

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

PAPER 2

NATIONAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE CSD'S
TWO YEAR CYCLE

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Introduction

This background paper offers an overview of the national reporting processes to the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). It identifies several issues that affect the national input both from governments and stakeholders and makes some suggestions for future cycles.

History

The national preparations for the CSD's two year cycle need to be different from those in previous cycles because of the nature of the approach adopted at CSD11.

The Eco Soc decision of 1993 outlined the following functions for the CSD in relation to national preparation

- To consider information provided by Governments for example, in the form of periodic communications or national reports, regarding the activities they undertake to implement Agenda 21, the problems they face, such as problems related to financial resources and technology transfer, and other environment and development issues they find relevant;
- To receive and analyze relevant input from competent non-governmental organizations, including the scientific and the private sector, in the context of the overall implementation of Agenda 21.

The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (2002) added:

- Focus on reviewing and monitoring progress in the implementation through a broad exchange of views and experiences, best practice and lessons learned

The first session of the Commission on Sustainable Development after Johannesburg in 2003 continued to encourage countries to provide national reports, although still on a voluntary basis. These reports in particular focused on input to the Commission's review year.

The Commission underscored that the reporting should:

1. *reflect the overall progress in all three dimensions of sustainable development, focussing on the thematic cluster of issues for the cycle;*
2. *focus on concrete progress in implementation;*



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3. *include lessons learned and best practices;*
4. *identify actions taken;*
5. *highlight relevant trends, constraints, challenges and emerging issues*
6. *incorporate, where relevant, the effective use of indicators for sustainable development.*¹

Present Approach

At present the National Reporting Guidelines for governments are as follows:

Extracts from Reporting Guidelines for CSD 14

You are invited to write about issues of importance to your country in dealing with the atmosphere, climate change, energy, and industry development, in addition to the cross-cutting issue in the context of sustainable development, highlighting in particular:

1. *concrete actions taken and progress made in implementation;*
2. *lessons learned and good practices;*
3. *trends and emerging issues;*
4. *constraints and challenges*

In its analytical reports for CSD 14, the secretariat will cover a range of issues. For many of these issues, including those listed below, national information is not readily available from all member States. You are therefore invited to reflect on as many of these in your response as appropriate.

CSD 11 also invited its secretariat to make reporting more efficient and less burdensome on countries and more focused on implementation. Consequently, these guidelines are related to areas where national information is important but not otherwise readily available for all countries for the analysis required for the preparation of the Secretary-General's reports on the CSD 14/15 themes.

*Countries will be requested to report **only once** on the thematic issues during the two-year implementation cycle of the CSD².*

Stakeholders have been asked to prepare their input by the September 1st 2005 which will contribute to:

the official documentation for CSD-14, including:

¹ From CSD web site

² From CSD web site



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- (a) *Secretary-General's State of Implementation reports in each of the thematic issues of energy, air pollution/atmosphere, climate change, and industrial development providing detailed reviews of progress of implementation at all levels and also reflecting new challenges and opportunities to expedite implementation.*
- (b) *Secretary-General's Overview report reviewing progress achieved in the overall implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (excluding the issues reviewed in the Secretary-General's State of Implementation reports).*

Challenges

a) Timelines for governments

The timelines for the national reporting process are one major constraint. The first cycle, since the cluster were only decided at CSD11, it was anticipated that the time will be a constraint while reporting on the cluster of water, sanitation and human settlement however for the second cycle the timelines for the 2006 CSD were published in February 2005 (with a deadline of 1st June 2005), when most governments and stakeholders were preparing for the CSD 13. As a result governments and stakeholders had to prepare input for two cycles at the same time (the end of the first cycle and the input to the second cycle).

In addition countries are

“Requested to report only once on the thematic issues during the two-year implementation cycle of the CSD”

It is our understanding very few countries managed to reach the June 1st 2005 deadline. In addition very few out of those who submitted the reports by 1st June did it in consultation with their stakeholders.

The expectation that countries report only once in a cycle means that already a joined-up country report is not possible in the second cycle.

b) Peer Group Review

In the first phase of the CSD (1993-1997) some countries presented their National Reports for peer group review within the CSD meeting. This enabled some exchange of views, learning and questioning around mapping progress, national reporting, data collection, indicators and relationship with stakeholders. This practice is not being followed for the new work programme.

More recently the French Government (2004-2005) has done a similar exercise for its National Sustainable Development Strategy. It has invited a number for governments to



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review the Strategy. Although this has been done outside of the CSD it has gained considerable positive response from governments and stakeholders alike.

c) National Comparability

From experience of past national reports a number of areas have been identified where more work is needed, these include:

- Integration of national reporting for CSD with other national reports being produced by various governments;
- The development and use of indicators;
- Ongoing process of updating reporting on previous CSD decisions

d) National Stakeholder Engagement

Over the life of CSD stakeholders have played an important part. In the past stakeholders have contributed in two ways to the national preparation for the CSD.

