

Outreach Issues

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Climate change is THE challenge of this century

Climate change and energy security are the dominant issues of international politics today. The Security Council, the G8, the World Bank and other institutions are talking about it; the Secretary-General plans a Special Summit on Climate Change; in many countries this issue is deciding elections; next week the climate negotiations continue in Bonn.

The CSD has a unique opportunity to bring together climate and energy and work out an integrated agenda - yet at the IPM it has sadly missed the opportunity. Most governments complained about the damage wrought by

climate change, yet at the same time they promoted the further expansion of the very fossil energy system that is responsible for climate change. Can the CSD really afford to trail the international energy and climate agenda when it should be the spearhead? We don't think so.

What we need today is a co-ordinated international response to the energy and climate crisis. According to the new IPCC report, global

emissions cannot be allowed to increase beyond 2020 and must then be reduced. In other words: the fossil energy system cannot stay on for many decades to come, but has to be phased out. This is only possible by a simultaneous massive expansion of sustainable renewable energies and energy efficiency. We need clear time-bound targets both for renewables and energy efficiency. And

"The elements of a global deal for a below 2 degree Celsius energy vision between the industrial and major developing countries need to be negotiated now"

we need funding for this transformation - a rapid phase-out of the billions of subsidies for fossil and nuclear energy, as well as radical restructuring of the energy portfolios of multilateral

development banks that still spend close to 90% for fossil fuel extraction.

A global energy revolution is also a programme for industrial development. Countries that have made the energy revolution their political priority have clearly demonstrated that this creates more jobs than fossil fuels, they have enjoyed more economic growth and it puts those countries in the vanguard of the fu-

Outreach + Taking Issue = Outrageous Issues?

This is the first edition of the new combined civil society CSD newsletter.

Good intentions and strategic thinking lie behind the merger of the two previous CSD conference dailies and we hope a forceful civil society instrument has been created.

The two conference newsletters at CSD – ‘Outreach’ and ‘Taking Issue’ – have a common past, and perhaps a common future. Outreach was the first CSD daily and catered to all major groups. Taking Issue started in the run up to the WSSD and became the spokes-organ for NGOs. Still, governments never understood the nuances between the two, and thought they were one and the same. In fact they were not. Outreach has been published by Stakeholder Forum, UK, and carried government and stakeholder views. Taking Issue has been published by the SDIN Group (ANPED, ELCI and TWN) and has been largely a vehicle for NGO opinions.

Merging talks

Towards the end of CSD 14, representatives of Stakeholder Forum and the SDIN Group met to discuss the rationale behind having one rather than two publications. Pooling the resources seemed a sensible thing to do, not the least in the context of production staff. Both production staffs have gone through gruelling times producing these worthy publications, and as a result often seen little or nothing of the informal meetings and dinners that are so important to developing an understanding of the politics at CSD.



And daily production is more than meets the eye: a good article of 700 words requires intense listening to the sometimes tedious and routine debates in the plenaries throughout an entire day to glean the major points and trends for an article; composing cutting edge commentaries that can wake up the somnambulant delegate, reflecting the ideas percolating in the civil society camp, is no easy matter, and requires an equal amount of intense preparation.

One publication

Behind the recent moves to approach each other are also substantive considerations. How can civil society actually inform and influence UN politics in a coherent and persuasive manner? Having a good and respected, and even feared, daily publication representing an independent civil society voice can be a powerful strategy. In a world where politics is often reduced to mere statements and words that soon fade, a daily news

letter is a sound and concrete product for everybody to see.

One “Outreach Issues”

So the decision for us was quite clear: the two papers will attempt to be one, with a mandate to continue their reporting under our new motto: “reporting with an attitude, from the global scene of sustainability.”

What may have been the trickiest element has been to find a new name. The old names, ‘Outreach’ and ‘Taking Issue’ could not be kept, and a new name had to be found. But ‘Taking Outreach’ or ‘Outrageous Issues’ did not seem to meet standards. Neither did ‘Taking Out CSD’ or ‘CSD Out-Takes’. Perhaps going in a totally different direction might have been the answer, but merging the better intentions of the two titles to simply call it “Outreach Issues” was the final decision. We hope serves its purpose, at least for the time being ...

