A view on the obstacles and constraints From the Stakeholder Forum’s Energy and Climate Roundtable Report  
(supported by DEFRA and UNEP)

The Stakeholder Forum for a Sustainable Future has been working since 1992 to promote the implementation of the sustainable development agenda. Last week they met in London to find out what stands in the way of mobilizing finance for renewable energy, especially in developing countries. Some of the lessons learned the hard way in the field of research and development (R&D), technology and information transfer, capacity building and market based approaches have been summarized in a report (available at www.stakeholderforum.org).

Investment in renewables, in new sustainable technologies, is often perceived as not attractive. You have to pay a lot of money up-front. Especially the development of new technologies requires large funds and patience; renewables make themselves paid (in hard currency) over time only. Most investors seek short-term results. On top of that, investors like the idea of certainty; they love to bet on the right horse. How do we know which renewable energy technology will make the transition to large-scale production in the future?

Investors are more than tempted to jump on what they call ‘next generation’ solutions – nuclear power and so-called ‘clean coal’. They also like to invest in large-scale projects, with backup from international finance institutions and guarantees from governments against all kinds of risks.

Developing countries need energy now, and without support, investment and political will for renewable energies, many tend to further what they perceive as proven, cheap and reliable options, without taking into account the environmental and social costs. Quantity goes before quality. The examples of catastrophic social and environmental side effects of that option are legion, and responsibility for them rests not on developing countries alone.

The report of the Stakeholder Forum suggests interventions to ‘make markets work effectively for sustainable development’.

To make renewable energy financially competitive, the subsidies provided to fossil fuel industries have to be phased out. At present no real cost signal is given to the markets regarding climate change. The centralized energy infrastructure model is at odds with the small scale, decentralized nature of most renewable energy projects. To allow real growth in renewables, we have to move away from the old model.

To stimulate large-scale investment into the renewable energy sector, risk factors need to be underwritten or mitigated by governments...
and IFIs (hm...haven’t we heard that before...?). Governments should set up incentives to drive investments in renewables. A joined policy incorporating targets, taxes and incentives is needed, and should be measurable, transparent, and publicized widely with the help of NGOs. (hoho...here they come in).

Other suggestions from the report include a larger role for local and regional governments, a tailored approach taking into account the specific characteristics and needs of different countries, and South to South cooperation on renewables, especially in order to achieve successful commercialization of new technologies.

Research and development need to influence both policy as well as technological development. The concentration on large scale, proven energy sources by R&D, can lead to overlooking important small-scale research projects. Donor countries and IFI’s should come up with money for demonstrations of new technology, to stimulate innovation and investment at the local level. This would encourage the development of locally owned, and therefore more secure, renewable energy technologies.

The focus of R&D should be both on energy efficiency, which directly demonstrates how money can be saved, and on making renewable energy more cost efficient. Money talks for itself.

…..claudia

MONEY, MONEY, MONEY...2
A view on down-to-earth local solutions from Chief Bisi Ogunleye, Country Women Association of Nigeria, COWAN
Supported by: themselves

“You know, I don’t mind talking about the private sector and investment. There is nothing wrong with that. But there are two things I want you to remember when talking about business, people and money: Governments forget that poor people are business people as well. Small scale, but still, they are business people in their own right! And if we put all our small businesses together, you will wonder just how big that business is.

The second point is that governments think poor people have no money. They forget that poor people do have money, small money, but still there is money in our communities!

I will tell you about my group. We are 260,000 people in our rural women’s organization, and we cover all of Nigeria. We have one rule: every member must save 20 Naira (0, 16 $) a day – no savings, no membership; this is our internal law. You must know, we poor have a culture of saving. The women do not eat up everything, they put aside and invest. My countries’ women have a very strong culture of investment. Together we set aside 5,200,000 Naira ($42,321) each day. That is $1,269,630 a month, or more than 15 million dollars a year! No investment bank has a part in this. Women put it together, small by small.

In December 2005, the government of Nigeria took a bold step. They came up with a policy for micro-finance as part of the national economic reform. Until now, our savings have been regarded as informal. Nobody would believe my organization is dealing with billions of Naira. Now the government has more eyes for our potential. Money talks! We are officially recognized as a people’s bank, we have proper auditing and credit mechanisms. And it’s not just our organization: we have a lot of people’s banks all over the place.

