

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

PAPER 3

REGIONAL PREPARATIONS FOR THE CSD'S
TWO YEAR CYCLE

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Introduction

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

History

One of the clear differences between this cycle of CSD meetings and the previous two (1993/1997 and 1998 to 2002) is the focus on the regional and sub regional level and the involvement of Regional Commissions in the process.

The Plan of Implementation adopted at the WSSD in 2002 stated that the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the Summit should be effectively pursued at the regional and sub regional levels, through the UN Regional Commissions and other institutions and bodies.

CSD-11, invited the United Nations Regional Commissions to consider organizing, in collaboration with the secretariat of the CSD, Regional Implementation Meetings (RIMs) in order to contribute to the work of the CSD. The purpose of the Regional Implementation Meetings is to:

1. Contribute to advancing implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;
2. Focus on the thematic cluster of issues to be addressed in the on- going Implementation Cycle;
3. Provide input to the Secretary-General's reports and the Sessions of the CSD. These inputs may include: identification of obstacles and constraints, new challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation; and sharing of lessons learned and best practices;
4. Provide for contributions from major groups.

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Present approach

In the first cycle, inputs from the RIMs were obtained through extensions to or parts of previously planned meetings. This resulted in considerable regional variations among reporting styles and also in terms of the nature of the regional meetings (how they were organized and run). The first cycle could be seen as a transitional cycle during which time the Secretariat, Bureau and Regional Commissions worked to identify existing or already planned forums which to attach CSD RIMs, however, without the adequate financing to do more.

For the second cycle, again, there seem to be a wide variance in the timings (from October to mid January) and in the length of meetings (from two to seven day). The inputs from these meetings are meant as input to:

“the Secretary-General’s reports and the Sessions of the CSD. These inputs may include identification of obstacles and constraints, new challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and sharing of lessons learned and best practices.”

Most RIMs are two or three days long (see Annex 1), replacing what was previously a two week session in the former CSD cycle.

An analysis of the RIMs should enable a focused discussion and policy review over the two year cycle. Stakeholder Forum’s analysis of the first set of Regional Meetings is available on www.stakeholderforum.org.¹ As an example of the analysis the diagram below shows a variety of issues relating to for example, inadequate means of implementation from the different regions based on their meeting reports.

¹ A full copy of the analysis ***Convergence And Divergence In Regional Implementation Experiences:- Comparative Analysis Of Chairs’ RIMs Summaries*** produced by Georgina Ayre and Debra Dickinson is available at www.stakeholderforum.org/CSD

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Obstacles and constraints ... and some components	Region				
	ECA	ECLAC	ESCAP	ESCWA	ECE
Inadequate means of implementation	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
Difficulty in mobilizing resources to finance and / or implement long term plans, policies and programs	•		•		•
Need for sufficient funds, training and credible information				•	
Need for an increase in the provision of funds to small scale organizations (high transaction costs in directly funded WB/ADB projects, sometimes makes them unfeasible)			•		
Inadequate level of investment for improving access to safe water and sanitation	•				•
Technical and financial obstacles for SIDS		•			
Inadequate funds to undertake repairs to existing infrastructure			•		
Decline of ODA in region, whilst estimates of costs required to meet water and sanitation needs far exceeds the funds available from govt, ODA, UN-systems, private sector etc.			•		
	2	1	4	1	2

Regions are ranked below by the number of obstacles and constraints reported in the area of water and sanitation:

Region	Number of Obstacles and constraints Reported
ECE	22
ECLAC	18
ESCAP	17
ECA	12
ESCWA	7

Obstacles and constraints were reported on in all regional meetings [RIMs] under the following 4 major headings:

1. Inadequate means of implementation;
2. Resource management / planning for water and sanitation;
3. Urban management / planning for water and sanitation;
4. Capacity.



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Specific obstacles and constraints were reported by three regions or more in the following specific areas:

1. Difficulty in mobilising resources to finance and / or implementing long term plans, policies and programmes;
2. Inefficient disposal of solid and / or liquid waste;
3. High-level water losses from agricultural, industrial and urban use;
4. Insufficient capacity at local government level (e.g. to plan and deliver water and sanitation services and lack of human resources/ technology);
5. Vulnerability to global environmental changes (e.g. to climate change and natural disasters).