...jgs

NGO Analysis

Following is an overview of NGOs' critique of the chairman's text from the IPM, without claiming to cover all objections raised by NGOs. It is mainly based on proposals of organisations in CURES (Citizens United for Renewable Energy and Sustainability), including INFORSE (International Network for Sustainable Energy) as well as considerations from people in the Third World Network. It also draws on the "NGO Policy Statement for CSD". The analysis follows the structure of the IPM Chairman's draft (A. energy, B. industrial development, C. Air pollution/atmosphere, D. climate, E. cross-cutting issues and interlinkages, F. Review and Follow up) It ends with an overview of the IPM structure and role.

From the background paper by Gunnar Boye Olesen, coordinator, INFORSE and CURES

The Chairman's draft negotiating document, the output of this year's IPM, is a real disappointment. The chair's document lacks strategic vision and leadership towards a more sustainable energy future, and neither does it provide a roadmap to sustainable industrial development, to sustainable energy structures, or to equitable access to energy. In general, the most progressive parts of the current draft are a repetition of previous agreements, such as the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) from the World Summit for Sustainable Development, 2002. It is based on the assumption that fossil fuel will remain the major contributor in the energy mix for decades to come, and that global energy consumption continues to expand.

Despite of that, a number of NGOs find that CSD15 can still be a step towards sustainable development. This is why several NGOs have raised objections to the IPM Chairman's draft and made proposals for progressive outcomes of CSD15.

A. Energy

The energy chapter advocates that "the development and use of advanced and cleaner fossil fuel technologies should be increased"

The wording of the entire section is biased towards fossil fuels, explicitly stressing in the introductory part the "dominant role" that it will play in the energy mix in the coming decades. References to renewable energy are always made with reservations such as "where they exist", "as appropriate", etc., further weakening any intent or commitment to shift to renewable energy sources.

At the IPM and CSD-14, many countries advocated a reduction in the dependence on fossil fuel and an increase in the share of renewables in the total energy supply. They complained how dependence on fossil fuel is draining the scarce financial resources and foreign exchange of developing countries and thus adversely affects the allocation of resources for poverty alleviation. This is not captured in the text.

The Chairman's text singles out support for the World Bank's Investment Framework for Clean Energy and Development, limiting support for other initiatives on this issue. It also dismisses specific proposals made for targets for energy access, renewable energy and energy efficiency, as well as development of international institutions for sustainable development in energy.

The text also fails to set a sustainability framework for energy production and use. It only calls for development and use of cleaner technologies. The one exception from this is a call for expansion of sustainable production and use of bioenergy.

The vast majority of NGOs share the opinion that nuclear power is not a sustainable form of energy and that it should be phased out. Nuclear power and its many problems are not mentioned in the text.

Access to energy

At IPM, there was a call for increased access to energy as part of poverty reduction. While this is mentioned in the Chairman's draft as an important issue, there are no targets and little is said about the mechanisms to realize the increase.

The draft demands that "With a sense of urgency...ensure that energy policies are supportive to developing countries' efforts to eradicate poverty, and regularly evaluate available data to review progress to this end." (par3)

To facilitate and achieve meaningful access to energy, it is imperative to set a target to discuss the necessary com-

mitments from all countries based on common but differentiated responsibilities, the priority for local, affordable resources, and the need for international institutional capacity to support implementation.

A clear target for access to energy and guidance on its implementation must be one of the cornerstones in the outcome of CSD15.

Renewable energy

The draft includes 8 references to support for renewable energy in the energy chapter, one in the air pollution chapter and two in the climate chapter. This includes a call to increase the share of renewable energy in accordance with the JPOI, and a quote from the JPOI "With a sense of urgency, substantially increase the global share of renewable energy supply, recognize the role of national and voluntary regional targets, as well as initiatives, where they exist" (par3)

While increased use of renewable energy is mentioned, the text does not contain any demands for renewable energy targets, for adequate mechanisms to realize the increase, or the necessary strengthening of international institutions to support the increase. The text also fails to set limitations of renewable energy to levels of sustainable use.

