

CSD13 IPM
Plenary Intervention
4 March 2005

The Chair identified provocative questions for us to consider this meeting, for the lead up to CSD 13.

The Secretary-General has rightly said that there is no one size fits all solution to these issues, and we offer the following thoughts focusing on natural resource management for you to consider alongside those of other delegations. We have also appreciated the opportunity to learn from our distinguished colleagues and experts and this meeting. In particular the insights of the G77 have been a spur to our further thinking.

Question one: the role of women

Without the engagement of women, sustainable development will remain an illusion.

Australian women are recognised as the drivers behind family farms and communities involved in Landcare. They are acknowledged as leaders of community-based action and 30% of all farm managers in Australia by women.

Our senior ministers have established advisory committees of farming based women to provide high-level advice and shape government programmes and policies. Our handout provides links to further information on these issues.

Question two: resource allocation

In determining resource allocation for sustainable development, the planning and management of water resources in Australia is based on a clear understanding of the resource. We look at the needs of the users and make explicit provision for the environment and biodiversity as legitimate users of water.

We also have a legislative basis that enshrines the principal of sustainable development at the national level.

Question three: capacity building

Australia has provided substantial investments to underpin capacity building activities for individuals and communities to contribute to decisions about the use, allocation, management, protection and conservation of Australia's natural resources. 4000 Landcare groups now operate throughout Australia.

This has been achieved through:

1. support for catchment management bodies to develop natural resource management plans and investment strategies;
2. funding for community-based learning and direct support for group activities like Landcare; and
3. investment in our R&D and resource assessment.

Question four: stakeholder participation

Australia has learned from experience that it is essential to involve stakeholders at all levels in policy development, programme implementation and on-ground action. This is achieved through (for example):

1. Public consultation on the development of catchment plans, water sharing plans, and major initiatives are accompanied by explicit public consultation and review processes;
2. In the construction of legal and institutional frameworks for access to water, the legitimate needs of consumers and the environment are recognised and given statutory backing; and
3. On indigenous lands (some 13% of our continent), indigenous landholders rights are respected and acknowledged.

Question five: legal and regulatory instruments to mobilise public and private resources

In Australia, farmers control 60% of our land and 70% of our diverted water. Regulatory frameworks recognise their role in both economic and environmental decision making. The scale of investment by private individuals and businesses is substantially larger than public investment in any given year.

Question six: building and strengthening of the institutions and financial incentives

Australia embraced sustainable development because we recognised we needed explicit policies and programmes to link the economic, environmental, and social aspects of our natural resources. We are working to:

1. Implement legal and institutional frameworks at all levels for access to, and use of, resources and the environment;
2. encourage capacity building at all levels;
3. provides strong support for community and catchment based actions;
4. develop and build partnerships with key stakeholders;
5. target outcome based investment; and
6. work with others to share our experience.

Conclusion

We continue to face challenges in pursuing sustainable development. Every nation in this room does. The challenge in Australia will be different to those of other countries. The challenge for all of us between now and CSD 13 is to find ways of developing clear pathways to implement our commitments.

Mr Chairman, we have spent much time in CSD 12 and again here at the IPM telling each other what is wrong and what has to happen. We have started to explore what needs to be done how to do it, and who should be doing what. Australia urges fellow

delegates to ensure that CSD 13 maintains that emphasis on practical, achievable, realistic policy options drawing on the wealth of experience that will be gathered here.

In doing so, roles, responsibilities and resources will need to be earmarked for action. It is essential that the support bodies to CSD 13 on the issues of water, sanitation and human settlements, maintain their effort. Bodies such as DESA., UN water, and UN Habitat need to have a well-defined and coordinated contribution to make in the lead up to CSD 13 and beyond.