

OUTREACH 1997

The Voice of the NGO Community at CSD*

Countdown to Earth Summit II

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CSDI SPECIAL EDITION

INTERSESSIONAL IN GEAR!

AT A GLANCE

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WHERE DO WE

OUTREACH '97
CSD NGO Steering Committee

World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)

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OUTREACH 1997
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GO FROM HERE?

The Intersessional is moving into gear. After a short ceremonial opening, the delegates started their work. The first day closed on an upbeat feeling, leaving the NGO community cautiously hopeful. Even though many felt uneasy about the lack of substance in the statement from the US ambassador on Monday. Would this be indicative of the direction the North would be going?

Tuesday's debate seemed to single out 5 issues as being of more significance. Derek Osborne summed them up as being: Oceans, freshwater, atmosphere, energy and as he said, resolving the forestry issue, which apparently several delegations feel is still hanging in the air.

The NGO community worked diligently throughout the night to finalize their statement and were able to present their abbreviated version by noon on Tuesday. Several delegations received it and commented upon its creative and positive suggestions.

The NGOs do have a common concern today - and at the moment this concern casts dark shadows over our environmental commitment. Will the NGOs be represented in the Special Session in June, or will the responsible governments hide behind formalities and say that only those NGOs who are part of their countries delegation may participate? We bring these concerns out in depth in this issue of OUTREACH. In one way this concern may seem only indirectly connected to the world of environment. But do not be fooled. Where would the governments have been today in environmental work, had they not had the grass root support of the NGOs? Would their country reports on environmental achievements have been as complete without the NGOs?

Our participation is needed if we are going to bring this world on a healthy environmental path into the next century. And to do this, our participation is needed in the General Assembly session in June.

MEETING CALENDAR

For more information on side events, contact the CSD Secretariat - tel: 963-8811 / fax: 963-1267.

DAILY MEETINGS:

9:15 a.m. Conf. Room C
CSD NGO Steering Committee

2:00 p.m. Cafe Vienna
Press meeting

WEDNESDAY, 26 FEBRUARY:

11:00 a.m. Conf. Room C
HUMAN SETTLEMENTS CAUCUS

1:15-2:45 p.m. Conf. Room 6
UNESCO presentation, Chapter 36 of Agenda 21

2:30 p.m. Conf. Room C
WOMEN'S CAUCUS, Organized by WEDO

2:45 p.m. Conf. Room 6
NGO meeting with Brazilian Co-chair

6:30 p.m. Conf. Room C
NGO meeting with European Union delegation

6:15 to 7:30 p.m. Conf. Room 6
Presentation on national Agenda 21 implementation organized by Capacity 21 UNDP

THURSDAY, 27 FEBRUARY:

9:00 a.m. to be announced
US NGO meeting with US delegation

9:15 a.m. Conf. Room C
Alexandra Bezeredi (GEF) will give brief presentation to CSD NGO Steering Committee

1:15-2:15 p.m. check venue at Conf. 4
Presentation of the first Global Environment Outlook report by UNEP

1:15-2:45 p.m. check venue at Conf. 4
Panel on Emerging Issues - Signals for the Future Organized by the NGO Committee on Aging

2:30 p.m. Conf. Room C
NGO Meeting with Dr. Mostafa Tolba (Egypt)

5:45 p.m. Conf. Room C
NGO meeting with Maurice Strong

6:30 p.m. Conf. Room C
TRANSPORTATION CAUCUS, chaired by Derek Osborne

NEWS FROM THE CONFERENCE ROOM

EXCERPTS FROM NGO STATEMENTS

MADE TUESDAY, 25 FEBRUARY**Indigenous Caucus:**

"It is widely recognized by Indigenous Peoples, the UN Secretariat and Governments supportive of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, that the minimalist position of the Outcomes of the Rio Process in relation to the protection and promotion of Indigenous Rights has not been successfully implemented. In fact, little effort has been made by the international community and Governments which participated in the Rio Process to ensure the implementation of the principles and programs to which they committed themselves at the Rio Conference in 1992. The Review Session by the UN General Assembly this year offers an opportunity to address these deficiencies.

Indigenous Peoples around the world have, in our own different ways, and as a result of our close spiritual and material relationship with our lands and territories, developed very detailed knowledge and understanding of the biodiversity of the natural environment.