Investors, donors and international bodies can now channel money through these official micro finance banks. It is a direct road to support our small enterprises. We can solve many environmental problems with investment in our local communities. The structure is there, the initiative and ownership is there!

The poor have a productive role to play. This is what we call building the inner energy of our women and communities. We are productive partners and we are able to sustain. The World Bank, the government, they jump in with their projects for five or ten years, and then they usually go out again. The poor have no place to run away. They will stay.

The reality is that poor people have no access to the modern energy we are talking about. Rural women are ignored, not invited to participate. We know it’s not always intentional; it’s the way they are perceived, as having no money, no capacities.

But we have the money, the inner energy, that is why we came with our proposal. There are lot’s of examples of renewable, small-scale, locally initiated projects. We can do more - ask us!”

... claudia

PROPOSAL FROM THE COUNTRY WOMEN ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA

A Way Forward in the Area of Energy Allocation 5% of national energy budgets, international grants for energy projects or international agreements like the Carbon Fund, to meet the energy needs of the poor through partnership arrangements with micro finance programs and small enterprises.

This arrangement would not only afford these disadvantaged groups access but ownership. It would create a productive partnership in energy for development and alleviation of poverty and it would further the achievement of the MDGs.
“There is enough resources in this world for everyone’s NEEDS, but there would never be enough for anyone’s GREED…” - Mahatma Gandhi

How much Profits did Big Oil and their CEOs get in 2005...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Profits (in $ million)</th>
<th>CEO</th>
<th>Salary, Bonuses, etc. (in $ million)</th>
<th>Shares Awards, 2005 Market Value (in $ million)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exxon Mobil</td>
<td>36,130</td>
<td>Lee R. Raymond (2004)</td>
<td>25.77</td>
<td>151.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Dutch Shell</td>
<td>25,311</td>
<td>Jeroen van der Veer</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Petroleum</td>
<td>22,632</td>
<td>Lord John Browne</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14,507</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chevron Texaco</td>
<td>14,099</td>
<td>David J. O’Reilly</td>
<td>8.80</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occidental Petroleum</td>
<td>4,868</td>
<td>Ray Irani</td>
<td>80.73</td>
<td>38.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

...and, how much do the world’s 1.6 billion people need to have access to basic energy services to allow them to attain the MDGs?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Financial investment requirement in energy for 2005-2015 to achieve the MDGs in least developed countries:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>$2,948 million 8 percent of Exxon Mobil’s profits in 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>$272 million 1 percent of Shell’s profits in 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>$345 million 2 percent of BP’s profits in 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>$604 million 4 percent of Total’s profits in 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>$431 million 3 percent of Chevron’s profits in 2005</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Internet research by Neth Dano, Third World Network

NGO Intervention on Friday May 5th on Interlinkages and Cross-Cutting issues

Thank you Mr Chairman,

The NGOs commend the EU for emphasizing the need for a long-term integrated approach and for their reference to poverty alleviation and biodiversity loss, and Norway for linking this discussion to women and gender concerns.

We support Mr. Goldstein’s call for the regulation of utility companies. This is especially compelling in view of the aftermath of Enron and other corporate scandals. NGOs would also like to thank Mr Jayante Sathaye for recognizing that “NGOs play a critical role in vigilance.” However, we do not agree with his statement that: “sustainable development is a fuzzy concept” and with due respect we beg to differ with the US’ optimistic assessment of the Organization of Work as well as discussions so far.

In fact we are worried about an epidemic of collective global amnesia in CRs 2 and 4. What we are sensing here is an overwhelming emphasis on sustained growth touting market-based and technologically driven solutions, which in our view, is subverting the delicate balance contained in the Rio and Johannesburg Declarations which stresses on principles such as the precautionary approach, the polluter pays principle and common but differentiated responsibility.

We hope the Bureau and Member States would muster all their wisdom to ensure this review session leads to pro-poor policies, greater self reliance - both individual and national, participatory decision-making, more decentralized renewable energy production systems that address peoples’ and planetary priorities over purely private profits.

