

OUTREACH 1997

The Voice of the NGO Community at CSD*

Countdown to Earth Summit II

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4 MARCH 1997

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SECOND DAY OF FINAL WEEK

AT A GLANCE

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COMMENTARY:

OUTREACH '97
CSD NGO Steering Committee

World Federation of United Nations Associations (WFUNA)

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OUTREACH 1997

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"I see little merit in the impatience of those who would abandon this imperfect world instrument [the UN] because they dislike our imperfect world. For the troubles of a world organization merely reflect the troubles of the world itself.....Those [UN] members who are willing to contribute their votes and their views - but very little else - have created a serious deficit by refusing to pay their share of special UN assessments."

*President John F. Kennedy
State of the Union Address, 11 January 1962*

So...week two of the Intersessional starts and we find governments looking for the mystical "thing" that will please their Heads of State when they arrive in June.

NGOs have been pushing the answer, to paraphrase James Carvel, "its the money - stupid." The deal at Rio was when the industrialized countries moved out of their recession, funds towards the 0.7% GNP target would start flowing again. Instead, money has been cut from \$60 billion in 1997 to around \$55 billion today. In addition, on the issue of full replenishment of the GEF, rumor has it that Germany and France may not support replenishment. Will the idea of an air fuel surcharge bring new money on the table? The European Directive allowing it to charge for domestic flights within Europe comes up for renewal in December. Europe could make an important announcement in June - but will they? There is obviously a need to politicize the debate around new financial mechanisms. The experts panel has done a great job, but we now need an Inter-governmental Panel on Finance to take the next steps and to prepare for Earth Summit III in June 2002.

NGOs are calling for the development of policy instruments that will secure commodity prices which reflect the true environmental and social cost of their production and the withdrawal of escalating tariffs on primary commodities exported from developing countries.

A focussed Indigenous Caucus has rekindled a set of achievable recommendations from the review process. It is our hope that this week, governments will support these recommendations.

The NGO Energy Caucus has been lobbying for a 20% reduction in CO2 by 2005 and strongly believes that a 40% reduction is possible. The caucus has been calling for governments to calculate the real internal economic costs of fossil fuels by taking into account the enormous public subsidies, both direct and indirect, that support fossil fuel production and consumption. In addition to this, the caucus believes that even if we consider only the current market prices, renewable technologies, especially solar, wind and fuel cell, are cost effective now!

On the Oceans issue, NGOs are calling for a mechanism possibly an Inter-Governmental Panel on Oceans, to bring together the disparate bodies and programmes dealing with Ocean-related issues.

At the end of this week, NGOs will be preparing a new position paper which will be sent out widely and negotiated over the weekend of the 5th/6th of April. This will form the basis of the main NGO input to the CSD.

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING CALENDAR

For more information on other side events and meetings, consult the newsletter "ISWG-CSD Today" which can be obtained every morning in Conf. Room C and in the main meeting room. Or 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. Lunch Room
MEDIA CAUCUS

TUESDAY, 4 MARCH

3:00-5:00 p.m. Conf. Room C
NGO Committee on Information, Communications and Technology

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They are not the official opinions of the NGO/CSD Steering Committee or of WFUNA.

NEWS FROM THE CONFERENCE ROOM

EXCERPTS OF NGO INTERVENTIONS

ENERGY

ENERGY NGOS URGE CSD TO SELECT ENERGY AS PRIORITY FOR JUNE

Excerpts from the Statements of the NGO Energy Caucus to the CSD made by Deling Wang -- Metropolitan Solar Energy Society (27 February)

Reducing energy use and transitioning to sustainable energy was a foundation of both Agenda 21 and the Framework Convention on Climate Change at Rio. Since 1992, there has been not only no stabilization of carbon emissions, but there has been an explosive growth of energy production and consumption both within sustainable as well as unsustainable development. The Energy Caucus strongly urges the CSD to select energy as a priority issue for the Special Session.

Last Sunday, in a discussion about an NGO call for a reduction of CO2 emissions of 20% from 1990 levels by the year 2005, a high-ranking participant remarked that while he felt there was definitely support for a targeted reduction, he would be "astonished" if countries would agree to 20%.

It was not surprising, because inevitably we hear the view that, while renewable sources of energy like solar might be a good prospect in the future, they are too expensive to be practical on a large scale basis today.

Well, not only is a 20% reduction feasible by the year 2005, but a reduction of 40% is feasible!

There are two reasons why. First, policy decisions on financing energy for development must calculate the true costs of fossil fuels and nuclear power. In particular, governments must take into account the enormous public subsidies that support fossil fuel production and consumption, and

the external health and environmental costs which have huge economic components. A good example is the cost of lost work time from increased cases of asthma and bronchitis caused by environmental factors.