The cultural and intellectual property of Indigenous Peoples is increasingly being "commodified" and alienated from the very communities that generated and nurtured it over successive generations.

The real concern which is shared by Indigenous Peoples, is that in some countries, we are already being denied access to the biological resources which we have managed for thousands of years, because they have become the legal "property" of foreign corporations.

CSD needs to be more proactive through its Secretariat and in its coordinating role to ensure that the UN Organizations all adopt a much more coordinated and proactive role to involve Indigenous Peoples directly in the further negotiation, development, and implementation of policies and programs that relate to the environment.

The Indigenous Caucus calls on the CSD to examine the impacts on Indigenous Peoples of the implementation of the Trade Related Intellectual Property (TRIPS) Agreement as administered by the World Trade Organization and its negative impact on biodiversity.

Each of the matters which the Indigenous Caucus has raised as requiring urgent action by the UN and its Organizations, point to the need for a Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples within the UN."

Statement on Finance on behalf of the CSD/NGO Steering Committee:

"Financial resources have been one of the most disappointing areas in the implementation of

Agenda 21...

The developed countries have not fulfilled their commitments to provide new and additional resources. Official development assistance fell from a peak of \$62 billion in 1992 to around \$53 billion in 1995. The \$3 billion pledged to the GEF since 1991 does not make good this fall.

Yet over this same period...the state of the world's environment has deteriorated dramatically. The need for external finance [to help save the environment] has never been greater.

NGOs therefore urge all the developed countries to fulfill their commitments to provide adequate financial resources for sustainable development by increasing the GEF in the replenishment negotiations that start in March, and by committing themselves to meet the aid target of 0.7% of GNP by 2002...

At the same time, the quality of aid must be improved...It is true that international private investment has grown dramatically since 1992. But the bulk of this investment goes to a handful of developing countries, hardly any of them amongst the least developed. Its environmental and social effects are poorly understood...

But we should have no illusions that private finance is a panacea. Private funds are driven by market imperatives, and will not automatically deliver public goods such as environmental sustainability or the elimination of poverty...

Conventional development assistance budgets will never be able to provide sufficient funds to meet the demand. This is why debates have started at the CSD on new ways of generating funds - for example through new international taxation. Support for at least one of the proposals that has been made - a charge on aviation fuel on international flights - has been expressed by some governments. NGOs believe the time is ripe for swift progress with this idea - for example as the EU considers the expiry at the end of 1997 of its exemption of aviation fuel from excise duty. The revenues from this source should be channeled into mechanisms such as the GEF and UNDP's Capacity 21.

This would be one of the many potential 'win-win' options from the removal of the estimated \$5000 billion per year spent on environmentally damaging subsidies. All countries should eliminate these subsidies - whether they are for intensive agriculture, energy, deforestation or fisheries.

But NGOs also believe a forum is needed in which other proposals for innovative

financing...can be broadly debated and progress made towards political consensus. We therefore support the establishment of an Intergovernmental Panel on Finance under the CSD, involving representatives of finance ministries as well as other experts and NGOs.

[This] should be accompanied by more formal links between the CSD and key bodies in the international financial arena...

Lastly, running through all [the NGO] proposals is a concern for transparency and accountability in the use of all funds in all countries. Far greater efforts are needed to eliminate corruption and to focus all spending on social and environmental priorities."

RIO GRINDS**overheard at the coffee bar**

"Rumor has it that UN Reform Czar, Maurice Strong, who established UNEP in 1972, is now considering it being integrated into FAO(!) and UNDP. Some commitment to the Environment [Ah]!

Did anyone go to the Earth Council Meeting on Rio+5 event? (zzzzz)

As we know, President Bush, the Republican, managed to go 2000 miles to Rio. One would expect that President Clinton, the Democrat, should be able to come 200 miles to New York from Washington. NGOs are starting a travel fund to help President Bill who was in New York for a DNC fundraiser last week. If worse comes to worse maybe NGOs could facilitate a donors meeting for the DNC across the road at the UN Plaza Hotel. Then all he has to do is walk 200 yards to the UN.

Brian Howe, the former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia has been seen in "the coffee bar" with the Indigenous Peoples caucus. Hmm. I wonder what this means.

So, after a long EU meeting, the EU had "reaffirmed its commitment to meet the UN target for ODA flows of 0.7% of GNP".