Mr Chairman,

I am reminded of a poem:

“The law locks up both man and woman
Who steals the goose from us, the common
But lets the greater felon lose
Who steals the common from the goose”

Let us hope the UN focuses on genuinely helping “We the Peoples” and not just ‘We the stock-holders’.

Thank you.
CSD 14 is a trade and industry convention
There is no ‘one size fits all’, yet privatisation is time and again presented as the panacea of financing sustainable development

By: David Boys, Public Services International

The central theme running throughout the plenaries, side meetings and partnership fairs at CSD 14 is how the private sector and market mechanisms will resolve the problems facing our planet. CSD 14 looks like a trade and industry convention. Even governments appear to be marketing agents for corporations, as they present case studies of innovative partnerships with business. The business delegation is big, and, as one ICC rep. said, they came to play…

Only a few clouds have darkened this sunny picture, for example when the government of Jordan’s spokesman said that they had done everything that the IMF and the World Bank asked, including privatising everything, setting up regulators, protecting investor rights, etc. But still no money flows, no investments reward such diligence. ‘What more do we need to do?’, he asked. Someone in the audience whispered, get a market of 200 million people!

Opposition to privatisation
The global trade union federation Public Services International challenges the corporate control of the energy sector. Many years of experience with privatisation indicate serious problems. The corporations are proving unable to integrate social and environmental considerations in their decision-making, as they must obey the masters of profit, share value, return on investment and corporate growth. Yet even these priorities are proving difficult to meet, especially in developing countries, where we see major global corporations abandon their commitments when profits are too low or risks too high.

The failure of electricity privatisation
The example of the electricity sector is a case in point. Electricity underpins modern society. Without it, our schools and hospitals will close, transportation will grind to a halt, water won’t be pumped. A failure of the electricity system will lead to immediate and serious welfare and economic impacts.

The special characteristics of electricity (and to a lesser extent gas) differentiate it from other commodities. The factors that allow other markets to work do not exist for electricity. These include:

- No storage: peaks in price and demand cannot be smoothed by use of stores;
- Need for supply and demand to match at all times;
- No substitutes: the threat of switching to substitutes cannot act as a market discipline;
- Vital role in modern society, which in most cases cannot be substituted;
- Electricity is a standard product. Switching supplier cannot produce better electricity;
- Environmental impacts of generating electricity can be very high.

One of the most attractive promises of liberalisation is that investment risk will be taken away from consumers or the government and will be assumed by the private sector. So if a company chooses the wrong technology or fuel, have the skills to wheel and deal on the market for a power station, or fails to complete the plant to time and budget, the extra cost will be borne by the shareholders. This will act as a discipline on companies to ensure costs are minimised and efficiencies achieved.

There was a brief era of commercial madness when old-style electric utilities believed they had the skills to wheel and deal on the market with ‘merchant’ plants arbitraging between markets with no contracts. This encouraged authorities to believe companies would build new plants unprompted, with no planning procedures. However, the demise of this dream can be summarised in two words: Enron, California.

The reality is that in a sector like electricity, dominated by capital costs and long lead-times, companies do not now knowingly take any risk. Nobody is going to invest, or more accurately, no bank will finance the investment of a billion dollars in a power station without very strong, probably contractual, assurances on the volume and price of the power they sell. In Britain, the government caved in to this reality by allowing integration of generation and retail supply. Britain is dominated by a handful of companies generating for their own consumers, bypassing the wholesale market, which is left as a façade with minimal liquidity.

Even apparently risk-free investments in generation have proved economically disastrous when it became clear that the companies involved had not understood the risks they were actually taking. Currency risk, demand risk (demand can go down as well as up), and political risk (a government cannot stand by and allow electricity consumers to be priced out of the market) have all derailed apparently safe investments and power purchase contracts have turned out to be not worth the paper they were written on when the buyer went bankrupt. While shareholders of the companies have often paid through the ruin of these companies, consumers have also paid dearly for these mistakes. And workers pay with their jobs.

Regrettably, many of the economic theorists and political ideologues ignore these facts, or seek to force them into their constructs. In striving to replace governments with the market, they ignore the large, continuing costs of creating this artificial competition. These range from the extra risk premium on investment that competition imposes and that are reflected in higher costs to consumers, to the cost of designing and operating the markets. It seems unlikely, even if competition was possible, that its benefits would pay these extra costs.