These subsidies might better be called "fossil fuel welfare" and they include tax deductions, credits and funding for exploration and generation of fossil fuels, and the roads and pipelines that transport them. Estimates for such direct and indirect subsidies range from \$250 billion U.S. to \$3 to \$4 trillion *per year*. On the other hand, subsidies for renewables such as solar, wind and fuel cells are not more than \$2 billion U.S., or less than 1% of the lowest estimates for fossil fuel. And these lowest estimates do not take into account the huge subsidies for nuclear energy.

Second, even ignoring those subsidies and considering only the current market prices, renewable technologies especially solar, wind and fuel cells, are cost-effective NOW. In remote areas, renewable technologies are already cost-effective and competitive with fossil fuels. Solar photovoltaic panels for electricity and solar cookers for cooking and water purification and other uses cost much less than building an infrastructure to supply oil, gas, or coal.

In both urban and rural areas, various types of solar technologies for building are already cost-effective. Passive solar design has made it possible to reduce energy use by up to 80%. More advanced passive solar technologies, which add negligible cost to a building's construction, include sun spaces and thermal storage walls. Combined with energy efficiency, these can reduce the heating, light and air conditioning costs of a building to almost zero.

Some of these technologies may not be as feasible in a dense city like New York, but even here, energy use can be reduced by more than 50% by using passive solar design. Other renewable technologies that are more than cost competitive, include solar thermal hot water heating, and wind energy with fuel cells, which are especially apt for generating energy supplied by utilities.

Finally, the costs of all types of solar photovoltaics are dropping 10 to 20% per year. One of the most promising of these new cost-effective applications is building-integrated photovoltaics, where the photovoltaics actually comprise part of the building materials. Increasing use should drive prices of photovoltaics down even more rapidly.

An old Chinese saying states, "One sun can sustain us for 100 trillion years." Does anyone know another resource that can last longer than that?

DID YOU KNOW...

Monopoly pricing rates proposed for NGO

access to UN Optical Disk System

Effective 3 March, the United Nations plans to make provisions for public access to virtually all UN documents - in all languages - through the World Wide Web - but at a price that will be prohibitive for all but a few of the largest NGOs, namely \$1,500 per year for public access - even with a 25% discount for DPI and ECOSOC NGOs, the resulting \$1,125 is still an outrageous price.

No doubt, the attempt to charge such prohibitive prices stems from a sincere attempt to address the UN's deficit - but the prices are based on a false sense of economy and economics — a penny-wise, pound-foolish approach. This does not recognize that such a high price will choke off demand for a service whose real costs are much lower than the cost of printing documents. Nor does it take into account that using information and communication technology to enable full, affordable access to UN documents can also foster stronger relations between the UN and the NGO community. This can also help to provide a much needed support for the United Nations. This is, by the way, called for in ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31.

Perhaps the largest debtor nation - a nation that continues to withhold payment of its arrears until reforms are made - could be induced to pay what would amount to less than 1/10 of 1 per cent of its outstanding debt in order to underwrite the whole cost of supporting the much needed measure of enabling online access to United Nations documents?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On Tuesday, 4 March, the US Delegation has called a meeting with all NGOs to be held from 6:00-7:30 p.m. in Conference Room A.

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.

The Sixth International Conference of The World Information Transfer will be held at United Nations Headquarters on 17-18 April 1997. Running parallel to CSD V, this conference, which is being co-sponsored by the Government of Chile, will focus on "Environmental Degradation: Its Effect on Children's Health." Further information can be obtained by contacting the following:

tel: (212) 686-1996
fax: (212) 686-2172
email: wit@igc.apc.org

"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.

FEATURES...

Money makes the world go around... but will it at the CSD?

We all know that money makes the world go around. And no-one knows it better than delegates at the Intersessional. Time and time again governments from all parts of the world have referred to the issue of finance in all its various dimensions: aid, the Global Environment Facility, technology transfer, the private sector ...

For the South, the main concern is to gain access to more funds for the right purposes and on the right terms. The North's response so far has been essentially to say either 'aid is a dinosaur and the private sector will solve the problem', or 'the private sector will solve almost all problems but there will still be some aid, probably in declining amounts'.

Finding acceptable solutions on the finance issue will be crucial to the success of the CSD and the Special Session. This means the developed countries will have to make real commitments on both the quantity and quality of finance that convince the developing countries that the North is still faithful to its Rio obligations. It will not be enough just to say that GEF replenishment that will be 'adequate', to assume bluntly that aid will fall, and private capital will step into the breach. Growing poverty and environmental degradation in the North show just how sensitive the private sector and the free market can be to the needs of people and the environment.

