

## THE GRAND FINALE, FOR NOW

### AT A GLANCE

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### COMMENTARY

**OUTREACH '97**  
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#### *Is this the end... or just the beginning?*

The process of international cooperation at the UN is impressive. Dedicated men and women from all over the world manage to arrive at "agreed texts" covering almost any issue at the close of almost each and every conference. The different delegates at the Intersessional are once again at work on a final document.

At a glance, the document sets out to describe the stark realities of the world in a typical UN manner. Trends and conditions in the world remain the subject of great concern. Economic inequities increase, more people live in poverty, the global environment continues to deteriorate and "significant environmental problems remain deeply embedded in the socio-economic fabric of nations in all regions."

But we are willing to do something about this deplorable situation. By all means, much has been accomplished in a surprisingly short period of time. Since Rio in 1992, we have taken giant strides towards a progressively better future. Positive development trends and positive achievements need to be emphasized. Population growth is slowing down; there are considerable health improvements among large groups of people in the world; conventions to protect various parts of the environment have been agreed on. But we have miles to go before we can sleep.

Why have we reached such a deplorable state of affairs? The participating nations in the Intersessional have so far agreed on a working text which alludes to a number of problem areas. Polluting and inefficient patterns of production and consumption, particularly in the industrialized countries are identified in Agenda 21 as the leading cause of environmental degradation worldwide. Poverty must be eradicated. All agree to that. But how? Many recommend the full integration of the poor into dynamic market systems.

Under the seemingly placid and amicable surface of the Intersessional there are problem areas that are analyzed from so different vantage points that they may be irreconcilable.

One basic and very simple question needs to be asked concerning future plans of action : Why have we reached the state of the world we are in? Is this a polemical question and therefore should not be asked? Is it a too political question and therefore should not be asked? Or is it a question that everyone knows the answer to, and therefore does not need to be asked.

Whatever the reasons for the world's present state of being, we need to produce and to consume to survive. There are six central questions to be asked in this connection:

- What are we going to produce?
- How are we going to produce this?
- For whom are we producing this?
- From what are we producing?
- Who will decide the production?
- What consequences for the environment will this production have?
- What answers are we going to give these questions?

Will the final document from the Intersessional help us to arrive at satisfactory answers to these questions? Will CSD 5 in April give us these answers?

For the first time in the history of mankind, we have the means, knowledge, technology and resources available to give all people a decent life. We just need to find a way to answer the difficult questions of how to develop our future.

We live in exciting times and the challenge of future is exciting. And as Derek Osborn said immediately after the closing session on Thursday - 'I think we are about to have a good document to work with. I am very optimistic about the future'.

Stay tuned to OUTREACH and stay with the process until the next meeting of the CSD 5 in April.

### VISION...

"Far better it is to dare mighty things to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the gray

twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat.”

*Theodore Roosevelt*

“The unlawful we can do immediately, the unconstitutional just takes a little bit longer.”

*Henry Kissinger*

“We commit ourselves to promoting the goal of full employment as a basic priority of our economic and social policies, and to enabling all men and women to attain secure and sustainable livelihoods through freely chosen productive employment and work.”

*Copenhagen Declaration, WSSD - 1995*

“Did I shave my legs for this?”

*Country singer Deena Carver*

## RIO GRINDS... overheard at the coffee bar

### LATEST PRIVATIZATION NEWS:

Following the rumors on Czar Strong's UN privatization in yesterday's OUTREACH, we have just been informed of the latest developments...

We understand that UNICEF is to be acquired by Toys 'R' Us, while Kentucky Fried Chicken has successfully bid for the lucrative CITES franchise. Rumors that the International Whaling Commission is to be taken over by a consortium of Burger King and Wendy's have proved to be lies as has the acquisition of IAEA by the nuclear industry.

Early speculation that WTO was on the privatization list has dissipated, after it was realized the organization is already controlled by the private sector.

## NEWS FROM THE CONFERENCE ROOM

### *NGO Statement on Areas Requiring Urgent Action (Section III B)*

*intervention by the INDIGENOUS CAUCUS*

### Paragraph 22

Poverty: We are glad to see that poverty is recognized as one of the first areas requiring urgent action. For us, this should be seriously addressed because one of the major barriers to our ability to effectively contribute to sustainable development is the worsening situation of poverty not only among our peoples but with the rest of society.