Initiatives such as global, regional and national targets for access to energy, renewable energy, energy efficiency, and phasing-out of subsidies have not been given any consideration,

INFORSE and many other NGOs ask

the CSD to start a strengthening of institutional capacity nationally and internationally on renewable energy. They also support the UN Secretary General's proposal for the establishment of a World Program for Renewable Energy. The program must reach out far beyond the World Solar Programme 1996-2005 and become a truly international effort to build capacity.

Energy Efficiency

While there are numerous references made to end-use efficiency, the draft fails to discuss targets for energy efficiency and proposals for international cooperation are limited to very specific issues (support for standards and certification and two measures for energy-intensive industries).

INFORSE and many other NGOs support strengthening of international co-

operation on all measures for end-use energy efficiency and propose that the CSD support the development of an international agreement for energy efficiency. They also propose

that the call for reduction of gas flaring and venting be replaced by a call for an immediate phasing-out of gas flaring and venting.

Support of fossil fuel use and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

In the energy chapter the draft makes 10 proposals for the increased use of fossil fuels, the climate chapter includes calls for cleaner fossil-fuel technologies similar to the calls for renewable energy and energy efficiency:

There is a strong disagreement with the

proposed support for fossil fuel, and it seems perverse that the CSD should recommend international support to continued fossil fuel use. CCS also is not a sustainable solution.

The CSD should propose a comprehensive strategy on international finance, redirecting the funding of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to sustainable energy solutions including strengthened micro-financing for renewables and energy efficiency.

B. Industrial Development

The chapter fails to recognize that industrial countries have the obligation to transform their development strategies into sustainable ones.

It also fails to recognize that countries must develop sustainable production and consumption patterns (SPAC) as an important part of sustainable development. The standards for sustainable production must be set. The draft only calls to "Promote more sustainable patterns of production and consumption, with developed countries taking the lead,....."(par. 7)

This chapter has a number of references to market-based approaches that go beyond the context of these discussions. One example is the call in the draft to work towards the successful completion of the Doha round (of the WTO). WTO issues seem to be out of context in this chapter, and a conclusion of the Doha round based on current proposals is not the best step forward to achieving sustainable development.

The chapter includes calls to "improve market access" for products of developing countries, but chooses to ignore the need to remove trade-distorting subsidies, which are regarded as a key barrier to the industrial development of developing countries.

The text fails to mention the need to remove obstacles for technology transfer, such as stringent Intellectual Property

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Rights. Instead, it calls for “sharing of intellectual property and know how”, completely ignoring the current realities in trade agreements.

C. Air pollution/atmosphere

This chapter favours LPG as a solution to indoor air pollution, as it is also proposed in the energy chapter.

While the text calls for regional cooperation to reduce air pollution, it fails to propose inter-regional cooperation, in spite of the increasing understanding that long-range pollution crosses not only national but also regional borders.

D. Climate

The climate chapter fails to recognize the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to levels that will prevent man-made climate change, as called for in the Climate Convention (UNFCCC) and to set a target for this.

The draft also fails to call for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions as the most important general measure to mitigate climate change. Instead, it calls for use of low-carbon energy technologies including cleaner fossil fuel technologies.

The means of implementing the proposals lack in general, just like in the other chapters. The only exceptions are references to the UNFCCC (call for additional financial initiatives) and references to two of the Kyoto Protocol’s flexible mechanisms (strengthen national capacities for Joint Implementation and CDM).

E. Cross-cutting issues and interlinkages

The draft includes a list of mostly reasonable proposals described in a general way and without references to mechanisms for implementation.

Critique to this chapter includes:

- The incentives and favourable terms for technology transfer to developing countries do not explicitly address the concern of many countries about stringent Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) systems as an obstacle to technology transfer.

- The Marrakech process on SPAC and the role of the nine major groups are only weakly mentioned in the document, without implementation mechanisms.

- The text makes reference to “removing barriers” to the creation of an enabling environment for investment, but does not tackle the barriers to trade identified by many countries as a major obstacle to development.

F. Review and Follow up

One role of CSD is to monitor the follow-up of the entire Rio Process, including documents such as the JPOI. To this end, it is proposed that the CSD in 2010/2011 and 2014/2015 shall review and follow up on progress in the implementation of international commitments on the issues of the thematic cluster of CSD 2006/2007 (energy, industrial development, atmosphere, climate), in particular commitments in the JPOI. In the review they propose to include contributions of international partnerships in addition to the contributions of governments and international institutions.