1. A report by stakeholders (major groups as referred to in CSD) sent directly to the Task Manager for Agenda 21 and JPoI chapters so they can draw examples into the Secretary Generals Report.

Agenda 21 and the JPoI identify stakeholders as having an increasing role and responsibilities on implementing the agreements in partnership with others.

For the present cycle stakeholders have been asked to contribute to the CSD secretariat by the 1st of September. The outputs will be reflected in the Secretary-General's State of Implementation reports on each thematic cluster and Secretary-General's Overview report reviewing progress achieved. What is not clear is how these will be drawn into the regional preparatory meetings.

2. To input directly to their respective government's national reports.

The involvement to state of stakeholders in the production of national reports has been poor. In a number of countries there are National Sustainable Development Commissions, Roundtables or similar adhoc groups³. The utilization of these groups in the preparation of national reports has only been tried by a few countries. So far there has not yet been a survey of the quality or quantity or impacts of stakeholder's contributions to national reports.

e) Cross cutting issues

CSD 11 asked for integration of the following cross cutting issues in the reporting process. A complex process but very important to fully address all aspects the clusters

³ Stakeholder Forum has produced National Reports from UK Stakeholders for CSD1994, CSD1995, CSD1996, CSD1997, CSD1998, CSD1999, CSD2000, CSD 2002, CSD2003 and CSD2004.

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- Poverty eradication;
- Changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production;
- Protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, Sustainable development in a globalizing world;
- Health and sustainable development;
- Sustainable development of SIDS;
- Sustainable development for Africa;
- Other regional initiatives;
- Means of implementation;
- Institutional framework for sustainable development;
- Gender equality;
- Education.

How these have been addressed in national reports is unclear.

Discussion Points

a) *Timelines for governments*

- The June 1st deadline enables a review of governmental input in time for the regional preparatory meetings for CSD2006. Does this need to be standardised for the remaining cycles?
- If there is only to be a report once a cycle then what could be done this second cycle to address the issue that many stakeholders and governments may have very useful information to report but have missed the deadline?

b) *Peer Group Review*

- Should there be a space either at the Regional Implementation fora or the CSD for Peer Group Review of National Reports?

c) *National Comparability*

- Should there be an overview prepared of all reporting process (in the intergovernmental field) that has an impact on CSD work programme?
- Could this enable a simplification through operating a similar reporting approach?
- Could the Secretariat with the DESA Statistics Division publish the relevant set of indicators for the issues being discussed as a tool for countries to report with?

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- Could a template for reporting on previous CSD decisions be developed?
 - Could all reporting deadlines be published for the remaining of the CSD Workprogramme and integrated into one calendar?
- d) *National Stakeholder Engagement***
- The date and target of the stakeholder reports is CSD 2006 not the Regional Implementation Meetings (RIMs). Does this need to change in future cycles to enable effective input to the regional processes?
 - With the changing of stakeholders and government officials from one cycle to the other. Does there need to be some form of capacity building to enable those different stakeholders and officials to understand the CSD process as it is very different from other processes?
 - Could there be a list of National stakeholder bodies that are following the CSD similar to that of the National Focal points for governments to enable better sharing of experiences?
- e) *Cross cutting issues***
- Could the reporting process link better into the CSD11 decision to clearly identify what cross cutting issues are being discussed?



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Annex

Potential National Preparation Roadmap for CSD 2008

January 2006:	CSD Secretariat publishes 2008-2009 Guidelines and timelines
February 2006:	Governments and National stakeholder bodies meet to plan out National Report processes to be completed by June 2007 Set up interdepartmental body to review governments own work on CSD 2008-2009 issues
March 2006:	First meeting of key national stakeholder groups to look at what needs to be produced First meeting of interdepartmental body to assign work
June 2006:	First meeting national stakeholder round table on CSD 2008 issues
September 2006:	Second meeting of national round table on CSD 2008 issues Second meeting of interdepartmental body to review progress on collecting material for CSD2008-CSD2009
November 2006:	Third meeting of national round table on CSD 2008 issues Third meeting of intergovernmental body to review progress on collecting material for CSD2008-CSD2009
February 2007:	Fourth meeting of national round table on CSD 2008 issues Fourth meeting of intergovernmental body to review progress on collecting material for CSD2008-CSD2009
March 2007:	Present initial Report to government
April 2007:	present final report to government Government merges reports of stakeholders and government into one national report
June 2007	Submission of report to CSD Secretariat for CSD2008 and CSD 2009