Privatisation in developing countries
Much of the electricity privatisation in developing countries came about as part of development bank conditionalities. The World Bank was particularly aggressive in these policies, supported by its sister, the IMF. One of the favourite models used was to break up the public monopoly into generation, transmission and distribution companies and seek to introduce ‘competition’ in generation and distribution. For generation, the independent power producers (IPPs) would not invest without guarantees, so they created the power purchase agreement model (PPA).
Under a PPA, the government would guarantee to buy all of the power that the IPP could produce over a 20-25 year period, whether the energy was needed or not – take or pay contracts.

A few years of experience with hundreds of PPAs around the world revealed their deep problems: in the Philippines, the public utility almost went bankrupt because of the IPPs. Domestic clients were forced to pay a PPA adjustment charge equal to 20% of their electricity tariff. The Maharashtra State Energy Board almost collapsed under Enron’s massive $2 billion natural gas plant at Dabhol. Gujarat Electricity Board is stuck paying more for IPP energy that it does not need. Thailand’s energy company had to shut some of its plants because it had committed to buying IPP energy, even at greater cost than its own plants.

Corporations abandon developing countries

The big electricity corporations created after the liberalisation and privatisation in Europe, including in the UK, are unable to capitalise on their expansion in developing countries. The biggest, Electricité de France (EdF) recently sold its assets in Argentina and in Brazil, and will now concentrate on the European market. Spanish conquistadors Endesa, Iberdrola and Union Fenosa have major stakes in Latin America, but are now caught up in merger and takeover battles that may force them to realign their strategies.

Big American corporations have abandoned any hopes of making fast and easy profits in developing countries. The collapse of Enron is well noted and was especially shocking to all of the policymakers and financiers who believed their promises of creating a new model for the sector. But most shocked of all were the thousands of workers who not only lost their jobs, but their pensions and much of their life savings, which they invested in Enron shares. The withdrawal of AES, Duke, Reliant and others came as a big surprise to those countries who believed their promises of investment and long-term operation.

In general, the promises we keep hearing of increased investments from the private sector remain just that: promises. These corporations will not risk their own capital in developing countries. Like the PPA model shows, unless they get public guarantees of profits, and unless the public sector assumes their risks, they won’t expand.

Market proponents want to fix the model

For some people the case against the liberalised electricity model will never be proven. There will always be a market design error that can be fixed to solve the problems, while any problems with a publicly-owned monopoly are inevitably insoluble. The array and influence of institutions and people with an interest in keeping the liberalised model going should not be ignored and the ‘dogs’ of the free trade lobby need to be called off the electricity sector. But when supply security can no longer be guaranteed, politicians will be forced to act.

For developed countries, the problems will be significant. Prices may have to rise to pay for a backlog of investment, skills lost because of short-term cost-cutting will have to be recreated and governments will have to abandon their denigration of publicly owned companies and get on with their job of managing them properly. However, developed countries, by and large, willingly opted for market dynamics and actors can indeed provide the solutions to the social crisis of poverty and the environmental degradation of our planet. We think that the for-profit motive is not the best basis for ensuring sustainability.

By contrast, developing countries have seen national companies that were a centre for skills and good employment practices destroyed at the command of the IFIs. Their industries have often suffered serious under-investment in the privatised market. Public spending restrictions imposed by the IFIs reduce the scope they have to retake control of the industries, although the Brazilian example is one that other countries can follow. It is these countries that the developed world has a duty to help. And the IFIs must urgently re-assess their policies, and widely acknowledge their mistakes. They must take the necessary steps to undo their mistakes, which, after all, impact not so much the IFIs as the countries that they are supposed to help.

What to do at CSD 14 and 15?