The economic growth that is taking place in some of the countries where we live is not translated into growth for indigenous peoples. This growth often means environmental devastation of our lands where important minerals are found. The increasing debt burden especially of southern governments has to be addressed in a manner which will prevent a further expansion of extractive activities in the lands of indigenous peoples.

### Paragraph 23

Fresh Water: Freshwater is another of our key concerns. Our groundwater aquifers are fast disappearing because of destructive mining operations. These, including our rivers and lakes, are also being poisoned by toxic pesticide residues and mine tailings.

We are not sure that the treatment of water as an economic good as stated in para. 23 (c) is a good thing for us. The push for privatization of water is a great concern to us. We fear it will undermine the indigenous water management systems which our peoples have sustained for many centuries.

In many countries, the major headwaters are found in indigenous peoples' territories. Allowing the privatization of water is going to aggravate conflicts between different groups of people.

We recommend that the proposals for integrated water management should take into consideration the existing indigenous water management systems. These proposals should also address the regulation of mining, commercial plantations, industrial factories, etc. which often are responsible for the disappearance of water sources or the destruction of the water quality.

Forests: With regards to forests, we would like to refer to the recommendations which came out on the Intersessional Meeting of Indigenous and other Forest-Dependent Peoples on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of forests of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests.

### Paragraph 25

Energy: Sites of energy projects like hydro-electric dams and geothermal plants are often found in ancestral territories which belong to indigenous peoples. We support para 25 (a) which calls on countries to include economic, environmental and

social aspects of energy programs and policies. The social and environmental impact energy projects have on indigenous peoples should be carefully studied before such projects can be pursued. The participation of affected indigenous peoples in the conduct of such studies should be ensured.

Uranium mining which is taking place in many indigenous peoples lands should be stopped. The Beijing Declaration of Indigenous Women made this call after a discussion of the impact of uranium mining on the health of indigenous peoples and on the environment. If uranium mining is stopped the creation of nuclear power and nuclear military weapons will also be stopped.

We support proposals in the Co-Chairperson's text for Education, Health, Toxic Chemicals and Wastes, Land and Sustainable Agriculture. All these are relevant to us.

### Paragraphs 32 and 33

Human Settlements and Tourism: Sustainable Human Settlements and Tourism are also concerns which we would like to contribute to. More and more indigenous peoples are being driven to urban areas because they are being displaced from their ancestral lands. In some communities, the cause of displacement is not only because of land conversion programs, but also increasing militarization. Many of the conflicts taking place in indigenous peoples lands are conflicts over the control and management of the remaining natural resources. The CSD should look into the interrelationships of conflict over resources, militarization and increasing urbanization and come up with proposals on how to address them.

Tourism is the fastest growing sector in economic development. This is another worry for indigenous peoples. Indigenous peoples and their territories are increasingly being developed as tourist attractions. The proposal for an International Programme of Work in para. 33 should be elaborated not only within UNCTAD,

World Tourism Organization and UNEP, but also with the UN Working Group on Indigenous Peoples. The views of indigenous peoples should be an integral part in the development of these programs and policies, whether on the national and international levels.

### NEWS FROM THE CONFERENCE ROOM (CON'T)

### Paragraph 34

Biodiversity and Biotechnology: Finally a few comments on biodiversity and biotechnology. We are happy to support a rapid conclusion of a Biosafety Protocol. We also thank the Co-Chairs for reaffirming the need to take positive action to recognize and reward traditional knowledge and practices of indigenous peoples in paragraph 34.

Biopiracy of plant genetic resources, indigenous knowledge, and even human genetic resources from our peoples are taking place. We have raised our alarm over how the Human Genetic Diversity Project collects genetic material from indigenous peoples. We said that it is not remote that with these developments, the cloning of peoples and the creation of super-races is not far behind. Now, with the news of the successful cloning of Dolly, the sheep, and of primates, there is reason to be alarmed.

In this light, we think it is not enough to call for a Biosafety Protocol but also a protocol on Bioethics. President Clinton's creation of a Bioethics Committee and his ban on providing support to cloning is a first step which could be replicated on the international level and on the national level. Indigenous peoples, time and again, in many different forums and conferences have called for a stop to the Human Genetic Diversity Project, and a moratorium on the collection of genetic resources in our lands. The immediate formulation and negotiation for a protocol on Bioethics should be proposed by the CSD and the UNGASS.