RIO GRINDS (CON'T)

Someone then noticed that this was "a little too strong" and "as soon as possible" was added to the text. Come on EU: this year is about money and commitment! Where is yours!

UPDATE...**CSD/NGO statement on NGO participation in the UNGA Special**

Session for the Ad-hoc Open-Ended Intersessional Working Group

Summary: Governments participating in this CSD process should ensure that the arrangements for the UNGA Special Session are based on the newly revised Arrangements for Consultation with NGOs (Part VII of Resolution 1996/31) and that these arrangements should apply to strengthening NGO access to and participation in the General Assembly and its committees.

* * * * *

The CSD's Member States agreed at their 1996 session, inter alia, that the General Assembly should ensure "appropriate arrangements for the most effective contribution to and active involvement of major groups, including non-governmental organizations, in the special session of the Assembly in 1997" (E/CN.17/1996/38).

In response, the 51st session of the General Assembly adopted Resolution 51/181, which provides, inter alia, that the GA "Recognizes the important contributions made by major groups, including non-governmental organizations, at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and in the implementation of its recommendations, and the need for their effective participation in preparations for the special session, as well as the need to ensure appropriate arrangements, taking into account the practice and experience gained at the Conference, for the substantive contributions to and active involvement in the preparatory meetings and the special session, and in that context invites the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with Member States, to propose to Member States appropriate modalities for the effective involvement of major groups in the special session..."(A/RES/51/181).

As agreed by governments, it is imperative that NGOs be able to participate in the manner called for in the UNGA resolution. NGOs have a great deal to contribute to the discussions, not as negotiators, but as consultants on the substantive issues involved. We believe, therefore, that the arrangements for NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC, as agreed to in Resolution 1996/31, should form the basis for arrangements in the Special Session.

Beyond the Special Session, the 1996/31 arrangements, in our view, should apply to the General Assembly and its Main Committees, as well - without encroaching on existing practices. Moreover, we are keenly interested

in ensuring effective NGO arrangements throughout the UN system. But the only issue facing Member States in this CSD preparatory process, consistent with the GA resolution, is that of ensuring effective NGO participation in the Special Session. That is the task that we ask you to accomplish as expeditiously as possible. Thank you.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Tomorrow, OUTREACH will bring you an in-depth article on transportation and environment concerns. This article will highlight some of the problem areas to be discussed at the Transportation Caucus to be held Thursday at 6:30 p.m. in Conference Room C.

This meeting, titled "Making Cities Livable: the Transport Challenge," is hosted by UITP and UNED-UK. It will be chaired by Derek Osborn (Co-chair of the Intersessional) and will feature Jonas Rabinovitch (UNDP) and Walter Hook (Institute of Transportation and Development Policy).

"Towards Earth Summit II: A Summary of NGO Recommendations for Actions And Commitments for the 1997 Intersessional Meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development" is now available in Conference Room C.

On Wednesday, 5 March, UNA-NY has organized a meeting with H.E. Mr. Razali Ismail, President of the General Assembly, at the UN Church Centre from 6:00-7:30 p.m.

"OUTREACH 1997"*

...speaking for the NGO Steering Committee for the CSD

The NGO Steering Committee for the CSD was established at the Commission for Sustainable Development in 1994 to facilitate the involvement of NGOs and other major groups, where appropriate, at the CSD. Membership of the Steering Committee is determined in annual elections held at the CSD, and includes Major Groups, grassroots organizations, regional, national and global NGOs and networks. Our work includes facilitating NGO Working Groups, providing support for participation of

southern and eastern NGO representatives, and organizing facilities which strengthen the voices of NGOs in the sustainable development debate. The Steering Committee is facilitating activities around the CSD Intersessional, the CSD V and Earth Summit II.

The **Steering Committee** has a web page. <http://www.igc.apc.org/habitat/csd-97>
There is also a general list server for those interested it is csdgen@undp.org just send a message to be added to it.

The complete NGO statement referred to under "UPDATE" will be posted on the web site in a couple of days.

NGO Caucus Meetings:

These meetings are scheduled in Conf. Room C. To request use of this room, please call Abby Neville, NGLS: tel: 963-3125; fax: 963-8712.

Deadline to submit a request for the following day is 4 p.m.