The atomisation of civil society along the many fault lines of energy, industrial development, climate change and air pollution is distracting us from the core issues. For PSI, the question is whether market dynamics and actors can indeed provide the solutions to the social crisis of poverty and the environmental degradation of our planet. While it is clear that the private sector has a number of important roles to play, we suspect that there are limits. We call on governments and the UN to assume their responsibilities to all citizens and to the planet. We need to refocus this discussion back to a rights-based orientation as agreed upon in Agenda 21 and seen in the JPOI. It is not appropriate for governments to sell all of their assets and to leave their citizens and our planet at the mercy of the vagaries of the market.
“WE ARE BEING SACRIFICED”

As America turns a blind eye to the mountaintop removal in the Appalachians, a sizeable chunk of their landscape is being blasted away. And you better not live in the way of the coalmining companies, or your life, community, children and property, is all of a sudden worth nothing to anybody but yourself.

When Joan Linville and her husband bought a property in the small mountain town of Van in Ohio, they didn’t know that within few years, their property would be surrounded by mountaintop removal and chemical impoundments. They didn’t know that their little creek would turn into a raging black river of wastewater. They didn’t know that the mountaintops around them would be blasted away. They didn’t know that one of them would die of cancer, probably due to the environment they were living in, the chemicals in the water.

This month’s issue of Vanity Fair calls it ‘The Rape of Appalachia’, citing that the mountains are being blasted at a rate of several ridgetops each week. The mountaintop that is being blasted behind Joan’s house is only one of scores of sites in central Appalachian coal country. Again quoting Vanity Fair, who present old figures as that is all that is available, 400,000 acres, all rich and diverse temperate forests, were destroyed between 1985 and 2001 as a result of mountaintop mining in Appalachia. The magazine’s journalist estimates that the figure is probably 100,000 acres out of date. In these same 16 years, more than 1,200 miles of valley streams were impacted by mountaintop-mining waste – of those, more than 700 miles were buried entirely. Pointed out as one of the big bad boys is coal baron Don Blankenship, C.E.O. of Massey Energy. Though only one of at least four companies that deal with mountaintop removal, Massey’s operations, according to Vanity Fair, ‘leaves its rivals shaking their heads’, and ‘Massey lawyers will research who owns mineral rights, who owns just land, and who owns nothing at all. The ones who own mineral rights may have to be bought out. The rest can be ignored’. Says Linville: “These people come in and because your house sits on coal they don’t care what they do to you. They’re mean. They’re ruthless. We don’t even count.”

There is perhaps no better example of the level of mountaintop removal destruction than Larry Gibson’s property. Having refused to leave his ancestral land, the coal mining companies have blasted the tops around his mountain property, to the point where Gibson literally lives on a small green island in the midst of a dirty grey coalfield. “The mountains used to be 400 feet over my mountain. Now they’re 1000 feet below my mountain”, says Gibson, whose Kayford Mountain property has become a vantage point for journalists and others who want to come and see what mountaintop mining is all about. According to Gibson, over 700 people from 20 different countries came last year.

The fact that mountaintop mining is taking place in America at such a rate, why it happens, and what the consequences are, is still new to most Americans. “It’s amazing, people in our own country haven’t heard of mountaintop removal. Even people who live only five hours away from where it’s happening haven’t heard about it”, says Roul Urias from Island Creek in Kentucky, a former coal miner turned activist.

Joan Linville, Larry Gibson and Roul Urias were all part of the coalition of anti mountaintop removal organizations that came to CSD 14 to put their issues and mountaintop removal on the map. “The clean water act law is being violated every day and mountaintop removal is against the law. We tell them all this stuff and they just don’t listen”, sighs Linville. The anti mountaintop removal activists have been to their local governments, they’ve visited the legislators, senators, congress. They’ve featured in the media, in magazines, newspapers and on TV. And yet, says Linville, nobody listens. “They’ve backed us in a corner. So now we are bringing our counties together, we are bringing the states together, we are bringing this to the UN, and we intend to continue this fight until our government stops what they are doing.”

Linville’s town has been taken off the map as if it doesn’t exist anymore. Gibson has been shot at, pushed off the road on purpose, and one of his dogs was killed by people who wanted him out of the area. In Roul’s Island Creek, the mountaintop removal has just started, and after he became an activist he has received death threats.

Linville, Gibson and Roul came to the CSD to tell their stories, and they’re gearing up for next year’s policy session. “We don’t want our state demolished like this”, says Linville. “I am ashamed at my government. They are so money hungry.”