We need an approach that identifies problems clearly and then matches them to a range of sources of financing, some private, some public. We need commitments to improvements in both the quantity and quality of official development

assistance - for example by increasing the GEF and tackling the problems of bureaucratic complexity that have so frustrated developing countries (and others). And it will not be enough to broaden the mandate of the GEF without giving it sufficient extra resources to enable it to rise to the challenge. If replenishment negotiations produce a broader but smaller GEF, it will just do more things less well. As for official aid, the suggestion by Dr Mostafa Tolba for a clear target to return to 1992 aid levels - for example by 2002 - could be a way to focus action.

At the same time, broad debate is needed on how best to use other sources of finance, public and private, to support sustainable development. Crucially, progress will have to be made towards new financial mechanisms. Several countries have supported this in principle at the Intersessional - but it is not clear how they think it can be done.

The time has come for an Intergovernmental Panel on Finance. A Panel could review all the issues mentioned above, and many more besides. It could move debate on new financial mechanisms such as international taxation from the technical cloisters of the Expert Group on Financial Issues of Agenda 21 into a broader and more inclusive forum - involving government representatives from environmental, social and finance ministries, NGOs and other experts, and towards international political consensus. It could also address the urgent need for all countries to remove the myriad subsidies from activities that cause environmental damage - intensive agriculture, energy production and consumption, forest exploitation, unsustainable fisheries, and more.

At the Intersessional, the CSD and the Special Session need to demonstrate an international political willingness to address the finance issue credibly. We need clear commitments to targets and timetables for increases in GEF and official aid, improvements in the quality of all aid, and the establishment of an Intergovernmental Panel to make real political progress over the next two or three years. **Rob Lake, UNED-UK**

NGO WORKSHOP...

GLOBALIZATION, SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS

During an NGO workshop on February the 27th a paper presented by CAPSCAN was discussed. CAPSCAN is the Consumption and Productions Systems Change Action Network. The NGOs facilitators are found in Oslo, Norway and Harare, Zimbabwe- thus making this an interesting North-South network NGO. We bring here an abbreviated version of their position paper.

In Chapter 4 of Agenda 21, "sustainable

consumption patterns" are recognized as central to any discussion on sustainable development and are relevant to all other chapters. However, the issue of globalization, though never explicitly addressed in Agenda 21, is increasingly seen by politicians and people's organizations as vital to achieving global sustainability.

Organizations working on the issue of sustainable production and consumption have identified three major issues in order to reach the objective of meeting basic human needs identified in Chapter 4 of Agenda 21. These are:

1. the need for reduced consumption of resources in order to maintain survival in the future,
2. a fair distribution of resources as a matter of both ethics, long term sustainability, and conflict minimization, and
3. the change from consumerism to a quality of life and lifestyle.

Globalization is not a new phenomenon. It is a long-term movement of history itself. Throughout history people have moved from food-deficit to food-surplus regions. This process was greatly accelerated with improvements in communications, the development of science and technology, and, beginning with the nineteenth century, the global movement of capital in search of markets and raw materials.

Globalization's twin is liberalization. Liberalization seeks to free the world market of trade barriers. Tariffs and protectionist policies have been the hallmark of national development for the last three hundred years. Consequently, domestic lobbies and pressure groups have arisen historically in all countries, without exception, seeking national protection from outside competition.

The twin processes of globalization and liberalization have a different impact on various countries, depending on their level of development and how they are integrated in the world market. The assumption made by neo-classical writers that globalization and liberalization will bring growth and development for all people in the world is not tenable or self-evident.

We would like to introduce a number of principles on which development should be founded:

Principle of Equity; Principle of High Thinking and Simple Living; Principle of Environmental Security; The Principle of Reciprocity; The Principle of National Self-determination; The Principle of Democracy in Global Governance; The Principle of Common and Differentiated Responsibility.

In order to fulfill our commitments on the grassroots level, we have also identified several demands:

Country impact demand; Environment Impact Demand; People Movement Demand; Long Term Demands.

RIO GRINDS... overheard at the coffee bar

“Thursday’s NGO meeting with UN-Reform Czar Strong ended with a question on corporate responsibility. Time didn’t allow for a follow up in-depth question on Ontario Hydro.

Rumor has it that the small Costa Rica-based Earth Council event at the Sheraton Hotel in Rio hasn’t got poverty reduction on its agenda because of the lack of interest among many of the non-NGO invitees. A big question asked in the coffee bar this week is, will the ‘poor’ of Rio be removed before the invited participants arrive.