Overview of the IPM role

The IPM is the preparatory meeting to the policy session of the CSD two-year thematic cycle. IPM takes place every second year about two months before the policy session of CSD.

Texts are not negotiated during IPM. Instead the chairman and bureau of the meeting are extracting issues and proposals from the thematic discussions at the IPM that they deem important. These are included in the outcome of the meeting, the “Chairman’s draft negotiating text”, a non-negotiated text produced by the Chairman and bureau. This text forms the basis for the negotiation of the conclusions of the policy session in the CSD cycle. In the current cycle the policy session is CSD15.

This year, the Chairman of IPM used the general principle of including only issues that several country-groups supported (such as EU and G77). This excluded a number of proposals that were supported by several countries, but without the explicit support of more than one major country group, thereby excluding proposals that could be part of a final declaration. In addition to this the Chairman used his freedom to include a large number of proposals for cleaner fossil fuels, effectively putting the support of

these technologies on the same level as support for renewable energy and energy efficiency. These working methods have been strongly criticized by the

NGOs involved in the CSD as well as by many governments.

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Challenge of the Century (from page one)

technology markets. But those countries that are now listening to the tunes from the fossil lobby will be paying dearly in the decades to come. And this applies both to industrial and developing countries alike. Countries are now deciding whether they are going to import the windmills, solar panels and efficiency technologies for the future, just as they do import petroleum now, or whether they will create their own booming renewable energy markets.

The elements of a global deal for a below 2°C degree energy vision between the industrial and major developing countries need to be negotiated now – in line with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, leading to a second Kyoto commitment period and a package of energy agreements between industrial and developing nations.

1.6 billion people still lack access to basic modern energy services. Energy poverty disproportionately affects women and is a crucial obstacle not only to development, but also to poverty reduction and social progress. Access to modern energy services and technologies must become an integral part of national sustainable development strategies, and we also need clear targets and implementation strategies for expanding access to energy. Decentralized power generation and energy service delivery are the most promising approaches for that.

A sustainable energy future for all and the prevention of dangerous climate change is the challenge of the 21st century. We call on governments at CSD-15 to meet this challenge and agree on concrete steps.

The CSD must recoup vision

The steps toward a stable climate and clean future are known; we now need to bring them to the CSD15 Text. Fortunately for us, the current text is broad and ambiguous – which gives us endless opportunities to improve it! To avoid the unmanageable impacts of climate, the planet needs emissions reduction targets for developed nations of 30 per cent by 2020 and 80 per cent by 2050. To achieve this investment must be made in renewable energy and energy efficiency. We know that the CSD can not overwrite decisions of the UNFCCC – that is reiterated many times in the current negotiation text – but that does not mean that the CSD can just wash its hands from providing any policy guidance to address climate change.

The CSD can create policies to promote markets for renewable energy, reduce risk, provide acceptable rates of return for renewable energy and energy efficiency for small and medium-sized enterprises, and finance the gaps in research and development and the commercialization

of sustainable forms of renewable energy. Also, the CSD can provide a holistic strategy for energy access—providing local, context-sensitive solutions that preserve the environment. Within that strategy, we must aim to phase out our reliance on nuclear energy and fossil fuels – energy sources that are not viable options for sustainable development. Following the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, governments must consider the reliability, affordability, economic viability, social acceptability, and environmental soundness of energy services and sources. Nuclear energy, and so-called “clean” fossil fuels, utterly fail this test.

At Rio and Johannesburg, Ministers

agreed to a vision of a sustainable world and gave the CSD the responsibility to follow up that vision. Now the CSD must step to its role. The world needs a future it can look forward to, and the CSD can provide guidance to secure it. The United Nations offers the framework to address global climate change: with

the guidance and direction of the Rio Conventions, the blueprint for sustainable development contained in

Fortunately for us, the current text is broad and ambiguous – which gives us endless opportunities to improve it!

Agenda 21, and the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, we can achieve global climate stabilization through sustainable energy and environmentally- and socially-sound industrial development.

JH