

CSD 17 PARTNERSHIPS FAIR  
 Working session on the Future of Partnerships  
 Summary of key messages  
 5 May, 2009



As part of the CSD 17 Partnerships Fair activities, a working session on the Future of Partnerships was co-organized by the Government of Italy and the Division on Sustainable Development with the generous support of the Italian Government. The session gathered a group of more than 50 participants from developing and developed country government delegations, key research and policy institutions, USA foundations, UN system as well as CSD registered partnerships.

**Mr. Paolo Soprano**, Head of Division for Environmental Research and Development of the Ministry for the Environment, Land and Sea of Italy opened the session by discussing the multi-stakeholder approach to implementation and the importance of sharing information and creating meaningful partnerships. He indicated that voluntary involvement and collaboration is important and noteworthy, especially now in times of global economic and financial turmoil.

**Dr. Tariq Banuri**, Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, began his presentation by asking, what are the characteristics which exemplify sustainable development in practice, and what are the elements that help operationalize it? He highlighted three lessons to be identified when implementing sustainable development:

1. Envisioning sustainable development
2. Recognizing sustainable development
3. Making sustainable development happen

Dr. Banuri's presentation illustrated the following concepts:

<i><b>Envisioning sustainable development</b></i>	<i><b>Recognizing Sustainable Development</b></i>	<i><b>Willing sustainable development (making it happen)</b></i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Learning by listening</li> <li>- From Rio to Reality</li> <li>- Civic will- a distinct motivation</li> <li>- Imagining sustainable development</li> <li>- Pushing reform</li> <li>- Pulling reform</li> <li>- Creating spaces for reform - Champions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community rootedness</li> <li>- Sustainable livelihoods</li> <li>- Wise use of resources</li> <li>- Ecological integrity</li> <li>- Adaptability and "scaling out"</li> <li>- Durability</li> <li>- Connectedness and partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Investing in people</li> <li>- Invest in innovation</li> <li>- Invest in institutions</li> <li>- Invest in communication</li> <li>- Invest in partnerships</li> <li>- Invest in a supporting environment</li> <li>- Invest in imitation</li> </ul>

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The meeting was divided into two discussion sessions. The first session focused on reviewing and assessing what partnerships have collectively achieved and identifying lessons learned and best practices from Johannesburg to the present.

The second session concentrated on the way forward and examined how to support further efforts to expand, replicate, adapt and scale up best practices in partnerships for sustainable development. Discussions also focused on the need for further collaboration to develop and establish a process of consultations around the world, with broad-based participation of different stakeholders, for the preparation of a comprehensive action-oriented set of recommendations on the future of partnerships which could serve as a contribution to relevant processes within and outside the United Nations as well as support countries in the implementation of their national sustainable development strategies and development cooperation frameworks.

The discussion of lessons learned and best practices was opened by **Dr. Markku Nurmi**, Director General, Ministry of Environment of Finland and Chair of the Energy and Environment Partnership (EEP) with Central America and by **Mr. Francois Rogers**, Corporate Strategies Officer at IUCN. The discussion on the way forward benefited from introductory remarks from **Dr. Darian Stibbe**, Development Director of The Partnering Initiative and **Ms. Norine Kennedy**, Vice President of Environmental Affairs at USCIB – ICC.

Their valuable and insightful statements launched a dynamic and interactive discussion among the participants, who exchanged views on the following issues:

- Creating an enabling environment for the development, establishment, and maintaining of partnerships.
- Improving the governance structure of a partnership in which the issue of meta-governance was suggested by one participant.
- Reaching equality in partnerships in which the ability to achieve equality among different partners was called into question, and co-creation was suggested to have an important role to play in this regard.
- Different types of partnerships in which the participants recognized the multitude of definitions and types of partnerships in the international dialogue on partnerships, but did not see the value of engaging in a characterization of partnerships but rather concentrate in forming partnerships based on specific goals and objectives.

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- The importance of leveraging partnerships more effectively and appropriately in which participants recognized the usefulness of partnerships but emphasized the need to identify how they can be most appropriately utilized.
- The importance of assessing partnerships as critical to the integrity, transparency and accountability of the partnership in which participants recognized the difficulties that an evaluation exercise entails for different types of partnerships.
- The need to create a systematic way to form partnerships and the importance of sharing success stories to raise awareness of the use of partnerships and inspire further use of this implementation mechanism. Capacity development to create particular skills and mindsets was recognized as vital to understand the process of partnering.
- Transaction costs were also expressed as a concern regarding forming partnerships, and social networking systems were offered as a solution to this challenge.
- The challenge to further engage the private sector as effective partner in multistakeholder partnerships was also discussed. This stakeholder group was identified as an important partner in the mobilization of resources; transferring of technology and in supporting creativity and innovation.

The meeting concluded by emphasizing the importance of improving the way CSD discusses the contributions of partnerships to the implementation of agreed goals and objectives by suggesting to add a plenary segment during CSD sessions to showcase examples of implementation and success partnership stories as well as bringing together partnership practitioners as a way to inspire further use of partnerships, in particular at the regional level.

There was consensus that having follow-up opportunities and broad-based consultations to discuss partnerships between the sessions of the CSD would be welcomed. It was hoped that the consultations could also provide a pragmatic and dynamic forum to review and assess what partnerships have collectively achieved, identify lessons learned and best practices, as well as serve as a fertile ground to open opportunities and possibilities for replicability, scaling up, expansion, imitation and adaptation of initiatives.

Capacity building and institutional development for Governments in order to integrate partnerships more effectively in support of the implementation of their national sustainable development strategies and development cooperation frameworks was also supported to further understand the potential and enhance the use of this mechanism.

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The need to attract more participation of the private sector in partnerships as well as in the discussions of the contributions of partnerships to sustainable development was also emphasized.

Suggestions were also offered to increase opportunities for further networking among the participants to share information and coordinate activities, and in this regard, efforts by the CSD secretariat in bringing together different stakeholders were welcomed and encouraged.