practices and have a strong technical base for action that is widely known and accepted. The importance of building on existing mechanisms, whether EIAs or initiatives such as Canada's Model Forests Program, were widely agreed upon as a basis for further action.

3 March

How can we operationalize the green economy and SCP through 10YFP and UNCSD 2012

Sponsored by Bioregional Development Group and One Planet Living

Integral to Bioregional Development and One Planet Living is the recognition that the world is in "ecological overshoot" (Poblete): the rate of human consumption is higher than the planet's capacity to sustain such consumption, and has been since 1985 (Riddlestone). Global Footprint Network, a data-generating agency for Bioregional, has maintained the National Footprint Accounts central data set from 1961 to present (in 150 nations). Their ecological creditor and debtor map provides a picture of per capita consumption in relation to ecological limits, helping to identify problem areas at the national level to inform policy response.

The One Planet Living framework to communicate and implement sustainability was presented (Riddlestone). Tested primarily in London and 51 other cities, the framework uses a city-based approach to sustainably meet the needs of its citizenry as per the following principles: waste should be seen as a resource, travel needs to be reduced by drawing on communicative technologies, sustainable materials must be used in all construction, local and sustainable food diets must be emphasized, food waste minimization, water must be managed more carefully, space should be provided for wildlife and wilderness, the incorporation of cultural heritage (using traditional wisdom) into policy should take place, actions for equity and the local economy should occur, and improvement of human health and happiness must be taken into account.

The plan provides a framework for a policy change to reduce emissions in new homes to zero percent in the United Kingdom by 2016. Relatedly, the French process for green economy was outlined: to improve building energy and harmonize town planning, to organize more environmentally friendly transport, to reduce energy and CO2 emissions, to increase biodiversity, to better process waste, and to implement new ecological governance. Brief attention was given to financing such aforementioned projects in the form of a similar capacity-building Marrakech process model, sustainable tourism, and centralizing women as a cost-effective practical measure.

4 March

Green Economy: Ears to the Ground, Lessons and Priorities from National Dialogues on Green Economies in Four Countries.

Sponsored by the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

The Green Economy Coalition has in the past year hosted dialogues in Brazil, India and Mali to discuss and help frame the debate on the concept of 'Green Economy' in preparation for Rio+20. These have aimed to bring in the voices of all stakeholders in the Green Economy, opening up the debate to build a definition from the local and national levels that incorporates growing concerns over social inequalities, unsustainable consumption patterns and environmental degradation.

Presentations on the concept of the Green Economy, the rationale for a reassessment of economic growth and the definitions that came from the country dialogues began the discussion. There was an overall focus on what characteristics are needed to overcome the disincentives currently permeating the political, economic and social climates against a shift to a green economy, as the current definition of 'developed' that 30% of the world enjoys is not feasible in an ecological sense for all. The expert from the Caribbean highlighted the inherent short-term nature of politics, and the need to gain political will to change long-term policy. The social aspect of economic stability was also discussed, and how the experiences of Brazil's serious inflation issues in the 1990s had a hang-over affect in the popular consciousness, despite Brazil's current economic successes. The expert from Brazil sees the economic development based on traditional growth models as a political choice, and a political and social change must be encouraged at the national level to effect any real change toward a green economy.

The initial successes of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 were acknowledged, along with the political good will in pursuing sustainable development initiatives at the national level. However, the current lack of initiatives due to inherent vulnerabilities that influence decision-makers was a highlighted point that now has to be readdressed in preparation for Rio+20. The social element of the green economy, with the need to address persistent

extreme poverty and environmental degradation due to human use was a key theme reiterated throughout the discussion. The need to change the institutional structure for dealing with environmental issues was discussed along with the need to address social, economic and environmental vulnerabilities that have still not been addressed 20 years after Rio. Currently, political decisions made that benefit areas such as tourism do not take into account the negative effect on areas such as agriculture, and this reflects the lack of institutional decision-making that is sufficiently integrated enough to take into account economic, social and political multi-sector issues. Although this was recognised in the presentations and the following discussion as a foundation for a shift toward a 'green economy', no clear definition of what it should entail was defined beyond the need for a more equitable economic model.

The feedback from the in-country dialogues stressed the need to work on existing value chains, building a base for low carbon capacity building. The capacity of key local stakeholders was also seen as important across the country dialogues, with the skills and expertise of human capital being an important aspect in the shifting of the economy. The education of the population, particularly the youth, in what the aims of a green economy are, as well as encouraging a move away from consumerism was encouraged at the local level as a way to begin to mobilise the relevant social and economic actors. The need to change governance patterns as a way to affect change in other key areas was also discussed. Within this though, the Brazilian representative cautioned against 'green washing', and the need for accountability in government actions.

Local vulnerabilities due to climate, natural disasters, natural resource use and economic issues create fragilities and vulnerabilities at the national level. Actors working in economic, environmental or social areas are all seeing and reacting to the same pressures, and are all frustrated by the same sustainable development problems. The green economy is an opportunity in which to address these issues within the same framework, but as noted by the Convenor of the Green Economy Coalition, there is still much suspicion from all groups about the concept of a green economy and its aims. Creating a genuine degree of involvement at all levels in the green economy process and to maintain this was highlighted as a key challenge in moving forward. To do this a feasible economic discourse must be presented to create any political or social change.

Ombudspersons for Future Generations as Sustainability Implementation Units

Sponsored by the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (ANPED) and the World Future Council (WFC)

Challenges to the implementation of sustainable development were addressed with the specific objective to secure our future generations. The representative of Major Group Children & Youth briefly recalled the linkage between sustainable development and human rights, while the Head of Child Rights Department of Terre des Hommes further spoke on ecological child rights and intergenerational justice. The Hungary's first Parliamentary Commissioner for Future Generations shared his experiences as an Ombudsperson under the Governmental-NGO's combined mode. The presentation of Director of the Foundation for Democracy and Sustainable Development focused on emerging coalitions on long-termism in policy making. And The Director of Future Justice at the WFC emphasized the voice of future generations in sustainable development issues.

It was stated that all human beings have the right to live a healthy life. Young generations are the most vulnerable populations facing toxic pollution and ecological diseases. Regarding the above mentioned reasons, panelist addressed the need to renew the existing sustainable development framework. Panelists recognized the crucial role of governments in monitoring intergenerational interests and also, conflicts among different human rights. Neither sustainability nor the protection of next generations should be only regarded as separated component of governments' responsibilities. Policy makers should have a comprehensive understanding of potential consequences before the execution process. The participation of children and the youth on sustainable development is indispensable to achieve prudent and democratic decisions. WFC stated that the people in their 20's and 30's nowadays represents in fact "the future generation" as per the Rio Declaration and studies on their life experience are needed by ombudspersons and policy makers.

Throughout the open discussion session, questions and comments were focused on the definition of next generations' needs, the mechanism of environmental justice, international dialogue mechanism and the national governance. Panelists recommended that efforts should be put to guarantee the minimum need of next generations for a healthy life. In response to the question on justice framework, panelists considered that the initiative of an environmental court was still far from the practice. Ombudsperson's efforts should focus on democratic and comprehensive governance of sustainable development. In conclusion, the Chair recognized the global boundary on sustainable development issues. And he encouraged all kind of ombudspersons to continue their efforts following Agenda 21.