

## Background

The workshop aimed to enhance exchange of experience, lessons learned, and best practice in implementation, as well as coordination among major group sectors in the Commission's work, by bringing together the representatives of major groups organising partners and providing the space for a transparent and informed discussion to achieve a common approach to this year's topics of Agriculture, Rural development, Land, Drought, Desertification and Africa, in addition to the review of CSD-13 decisions on Water and Sanitation.

The workshop further aimed at developing a common strategy for major groups as implementing partners (as different from organizing partners) in dealing with the thematic cluster, and at increasing mutual trust and intra-sectoral collaboration towards CSD-16 /17 and beyond.

## Opening

Participants were welcomed by Federica Pietracci, Major Groups Programme Coordinator, UN DESA/CSD Secretariat, who organised the workshop in close collaboration with the CSD major groups organising partners attending the UN ECE RIM on CSD. (Please see attached List of Participants and Agenda.) Federica provided an update of the Bureau's decision to have three Interactive Discussions where major groups will participate during the CSD: 1st - on 6th May (Tuesday); 2nd - on 9th May (Friday) major groups and partnerships initiatives with multi-stakeholders; and 3rd - on 15th May (Thursday) - Ministerial segment.

## Presentation

Nora Ourabah, representing farmers (IFAP) presented the context of agricultural development linked to poverty reduction and the recent trends in agriculture production, such as technology development, new actors in agri-food systems and open markets, that now brings greater food insecurity and very low commodity stock. She highlighted the need for "a new model and new thinking" in agriculture based on environmental sustainability that is more efficient, with better use of technology and inclusive of farmers. She noted that in view of increasing risks on climate side and market side, there are common challenges and concerns faced by the major groups (based on the Grid prepared by the CSD Secretariat using the Discussion Papers) on the following issues:

- Research and development - lack of extension services, lack of technology and lack of monitoring and evaluation
- Investments and markets - lack of attention to high income activities, turning drylands and degraded land into economic assets
- Environmental concerns - on land and water, attention on soil management and land tenure, water shortages and over-exploitation of land
- Capacity building - due to lack of financing, gender-specific concerns, support to small-scale farmers
- Institutions - due to weak financing and local management

## Discussions

Kirsten Sukalac (Business & Industry) emphasised the need to focus on the rapidly changing context of agriculture, particularly on some of the major structural changes. Their recent study showed changes in dietary patterns and increase in commodity prices. They have relatively similar findings with the Scientific and Technological Community on the need to accompany farmers who are not yet entrepreneurs through innovative ideas on education such as in elementary school. Likewise, there are best management practices that can be scaled up and can be locally adapted on integrated natural resource management.

Gilbert Glaser (Scientific and Technological Community) expressed his concerns about the current technology and efficient research in agriculture led by the CGIAR system that does an excellent work but is not particularly looking at the users side, particularly the small-scale farmers who we see has not been reached and are not empowered. There is a need to develop strategies that transfer modern technology to those needing them, therefore small scale farmers need more education. Farmers do have a lot of knowledge but the scientific work is not learning from them. John Badouox (Scientific and Technological Community) highlighted the need to have more people with a different mindset unlike many who want to be researchers and specialists who go out to the field to take pictures. Therefore, a space like CSD is very useful to sensitise the community where you need to involve the users (i.e., farmers) in defining your agenda and research.

Jing de la Rosa (Women) aligned their concerns with the Scientific and Technological Community about the CG system not reaching the users and women farmers, and yet new agriculture donors such as Gates Foundation are funding them. Marha Hirpa (Women) also expressed her concerns regarding current supply-driven *versus* demand-driver research where participatory research perhaps started but did not keep up with farmer's participation.

Lucien Royer (Trade Union) cited a joint study with between UNEP, ILO and TUAC - on agriculture and the potential of small farmers. It requires a specialised research dedicated to farmers and farm workers.

## Identified Common issues and Ways Forward

The ensuing discussions allowed the group to identify some common issues where all major groups may potentially work together in articulating their positions on the following issues. NGOs observed that they could not speak on behalf of their specialist NGOs working on the CSD clusters, but felt that most NGOs would be able to subscribe to what follows:

1. The need to target small-scale farmers (as entrepreneurs, as agriculture workers (employment and non-farm issues), mainstreaming small-holder farmers that are often in the margins that should now be part of holistic strategies and approaches so that the system works better, needs extension services, etc.)
2. Knowledge Transfer
  - Scale up /up-take of best practices
  - Water management (citing International Water Management Institute publication on Water for Food Water for Life on managing rainfall for rainfed agriculture)

3. Awareness raising at all levels (to research community, to policy makers)
4. Environmental risk-related (taking into consideration economics and social issues)
  - climate change
  - land and water resources (depletion)
  - soil management
5. Strategically approaching emerging issues and its current structures and paradigms
  - Bio-energy
  - Sustainable Consumption and Production

#### **Follow-up Action**

- Those who wish to share the outcome of the discussions to their constituencies on the above five issues can further discuss (via listserv/email) how to have a joint position through organising a Side Event at CSD.
- All major groups expressed their willingness to move this forward relating it to the Grid. The Grid can be revisited and simplified using these common issues as a basis of exploring how to work together. The idea is to bring out key messages from each of the major group interested (voluntarily) on these common issues serving as points of commonalities. The outcome of this exercise can also serve as the lowest common denominator particularly in our attempt to engage those who are not yet part of the major groups. The output can be made available in public (using CSD website).