Says Gibson: “I’m not just here to save my home. I’m here to save Appalachia. It’s our treasure. I call myself Keeper-of-the-mountains. People ask me why I keep fighting. I wanna show my people by example. And it’s a no-brainer. I’m right.”...ida
Larry Gibson’s story:

“If you can’t tell the story, is it happening?”

My family has been here for over 220 years, since the late 1700s. We had 560 acres of land, but were cheated out of most of it because of the minerals. My land now sits in the middle of 187,000 acres of coal company land. I’m completely surrounded, it’s an island.

I make reference to my land as the land of the dinosaurs – why? That’s because that’s where all my family members are. I have more than 300 people buried in my family cemetery.

The mountaintops used to be 400 feet over my mountain. Now they are 1000 feet below where my mountain is. Before I could not see around for the mountains, now you can watch them working from my land.

The blasts here are 100 times greater than the Oklahoma blast. Sometimes they blast ten times a day. The ground shakes, it’s like an earthquake, the ground opens up. There’s a mine crack going through my cemetery. These mine cracks are about 600 – 700 feet deep, they open from the ground up. You’ve gotta watch where you’re walking on my land.

When you can feel the ground vibrating 10 – 15 seconds before you hear the sound, that is an illegal blast. Even the inside of my house is covered in thick layers of coal dust. If you walk from one end of our schoolyard, to the other end, in white tennis shoes, they will not be white when you get to the other end. What do you think these kids are breathing?

During a blast they dropped my water table so I haven’t had water for five years. They say prove it, I don’t have water for five years. They say prove it.

They burned my cabinet. They have shot at my place, they’ve shot at it while I’ve had people camping out there. They shot one of my dogs. Tried to hang another one. Ran me off the road and turned me upside down at the creek. They stopped to laugh at me, that’s how I know they did it on purpose.

The mine company told me my land was worth a million an acre to them in 1993. They said we’ll do you a favour and take you off that isolated place, how about that. They didn’t know it wasn’t about the money. They said you will be an isolated island, and I am.

What do you hold so precious in your life, what’s it gonna be, that’s so precious that it’s not for sale? For me it’s the Appalachia. The family members that I have lost that never worked in a mine but got black lung for living in the coalfields.

If you can’t get the story out, if a tree falls in the forest and there’s nobody there, does anybody hear it? If you can’t tell the story, is it happening? That’s why I’m here. To let the world know what’s happening to its own people.

They’ve taken everything from me and my people already, but if I let them take what I feel inside myself then I do truly lose everything. There are things that we own that they should not have. That’s why I do what I do. I’m encouraging my people to stand up and be counted. It’s simple. It might not sound like it, but it is.

And anybody’s welcome to come and see my place. I do accept donations but I don’t charge. We don’t have running water though...

Joan Linville’s story

“I’m sleeping behind a mountain that’s slipping”

I have lived in the coalfields for 50 years. I have an abandoned coal mine filled with mine slurry behind my house, which is leaking and running onto my property. I have paid out of my own pocket to detour this off my property. When our town was flooded and mountains were coming in on us, it didn’t even make the news. The coal companies don’t want people to know what’s going on around us.

I also have an active deep mine (underground mine) in front of my house which is operated by Peabody Coal Company, which has been on fire ever since I have lived there, which is 32 years.

The small creek which was in front of my house when we built it 32 years ago, is now a raging river when it rains. There are three abandoned coal mines wastewater running into it at all times. They shut down our water plant about five years ago because the water was so contaminated fish could not live in it anymore. If my dogs get too close to the river and get their feet wet I take them home immediately and wash them.

Also, a mountain top removal site is behind my house, and six waste ponds, or chemical impoundments, where they dump the waste from the mines. If they get too full they turn it loose and let it run into the river in the middle of the night. They have recently started putting a seventh waste pond behind my house, yet the permit for it has not even been approved yet. You are supposed to get a permit first! That tells you what they do.
The coal people have done exactly what they want to for so long. They want to run us out and make our property worthless. I have almost a $194 000 home. Right now if I tried to sell it I couldn’t get even $50 000 for it because this stuff is all around it.

I have also developed severe asthma in the past 15 years because of air pollution from the blasting. I lost my husband to cancer, which my lawyer says was most likely caused by our water. Everyone in our community is dying of cancer. Nobody dies of old age anymore. It’s lung cancer, liver cancer, kidney failure, liver failure...