From this analysis we can conclude that while there is a common global incidence of obstacles and constraints under major headings, there are significant regional differences within these. Thus, it is suggested that setting global priorities which allow room for regional interpretation and implementation, would significantly benefit the global implementation process.

Addressing the regional obstacles and constraints, successes in the reports is an important challenge that deserves consideration.

Challenges

a) Time

Reducing the time of the RIMs from a two week discussion (as in previous cycles) to a two to three day session does have an impact on what can be achieved in the regional meetings.

b) Reporting to Regional Implementation Meetings

It is unclear at present what the process of input to the RIMs is.

c) Regional Comparability

The lack of guidelines for reporting on the outcomes of RIMs has resulted in a number of variations that make comparative analysis more difficult:

- Variations in data presentation
- Variations in Summarizing regional outcomes;
- Variations in the comparison of outcomes at the inter-regional level.

The lack of meaningful inter-regional comparison threatens to undermine the effectiveness of the regional process. This necessitates that the current regional outcomes be compiled in a streamlined presentation, whereby (intra-regional and



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inter-regional) comparisons can be highlighted more easily. The potential for a more detailed GAP analysis also emerges.

The Secretary General's Report provides an overview of the state of implementation as indicated in each of the regional reports. However, the reports fail to provide:

1. Snap-shot of the situation in each region;
2. Snap-shot of the global situation;
3. Comparative analysis of the differences in the status of implementation in each region;
4. Convergence in the experiences of regions ;
5. Disparities in the experience of regions;

The matrices could be used in the following way:

1. To identify obstacles and challenges which require urgent action at the regional level;
2. To identify common obstacles and challenges which require urgent action at the global level;
3. To identify recommendations which could be adopted at the global level;
4. To identify areas where one region has developed a solution to a challenge being faced by another region;
5. To identify potential areas for regional collaboration in developing solutions to common challenges;
6. To provide initial insight into areas likely to be addressed during the policy year;
7. For governments and stakeholder to identify areas and issues which could be useful to address at the fourteenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, upon which to base their work programme and activities.

d) Stakeholder Engagement

In the first cycle there was not a great deal of involvement of stakeholders in the RIMs. This was because many stakeholders were unaware of their occurrence and their significance. There were also a wide variety of approaches to involving the stakeholders in the meetings.

e) Cross cutting issues

The complexity of CSD11's decision to identify a series of cross cutting issues has not yet been well integrated into the regional process.

f) CSD Decisions

One of the problems of bringing the outcomes of the RIMs to the global level is the loss of regional priorities when a global text is produced.

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Discussion points

a) *Time*

- Is two to three days enough for regional consultations?

b) *Reporting to Regional Implementation Meetings*

- What road map is there for inputting to the Regional Meetings?
- How can sub regional meetings input to Regional Meetings to the CSD?
- How can stakeholders input to the Regional Meetings?

c) *Regional Comparability*

- Is there a template or guidelines for RIMs and sub regional meetings to report to CSD in order to enable the CSD to draw together inputs in a similar way?
- What role could the DESA Statistics Division play in helping with regional indicators?

d) *Stakeholder Engagement*

- As there is a new cycle who is responsible for reaching out to the new stakeholder groups? The CSD Secretariat? The Regional Commissions? The Major Group Focal Points?
- Is there a common approach to involving stakeholders in the RIMs? Should there be a common approach?
- Is there a role for stakeholder dialogues at the regional level?

e) *Cross cutting issues*

- How should the RIMs deal with the cross cutting issues?

f) *CSD Decisions*

- Is there a role for a summary of the key regional issues to be part of the chair's text from each CSD [non negotiable] outside of the region which helps retain regional priorities?
- Could funders be persuaded to focus on addressing regional priorities and reporting back to CSD every two years through the Regional Commissions the progress?



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Annex. Regional Timetable

- Africa Regional Implementation Meeting
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 24-28 October 2005
Organized by: [UN Economic Commission for Africa](#)
- Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Implementation Meeting
Santiago, Chile, 24-28 October 2005
Organized by: [UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean](#)
- West Asia Regional Implementation Meeting
Cairo, Egypt, 11-13 November 2005
Organized by: [UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia](#)
- Europe Regional Implementation Meeting
Geneva, Switzerland, 15-16 December 2005
Organized by: [UN Economic Commission for Europe](#)
- Asia and the Pacific Regional Implementation Meeting
Bangkok, Thailand, 19-20 January 2006
Organized by: [UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific](#)