#### **Additional Presentations and Discussions**

Lucien Royer (Trade Unions) presented the methodology of the Country Profiles as an analysis tool and strategy that, with the support of NGOs and other sectors, has been used to interact with governments at CSD. Lucien explained the details that can be found on the Country and Company Profiles which can be found on their website: <http://www.tradeunionsdunit.org/profiles>

Interests were expressed by the group to use the Country Profiles for this CSD cycle agenda; however, work is still in progress in putting up data. Potential collaboration will be done by each major group on a bilateral basis (e.g. women on land access) as well as in developing a joint calendar.

Jan-Gustav Strandenaes (NGOs) discussed the structure of the Multi-stakeholder dialogues<sup>1</sup>,

The following have been proposed by the group for the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue structure:

1. Develop discussion questions among major groups (to be drafted by UN DESA)
2. Have a facilitator to ensure equal footing participation
3. Possible structure of Chair and Co-Chairs (like at FAO)
4. Develop ground rules among major groups to have coherent presentations and positions

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<sup>1</sup> Presentation is attached separately

5. Ensure capacity building orientation to ensure greater involvement among major groups
6. Contact regional groupings among governments ahead of time to garner support for positions and make sure they are present under the dialogue

The afternoon continued with Jan-Gustav Strandenaes (NGOs) who introduced the issue of Resource mobilization challenges and National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSDS)<sup>2</sup>: how to engage in their development. He posed the challenge to the group that the process work that the major groups are doing before, during and after CSD is losing ground with less and less resources made available.

Issues discussed include:

- Relevance of process work as a driver of programme and project work
- Remind donors' of their pledging and promises from Johannesburg in 2002 to fund civil society work at CSD
- Work to increasing donors' willingness to understand and fund process work and not primarily fund easily defined and concrete projects developed and executed in the field
- Untapped potential enshrined in the NSDS
- Link the Trade Unions' country profiles work to the NSDS process
- Develop a coordinated major groups' funding strategy
- Synergy among NSDS and Local Agenda 21

Furthermore, strategic approaches among major groups sectors and exploring common solutions in dealing with the thematic cluster and their implementation were discussed as follows:

1. Launching common initiatives and partnerships:
  - A number of major groups sectors are inclined to use a common approach in presenting issues of mutual concern ( B&I, TU, W, F and STC)
  - Joint organisation of side events
  - Make complementary/joint major groups' presentations during the MSD (supporting each other's finding/viewpoint)
  - Develop key questions for the MSD and coordinate contacts with Governments and Secretariat
  - NSDS and Country Profiles and development of new major groups' indicators
2. Developing a common road-map and calendar of meetings:
  - Participants exchanged dates of relevant planned activities and meetings leading up to CSD-16 and beyond
  - Secretariat invited to submit electronic information on these meetings as well as relevant UN meetings for possible uploading in the CSD website

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<sup>2 2</sup> Presentation is attached separately.

SARD Initiative: presentation by NGO SARD stakeholders (introduced by Thomas Forster, International Partners for Sustainable Agriculture, IPSA) on activities that feed into CSD-16/17 cycle, including:

- Publication of a CSD-16 Background paper (outline distributed)
- Website launched: [sustainablefoodmonitor.org](http://sustainablefoodmonitor.org)
- Linking international agriculture and rural development agendas to the National, regional and local perspectives
- City and Farm linkages showcase 2008 (The New School, NY, Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 May 2008) possibility for interested stakeholders to reserve space by 15 February (requests to be addressed to [Tomas.Forster@practice2policy.org](mailto:Tomas.Forster@practice2policy.org))
- How to get a possible civil society consensus expression of messages from these two weekend days into the CSD process at the UN, possibly through participation of a person in one of the dialogues.

Hannah Stoddart, (NGO) Stakeholder Forum, provided updates on the Global Public Policy Network (GPPN) on Water Management and Sanitation. The GPPN was created to prepare the groundwork for the review at CSD 16 and ensure strong involvement in contributing to such a process. GPPN is a space for stakeholders, governments and UN Agencies and Organisations to work together, and in cooperation with other relevant initiatives (for example the International Year of Sanitation).

A preliminary consultation of a range of stakeholders has been conducted in order to obtain their views on how the GPPN might best achieve this, and how it can operate most efficiently with other relevant processes.

#### **Follow-up Action**

- Facilitator for MSD (UN- DESA to explore option)
- Coordinate capacity building orientation to ensure greater involvement among major groups (MGs)
- Contact regional groupings among governments ahead of time to garner support for positions and make sure they actively participate in dialogue (MGs)
- Work towards developing common approach in presenting issues of mutual concern (MGs)
- Joint organisation of side events (MGs)
- Develop key questions for the MSD and coordinate contacts with Governments and Secretariat (MGs and UN-DESA)
- NSDS and Country Profiles and development of new major groups' indicators (MGs in consultation with Trade Unions)
- Participates exchanged dates of relevant planned activities and meetings leading up to CSD-16 and beyond (MGs to submit meetings' listing to UN-DESA for possible inclusion on CSD Web)

## Annex I: List of participants

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|-------------------------|--|
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