I also lost my dad to black lung, he worked in the mines. Also my grandfather. I have lost three of the most important men in my life because of these coal people.

After four generations of mining in my family, this is what I have left. I will lose my home to a mountain that is slipping down.

They show us commercials on TV with flowers and animals – it sure aint like that where I live. It’s all such lies. They’ve got this coal miner in clean clothes and a sexy woman in a red dress doing the tango and it says come together and make jobs in West Virginia. They have taken my town off the map. They do not want anybody to know where we’re at because they intend to make a toxic dump of this whole area.

This is a human rights issue. We must get the corrupt politicians out of office and clean up our government before it’s too late for the next generation. People have got to be made aware of this.

We want our little piece of heaven, that’s what we used to have. Now they’re making it a little hell for us. We are being sacrificed for coal so big C.E.O.s can get rich. This is the United States of America, and we need to take our rights back.

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They show us commercials on TV with flowers and animals – it sure aint like that where I live. It’s all such lies. They’ve got this coal miner in clean clothes and a sexy woman in a red dress doing the tango and it says come together and make jobs in West Virginia. They have taken my town off the map. They do not want anybody to know where we’re at because they intend to make a toxic dump of this whole area.

This is a human rights issue. We must get the corrupt politicians out of office and clean up our government before it’s too late for the next generation. People have got to be made aware of this.

We want our little piece of heaven, that’s what we used to have. Now they’re making it a little hell for us. We are being sacrificed for coal so big C.E.O.s can get rich. This is the United States of America, and we need to take our rights back.

During CSD 13, the matrix received a lot of attention. Everyone seemed to have an opinion about it. The matrix? No, not the movie, where Keanu Reeves starring as Neo saves Zion! We are talking about the CSD matrix, prepared by the Secretariat at the request of the Bureau. This matrix contains information from Governments, Major Groups and UN agencies, together with outcomes of regional implementation meetings and Secretary General’s Reports.

At the moment it is still an information tool, that is aimed at facilitating thematic discussions during CSD-14. The matrix can be much more, however, and it is up to all of us to make the matrix a success.

When you have a look at the matrix, it seems as if the document is merely used to show off good examples of western governments. The number of examples from developing countries and major groups is strikingly low.

Of course it is very good that some western countries have submitted so much information, but we have to keep in mind that the matrix has to be a balanced document.

Having a closer look at the document, the list of ‘case studies’ and ‘best practices’ appears to be lot longer than the list with ‘barriers and constraints’.

In order to be able to use this year’s matrix as a strategic tool during CSD15, good examples are not enough. Governments, Major groups and UN agencies will have to present their vulnerable side as well, by revealing what kind problems they face in the implementation process. The goal of CSD 14 is to identify obstacles and constraints, therefore presenting only ‘fantastic examples’ does not lead to satisfying policy options next year. At CSD 15 it should also include action owners: who will do what to overcome the obstacles?

We urge Governments, Major groups, UN agencies, the Secretariat and the Bureau to consider the following points when dealing with the matrix:

• The procedure to submit information for the matrix is unclear to many, this leads to certain groups being left out.

• The matrix can help to increase the feeling of ownership in problem concerning sustainable development.

• By identifying obstacles and constraints the matrix becomes more than just information sharing, it becomes a document that really contributes to successful outcomes of CSD 15.

• CSD is a learning process, a transparent matrix helps us to learn from previous experiences and to find solutions for the obstacles we are facing.

Back to Neo...there is in fact a similarity between the movie and the CSD matrix: we will have to make the change. ‘The matrix can only show us the door. We are the ones who will have to walk through it.’
Lucien Royer, Major Group Coordinator, Trade Unions:

“DECI SI ON-MAKI NG AT THE WORKPLACE LEVEL HAS TO CHANGE.”

About healthy confusion, reporting back to 180 million members and developing national multi stakeholder processes.

What is your take on the nine major groups – do they help or confuse the process?
I would say they are an essential component of solutions that lead to the implementation of sustainable development. They are very much help and they do confuse. The confusion reflects what’s taking place in society as a whole, so the resolution of that confusion will help understanding how to implement sustainable development in society. So it’s an important confusion!