The CSD should be in the lead in raising not only environmental and development concerns but also moral questions related to the destruction of the environment, human lives, and the distortion of human values.

While there is a demand for the transfer of biotechnology, governments calling for this should be aware of the environmental, social, moral, and health impacts of biotechnology, particularly genetic engineering. Indigenous peoples are very wary of the developments taking place in Biotechnology and in the formulation of policies on this it is our hope that our views and concerns are considered and solicited.

## NGO VIEWPOINT...

### *The Cloning of Dolly and the CSD*

by Victoria Tauli-Corpuz  
Cordillera Women's Education & Resource Center

During CSD 2 the Indigenous Peoples blew the whistle on the Human Genome Diversity Project which aimed to collect genetic material of indigenous peoples from more than 700 communities. Our concern was around several points such as; how these genetic materials will be gathered, will these be patented by the collectors, will these be cloned and reproduced in commercial quantities, etc. Thereafter, indigenous peoples in several conferences and fora protested against this project and called for a stop to it, a moratorium on the collection of genetic resources in indigenous peoples lands, and a stop to the patenting of life forms.

The way life is being manipulated, commodified, and desecrated is once again witnessed by the cloning of Dolly, the sheep, and the primates. Most of the news analysis on this issue say that the cloning of primates is only one step behind the cloning of human beings. The United States government is very concerned about this development and President Clinton, himself, immediately created a Bioethics Committee and banned the giving of support to cloning projects.

However, everybody knows that enterprising individuals and corporations who see profit in this will not be easily stopped. The US government should review its laws which allow for the patenting of life-forms because this is how everything started.

Within the past five years we have seen the tremendous advances in biotechnology in manipulating genetic materials, whether plant, animal, or human. In spite of the protests launched against the deliberate release of genetically-modified organisms and plants, these releases are still being done. The negotiation of a Biosafety Protocol within the Convention on Biological Diversity is still going on, so up to now there is no appropriate international legal instrument which can be used to stop these releases.

The Review of Agenda 21 should take stock of the extent of the GMO releases and the commercial production and sale of transgenic products and see the social, health and environmental impacts of these. Biotechnology needs to be included as one of the areas which need urgent action. Because of the ethical and moral implications of biotechnology, the Biosafety Protocol should include bioethical issues, or there should be a separate protocol on Bioethics.

The cloning of Dolly is a very relevant development which CSD should address. The world will never be the same again after this development but the CSD,

or the UN in general, can play a role in helping slow down the wide scale desecration of life.

### *Close Encounters of the EU Kind*

by Malini Mehra  
Friends of the Earth International

The European Union hosted an informal 1 1/2 hour dialogue session with all interested NGOs for the second time during the intersessionals on March 6th. All 15 EU member state delegates were represented with the exception of Denmark. Arrayed on the other side of the table were NGO delegates from UNED-UK, Birdlife International, IUCN, Friends of the Earth International, WWF, German Forum on Environment & Development, the NGO Energy Caucus and others.

The discussion started with an exchange of views of the CSD Intersessional. While the feeling in NGO ranks was one of "underwhelment" at the lack of focus, targets and timetables in the draft document produced by the CSD Intersessional Working Group co-chairs, the EU president, Mr. J.G.S.T.M. van Hellenburg Hubar, of the Netherlands spoke optimistically of it. He noted that ownership of the document by the Co-chairs is believed to facilitate agreement on the document which will now be taken back to national capitals for discussion, and preparation for negotiation, during the ten days of the CSD V in April. The EU expressed concerns, however, about the lack of geographically balanced participation in the CSD Intersessional and in particular the involvement of southern countries.

While noting commendable efforts made by many, NGOs lamented the general lack of "oomph" in the intersessionals and the lack of preparedness on the part of many governmental delegations. They stressed the urgent need to reinvigorate the CSD discussions if governments are to succeed in effectively addressing the grave ecological and social crises. EU delegates expressed confidence that the Earth Summit would reaffirm the Rio commitments and welcomed NGO leadership in many areas. Indeed, the EU president quipped that the EU's papers looked like the CSD NGO statement leading to raised eyebrows on both sides of the table. Asked whether this common ground extended to NGO recommendations on the need for a well-enforced, regulatory framework for the private sector and a formalisation of relations between the CSD and the WTO, the response was less affirmative.