There is some concern among governments about the support for recycling aluminum doors which is in the final draft of the NGO document. The lack of any mention of Space Junk has also shocked many.

With over 200 NGOs coming through these two weeks, the Intersessional is turning out to be more like the CSD.”

NGO CORNER...

There are more than 550 accredited NGOs behind the NGO Steering Committee. Together they represent millions of people on all continents. We will be using this column in the next few days to introduce a few of these NGOs to you.

THE INDIGENOUS CAUCUS:

It is worth remembering that we are now in the International Decade of the World’s Indigenous Peoples. We are therefore, pleased to begin our NGO Spotlight series by featuring the Indigenous Peoples’ Caucus, who have combined their energies to speak on behalf of native inhabitants from every region of the world.

In terms of international activity, this diverse group, made up of hundreds of organizations, large and small, was formed (in most recent times) in Geneva in 1977 under the auspices of the UN. And while the Caucus is represented by several organizations at the current CSD Intersessional, they also participate in various other fora no within the United Nations.

During the Intersessional, the Indigenous Peoples’ Caucus is represented by the following organizations: The American Indian Law Alliance; The Native American Council of New York City - which represents four indigenous organizations; Cordillera Women’s Education and Resource Center; The Indigenous Peoples’ International Centre for Policy Research and Education (Tebtebba Foundation); Asia Indigenous Women’s Network (AIWN); Bangladesh Indigenous and Hill People’s Association for Advancement; The New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council - representing approximately 90-100,000 aboriginal people in New South Wales; The NGO Committee on the United Nations International Decade of the World’s Indigenous Peoples - Ad Hoc Committee on the CSD; El Consejo General de Tainos Boricanos; and the Wittenberg Center for Alternative Resources.

The Caucus has developed a summary of recommendations which NGOs and governments alike are invited to support. Calling for the UN System to play a more proactive and coordinated role in ensuring the effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in achieving Global Sustainability, they propose that;

1. The CSD should organize a day on Indigenous issues at a future CSD (see para 41 of the Report of the Secretary General E/CN.17/1997//2/Add.22);
2. All UN agencies should ensure the dissemination of comprehensible information in relation to Sustainability and the associated processes of all levels;
3. The mandates for the UN Voluntary Funds for Indigenous Peoples and the International Decade for the World Indigenous Peoples should be amended to facilitate Indigenous Peoples’ representation at the CSD and the associated processes;
4. The Department of Policy Co-ordination and Sustainable Development coordinate an Inter-agency task force directed at ensuring more informed, active participation of Indigenous Peoples in programs designed to contribute to Global Sustainability (see para 42 of Add 22);
5. The DPCSD and the CSD contribute to discussions on the establishment of a Permanent UN Forum for Indigenous Peoples’;
6. The CSD should review the progress of UN agencies in relation to the impact of Genetic Research programs on Indigenous Peoples (see para 38 of Add 22) especially the Human Genome Diversity Project;

7. The CSD should examine the impacts on Indigenous Peoples of the implementation of the policies, programs and activities of the World Trade Organization and International Institutions and other similar processes;

8. The CSD should review the activities of National and Transnational Corporations with a view to ensuring greater corporate accountability;

9. The CSD should be guided by Indigenous Peoples’ own principles and perspectives, as expressed in the UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, especially bearing in mind that there has been a united call by Indigenous Peoples worldwide for its early adoption, in its present form (see para 33 and 39 of Add 22).

10. All UN bodies should recognize that Indigenous Peoples worldwide have called for the adoption of the Draft Declaration in its present form.

To sign on to their document, give your name, organization and address to any of the Caucus members or consult the notice boards around Conference Room C.

ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO “OUTREACH” MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 4:00 P.M. THE DAY PRIOR TO PUBLICATION. PLEASE FORWARD TO JAN-GUSTAV OR SHARON AT WFUNA.

DOUBLE FEATURE...

Local Agenda 21 on the Agenda

This Intersessional is just over a week old but already there is enough evidence to show that Local Agenda 21 is now firmly part of the CSD’s agenda for UNGASS. This community-based initiative seems to have been one of the more meaningful outcomes of the Rio process.

The survey of international activity on Local Agenda 21, which was carried out by ICLEI for the CSD Major Groups Secretariat and which is referred to in the Report of the Secretary-General in the paper No. E/CN.17/1997/2/Add.22, draws attention to the significant progress on Local Agenda 21, namely that now around 2000 local authorities working in concert with their local communities are preparing local plans for sustainable development. For example, in the UK over 70% of all local authorities are engaged in the process. This scale of activity is replicated in other countries.

