

COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP
PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

PAPER 7

CSD AND THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

This background paper provides an overview of the approach to the international framework for sustainable development developed at Johannesburg and raises some discussion points based on the first two years.

History

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) reaffirmed the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) as the highest-level commission dealing with sustainable development issues within the UN system, and that it should serve as a forum for the consideration of the local, national and regional implementation of sustainable development. The JPOI (para 157) also affirmed that “strengthening of the international institutional framework for sustainable development is an evolutionary process,” and that “it is necessary to keep relevant arrangements under review; identify gaps; eliminate duplication of functions; and continue to strive for greater integration, efficiency and coordination of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development aiming at the implementation of Agenda 21.” The JPOI (para 148 (e)) also called for the Commission to “take into account significant legal development, in the field of sustainable development, with due regard to the role of relevant intergovernmental bodies in promoting the implementation of Agenda 21 relating to international legal instruments and mechanisms.”

The institutional framework outlined in the JPOI includes a set of nine objectives and measures on : strengthening the institutional framework for sustainable development at the international level; the role of the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council; the role and function of the Commission on Sustainable Development; the role of international institutions; strengthening institutional arrangements for sustainable development at the regional level and national levels, and the participation of Major Groups. CSD-11 agreed that issues relating to the ‘institutional framework for sustainable development’ would be addressed as a cross-cutting theme in each cycle.

This brief presents generic ideas for enhancing and strengthening institutional linkages between the CSD and related multilateral decision-making processes. It proposes a standing agenda item on institutional framework of sustainable development and identifies a set of questions to facilitate discussions. The core mandate for CSD-11 to address such issues is presented in an Annex.



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Challenges

While the participation of UN system and international institutions bodies has increased since the WSSD, CSD-12/13 struggled to address the relationship between the CSD and such bodies. Some observers noted that the Commission avoided controversial issues related to the Commission on Human Rights, in particular their activities on the right to water, the right to housing, the right to protected from forced evictions, and the right for women to own housing. A similar situation arose in the CSD's relationship between UN-Habitat and its Governing Council. An analysis by ENB noted that a further issue not discussed in the first cycle was the relationship between the Commission and other intergovernmental fora, such as the Global WASH Forum; the third World Water Forum; and the FAO/Netherlands Conference on Water for Food and Ecosystems. ENB suggested that while "each of these meetings has added, both conceptually and substantively, to the WSSD's water and sanitation-related outcomes, there is a need to link their outcomes to the Commission's work." Others felt the manner in which the Commission addressed the upcoming General Assembly World Summit 2005 was far from satisfactory. One reason for not addressing the institutional framework during CSD-12/13 may also be attributed to the fear from some delegations that a precedent set in relation to this issue in the first cycle would be carried over to future cycles. Whatever the reasons behind the failure to address the institutional framework during CSD-12/13, a 'sober' analysis would suggest that the Commission has yet to adequately operationalise and define the JPOI and CSD-11 decisions on how to structure the institutional framework and relationship between CSD and other multilateral processes.

The foremost challenge for the Commission is to develop a working method to provide guidance to, and receive guidance from, other UN decision-making fora, while simultaneously respecting their unique mandates, authority, and independence. While there is no "one size fits all" solution to ensuring coherency in international cooperation, the first CSD cycle did not provide much detail and/or working examples of how this relationship can be structured, strengthened and enhanced. There is therefore a need for a systemic discussion on these issues which could be resolved by having a standing agenda item on 'Institutional framework for sustainable development. Under this agenda item the Commission needs to clarify its relationship with

- intergovernmental process under the UN, such as governing bodies, treaty bodies and related functional commissions and subsidiary bodies, UN Agencies, Programmers and Funds;
- intergovernmental initiatives led by coalitions of like-minded governments, such as the German government's International Action Plan on Renewables, and the G-8 Action Plan on Clean Energy and Climate Change; and
- international financial intuitions, such as the GEF, and World Bank.

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Discussion Points

Among the questions, directed at both the Commission and the Secretariat/DSD, include:

- How can the CSD contribute to the implementation of treaty body decision and programmes of work, particularly in the area of capacity building, technology transfer and means of implementation?
- How can the CSD maximize intergovernmental inputs, including scientific research@
- How can the CSD promote stronger linkages between global, and regional and country-level implementation measures?
- How can the CSD strengthen coherence and collaboration within and between organizations?
- How can the CSD enhance collaboration and coordination in all areas, including information exchange and knowledge-sharing on all aspects of the implementation of sustainable development?
- How can the CSD mobilize and increase the effective use of resources from all sources for implementation?
- How can the CSD involve the IFIs effectively?



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Annex

CSD'S MANDATE: CORE ELEMENTS OF THE CSD-11 DECISION

Based on the CSD-11 decision we can extrapolate the following mandate for the CSD:

Review Session: The review session should assess: contributions of United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, the Global Environment Facility and international financial and trade institutions (para 2c (ii));

High-level segment: High-level segments should include focused dialogue, with the active participation of agencies, funds, programmes and other organizations of the United Nations system, international finance and trade institutions, and representatives of major groups at the appropriate level, taking into account paragraphs 139 (g) and 149 (c) and (d) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (para 7).

Reporting-Secretariat cooperation with the UN system: Requests the secretariat of the Commission, working in close cooperation with other organizations of the United Nations system, to:

- Take measures to streamline reporting in order to avoid duplication and unnecessary burden on States, including in accordance with the Secretary-General's report on United Nations reform;
- Provide focused information that highlights relevant trends, constraints, challenges and emerging issues;
- Provide technical assistance to countries, upon their request, in national reporting through regular and extrabudgetary sources (para 15);

The relationship between CSD and the UN system: Further to paragraph 140 of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation¹ relevant United Nations agencies, programmes and funds, the Global Environment Facility, and international and regional financial and trade institutions, within their mandates, to participate actively in the work of the Commission in order to inform it of their activities designed to further the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. To that end, it is essential to undertake further measures to:

- promote stronger linkages between global, regional and country-level implementation measures;
- strengthen coherence and collaboration within and between organizations;
- identify areas where further implementation measures may be required in order to improve progress;
- mobilize and increase the effective use of resources from all sources for implementation; and



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- enhance collaboration and coordination in all areas, including information exchange and knowledge-sharing on all aspects of the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation;” (para 17)

Inter-agency collaborative efforts: 18. Requests the Secretary-General, taking into account the ongoing process of United Nations reform and utilizing the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, including through informal collaborative efforts, to further promote system-wide inter-agency cooperation and coordination to enhance the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and to report on its activities to the Economic and Social Council and the Commission.