Substantive issues covered during the discussion included finance (on which significant progress is hoped), trade and the environment, action on the chemicals agenda, oceans, transport, the role of the private sector, the Climate Convention, and forays into the pros and cons of the Forest Convention, EU delegates agreed with NGO proposals for visible and

popular messages to raise awareness (perhaps on a country basis) on the Earth Summit II but would not divulge their plans. Asked what the Earth Summit II's central message should be, the EU president quoted Nitin Desai that 'sustainability should be brought from the margins to the core of development policy.'

On Climate Change, one of the priority areas of the CSD, NGOs regretted that no specific targets were mentioned in the co-chairmen's draft document. The German delegate responded that while the Earth Summit II could add political impetus to the Climate Change negotiations it was not the place of the CSD or the General Assembly to prejudge / replace the COP3 negotiations.

One of the most practical outcomes of the meeting was the EU President's endorsement of a proposal by the Energy caucus' to green the UN to it can live up to its sustainability ideals. An idea that has been lobbied without success for several years, this has now been taken up by the Dutch who have even offered to send over one of their energy experts to the UN to help in conducting an energy audit.

The discussion was perceived to be useful by both sides and it is hoped that other governments will respond with a similar willingness to engage with NGOs. NGOs have benefitted from both general and issue-focused dialogues with the AOSIS and other countries at the CSD Intersessionals and look forward to constructive dialogues with other countries and regions - in particular the G-77 - at the CSD V to move the Earth Summit II agenda forward.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS.

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**NGO CONSULTATION ON  
INCREASING ACCESS TO THE  
UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
AND ITS MAIN COMMITTEES  
AND ALL AREAS OF WORK OF  
THE UN**

**WHEN:** *Wednesday, 30 April 1997*  
*10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.*

**WHERE:** *UN Headquarters*  
*(room to be announced)*

Representatives of NGOs in Consultative Status with ECOSOC and those Associated with DPI are invited to participate in a day of discussion on specific issues that are likely to be raised at meetings of the Sub-Group on NGOs of the Open-Ended High-Level Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System, which is examining ways to increase NGO participation in the work of the UN General Assembly, its Main Committees and the UN System as a whole. All UN Missions are also invited to send Representatives.

*This Consultation is being organized under the auspices of the NGO Committee Chairs of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (CONGO). For further information, call the CONGO office in NY at (212) 986-8557.*

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### **PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY: LOCAL INITIATIVES FOR CITIES & TOWNS**

From 1-5 June 1997, an international conference will be held in New Castle, Australia to examine and encourage environmental awareness in local communities. The outcome of the conference will be presented to UNGASS in June. For more information, contact the Conference Managers, Capital Conferences Party Ltd. in Australia at: tel.: 612 9252 3388; fax: 612 9241 5282; email: capcon@ozemail.com.au

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### **ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION: ITS EFFECT ON CHILDREN'S HEALTH**

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

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## **THE NGO PROCESS SO FAR...**

**1996:**  
*April* NGOs at the CSD produce a synthesis position paper for Earth Summit II.

*June* This is mailed out to NGO focal points for them to use in their deliberations.

*July* The CSD\NGO Web Site is set up with a copy of the document posted.

*October* NGOs attend the General Assembly preparations for Earth Summit II.

*November* NGO Caucuses are asked to prepare position papers for the CSD Intersessional

**1997:**  
*January* NGO position paper produced

*February* NGO position paper synthesized into two new papers: a draft of the key NGO proposals and a more in depth set of calls for implementation process and the rationale

*20 February, NGO paper posted on the web*

*22-24 February, NGOs attending the CSD I discuss and agree position papers*

### **The process from now...**

*2<sup>nd</sup> week of March:* mailing to all CSD accredited NGOs with a copy of the two NGO papers

*2 April 1997:* deadline for comments for additions to NGO papers/new papers produced

*3 April 1997:* New papers posted on the web

*6/7 April 1997:* NGOs negotiate new papers prior to the opening to the CSD 5