The CSD’s survey shows that progress on Local Agenda 21 is more widespread in those countries where national associations of local government have organized national Local Agenda 21 campaigns. Such campaigns have been up and running for a while in Australia, China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, Norway Sweden and the UK. Similar

campaigns have started more recently in Malawi, South Africa, Germany, Greece and in both Ireland and Northern Ireland.

In many other countries, including Brazil, Peru, and others in Africa and Asia, Local Agenda 21 activity has occurred successfully but sporadically in individual local authorities and communities without such national campaigns. It is also true that more progress has been made in those countries which have been generally supportive of Local Agenda 21 activity. And so, in recognition of the progress already made and to give further impetus to the Local Agenda 21 initiative, it would seem appropriate for national governments to support national associations of local governments and to prepare a review of measures by national governments which could provide support with policies and, where appropriate, fiscal frameworks for successful and continued implementation of Local Agenda 21's.

INDICATORS: Much exciting work has been continuing since Rio, particularly during the HABITAT II process, on indicators for sustainable development. In some countries, considerable work has been put into the development of such indicators both at the national and local levels. As part of local Agenda 21, the preparation of indicators with citizens and community groups has been particularly exciting and worthwhile. However, there may now be real opportunities for national and local governments to work together on sets of core indicators of sustainable development. National and local governments should, along with NGOs, consider the development of such core indicators for use at both the national and local levels.

JOINT WORKING: Of course, there are many areas where national and local governments, other major groups and NGOs should work together in:

- land use planning and management;
- human settlements planning;
- energy management and reduction campaigns;
- the preparation of local biodiversity action plans;
- the development of environmental management systems for businesses and local government like

EMAS and ISO 1400;
- the wide area of environmental education and empowerment.

CLIMATE CHANGE: One of the conventions that has received considerable attention in the local government community is the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Since 1993, 165 cities - representing 4% of global carbon dioxide emissions - have joined together in the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign. Aiming for a general target of a 20% reduction in their greenhouse gas emissions, these cities have prepared and are implementing local climate action plans and are beginning to measure their progress. The City of Nagoya, Japan, will host the Fourth World Conference of Cities for Climate Protection in late November of this year, on the eve of the third session of the Conference of States Parties. Representatives of cities hope to present their findings and recommendations to this body and work with national governments to establish processes for target setting in this critical area.

More positive news and examples of good practice will be aired at the dialogue session arranged for Local Agenda 21 and local authorities at the 5th Session of the CSD in New York on 16 April.

A Challenge for the EU Parliament

Lone Dybkjaer, the Chairperson of the European Union Parliament's *Committee on Environment and Health Matters and Consumer Protection*, is presently preparing a statement on behalf of the Parliament regarding priorities for Earth Summit 2. The statement is expected to be officially adopted by the Parliament next week, but some of the Chairpersons opinions are already known.

The statement sets out by noting that since UNCED, we have moved even further away from sustainable development and that making it even more imperative to reevaluate the Rio-process and to engage in much stronger commitments. It is therefore troublesome that the EU countries are not able to comply with the Rio commitments, detracting credibility from the EU's work to ensure sustainable development globally.

The main task for the upcoming Special Session is to improve the partnership between rich and poor countries, while the main problem remains the lack of commitment on behalf of the rich countries. This, which is clearly shown by the lack of transfer of resources to the developing countries, coupled with over consumption in the North creates serious obstacles for fulfilling commitments made in Rio.

Most of the EU member countries have not fulfilled their economic commitment. And although concern for this is expressed by both the EU Commission as well as by its member nations, it is obvious that asking the fulfillment to take place "as soon as possible" is too strong a wording for the European Community to accept at this time. The cost of fulfilling these obligations will just keep increasing if

they continue to procrastinate. The common platform for the participating EU countries at the Special Session ought to go further than suggested by the EU Commission and the EU Council.

Obviously the draft for the statement was written before the Intersessional, and in its present form is not completely up to date with the latest statements; but on the issue of finance mentioned as the main problem, the statement is sadly too valid: in the statement delivered Friday by Van Hellenberg Huber, on behalf of the European Union, paragraph 43 on Finance reads: "... the DAC donors and others able to do so should, *reaffirm our commitment* to meet the UN target for ODA flows of 0.7% of GNP *as soon as possible*" (emphasis added).

Ms. Dybkjaer, "You've got 3 months! Good luck!"

EXTRA, EXTRA!

US Delegation calls a meeting with all NGOs on Tuesday, 4 March from 6:00-7:30 p.m. in Conference Room A.