What is the biggest challenge for you in relation to your constituency?
The biggest challenge is to obtain a national framework in every country whereby workers at the workplace level can engage with their employers in implementing concrete measures of implementing sustainable development in their workplace.

Does your constituency feel represented at the CSD?
We’re kind of structured different than other major groups, we are necessarily represented. A trade union in any factory belongs to a national organization that belongs to an international organization. So when I come here I necessarily represent the policy that they have adopted. Therefore, it is no question about whether we do represent or not. And with that there’s an accountability structure. We’ve got to go back to those 180 million members and inform them and get them involved. It’s a long process, and we can’t do it without the employer and the government being involved. The biggest part of the problem is that most workers, even unionised, don’t have the right to participate in workplace decision-making. But business as usual scenarios won’t work. Decision-making at the workplace level has to change. New frameworks are needed, and new relationships between workers and employers.

Is the constituency interested in the process, the issues?
I would say yes and no. In the sense that the actual logistics of the meeting, preparation and documentation is too far from the workers reality. But when you take the concept of sustainable development and take what we consider as the trade union agenda in life – the right to participate, occupational safety, livelihood, etc – the trade union agenda is in essence a sustainable development agenda, except it is not understood that way. The workers are interested in it as much as it touches upon their lives. At the national level they are interested and informed, but when you get into the regions, sectors and factories, it’s pretty far away.

How do the different groups work together?
I would say that they haven’t. They’ve never really worked together. There have been opportunities and they have taken them to meet and agree on certain things at certain times. But most of the time they don’t work together. It’s a resource question, there’s different interests, and lack of infrastructure. If we want to do some action in Nepal and want to work with the major groups in Nepal, we will be hard pressed to find them there. And they sure won’t be organized. Learning how to work together is a challenge. After having said that we haven’t worked together though, I might add that the elements for working together are getting better, it is improving.

Do you think that the major groups should speak with one voice?
I don’t think it’s necessary, but where the opportunity arises they should try.

How do you approach the review session as opposed to the policy session?
For us the review session is an opportunity to canvass and understand what is going on in our movement in sustainable development, identify it and report it. And out of that identify what it is that connects to the other commissions on sustainable development. The policy session is a step away from reporting. It’s looking at policy that relates to the national frameworks that we want for implementation. The focus then is more on lobbying and getting support from governments. This time it’s about reporting.

If you could change something about the CSD process, what would that be?
I would say the accountability process of national governments to their constituencies back home. And developing a multi stakeholder process nationally that actually corresponds to what is going on here.

Make a statement:
The commission on sustainable development provides an opportunity for major groups to provide leadership to countries on how to implement sustainable development at the national level. Both the major groups and the governments should take that role seriously.
DO YOU THINK BUSINESS SHOULD BE FORCED THROUGH REGULATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OR SHOULD THEY DO SO VOLUNTARILY?

**Abdalla Rashid, Diplomat, Saudi Arabian Mission**

Nobody should be forced to do anything today. It is upon each country to decide what is good for its people and its national interests. Sustainable development is a broad issue. We need to look at its three pillars – social development, the environment as well as energy. In my country, Saudi Arabia, there is no law that forces anyone, including business, to participate in development. Yet business is deeply involved in sustainable development especially at the social level. They are doing a lot of voluntary work in charity, poverty reduction and education. In Islam, it is the duty of every able person to give freely to support the poor and destitute members of our society. I do not support regulation of business. They should be left to participate in development out of their own free will.

**Indira Shakya, Gender, Energy and Water Network, Nepal**

We need regulations. In developing countries such as Nepal where I come from, we’re not as disciplined as in developed countries. Issues at times get dissipated. If we allow businesses to participate voluntarily, there is danger that only a few of them will come on board. There should be a code of conduct developed by government in partnership with business that will give guidelines on how business can engage in sustainable development.

**Emmanuel Prinet, 4D France (Member of ANPED)**

Yes, business should be regulated. We need an international convention on social and environmental components of corporate social responsibility and accountability. Business is by nature undemocratic. It is not elected by anyone yet it has an impact on people’s health and ecosystems and there is need for it to be regulated by a strong government.