



STAKEHOLDER
FORUM

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT–UK COMMITTEE

A Vision for Our Common Future: The UK's Contribution to Earth Summit 2002

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As the pace quickened towards the August 2002 Johannesburg Summit, this high-profile stock-taking event was a part of UNED-UK Committee's multi-stakeholder UK Preparations for the *World Summit on Sustainable Development* – Earth Summit 2002. The event followed on from UNED-UK's March 2001 national conference, where ongoing multi-stakeholder working-groups were launched to prepare the UK for the Johannesburg Summit.

Ten months later, on the eve of the United Nations Second Preparatory Committee Meeting for the *World Summit on Sustainable Development* – PrepCom II – in New York (January 28 to February 8, 2002 – where the key issues for the Summit began to crystallise), it was agreed to report back on national preparatory work to a broad audience of UK stakeholders. The day also provided an opportunity to make stakeholder views known, before teams of Civil Society stakeholders and Government officials departed for NY.

Keynote speakers, panellists, and delegates were challenged to address the questions:

- **What should Earth Summit 2002 be trying to achieve?**
- **How can Civil Society influence and ensure a progressive outcome for sustainable development in the UK and internationally?**
- **Can we have a UK multi-stakeholder position at Johannesburg?**
- **What is the UK Government's position as it leaves for PrepCom II?**
- **Can stakeholders have an effective joint-approach and propose a consensus on Sustainable Development in the UK?**
- **What is the future of the UK process beyond Earth Summit 2002?**

Attended by 300 delegates from a broad range of Civil Society stakeholder groups, keynote speakers included Derek Osborn, Chair of Stakeholder for Our Common Future, the Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP, and Michael Meacher MP, Minister for the Environment. Jonathon Porritt, Chair of the UK Sustainable Development Commission, chaired an afternoon session where representatives from key stakeholder groups presented their visions and expectations in for the Summit.

Opening Remarks

Derek Osborn opened the conference by heralding the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development as an opportunity to push towards sustainable development, and to embrace the challenge to make sustainable development a reality with practical effect. He closed by offering the conference as '*...a day for exchanging views, hearing from key players, and forming effective linkages, groupings and partnerships.*'

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John Gummer and Derek Osborn open the day on an upbeat note

Morning Keynote Address

Rt. Hon. John Gummer, MP

'Sustainable development is two words which need to be carried together. We cannot ask people who are impoverished to embrace sustainability without the promise of development. We need to be practical and to do these things ourselves.'

The spirit of the day was set early-on by an inspiring keynote speech by **John Gummer**. Emphasising the need for a bottom-up approach to provide the foundation of any initiative arising from the WSSD, he endorsed the need to put practicality at the heart of what we ought to be doing. Confidence and energy must be placed in a process, which produces practical activities involving Government, business and all other stakeholder working together to achieve real change. Government appear, for the first time, to be united in its commitment to issues pertaining to sustainable development. However, there is still a need for this Government to acknowledge that sustainable development is something that the UK needs to do well in. It is the responsibility of stakeholders to ensure that Government holds true to such commitments. Between January and August 2002, the UK government must clearly identify what it is going to offer, deliver, and seek to achieve at Johannesburg.



Mr. Gummer addresses a sold-out house

Briefing on the UK Multi-Stakeholder Process

John Gordon, (UNED-UK Executive Committee Special Advisor for UK Preparations for Earth Summit 2002), gave a brief introduction to the multi-stakeholder process that UNED-UK Committee has been engaged in since September 2000. Opening with 'the legacy of Rio,' it was suggested that the UK

now needs to select a limited number of commitments made in Agenda 21, and take these forward to Johannesburg. Mr. Gordon emphasised that this take is too large to charge to Governments alone. To ensure that the Summit succeeds in progressing sustainable development at the national and international levels, responsibility falls to each sector of civil society to make a contribution to the preparations.

UNED-UK provides a neutral forum in which civil society – particularly but not limited to Agenda 21 stakeholders – can discuss sustainable development. Participants at these meetings are asked to focus on those issues where they can build consensus, leaving to one side those areas where they cannot agree. Priority issues and recommendations from these discussions, through UNED-UK Committee, are channelled into the UN preparatory process.

We have achieved a great deal to date. Seven dialogue groups are now fully functional, with in excess of three hundred interested parties contributing to the discussions. Talks so far have focused on priority issues, and have not, as yet, moved into the sphere of solutions, recommendations, or implementations. It is hoped that the coming together of so many different stakeholders will help encourage progress towards this new level of discussions.



John Gordon outlines the multi-stakeholder process that UNED-UK Committee has been engaged in since September 2000

Thanks were given to the UK Government, and in particular to the Environmental Protection International team at DEFRA for their continued support of the UNED-UK process.

Report on a Multi-Stakeholder Process

Chaired by **John Gordon**, the morning session was used to report back on the work of UNED-UK's seven multi-stakeholder dialogue groups. The aim of the session was to review the content of discussions so far, by outlining key priorities and recommendations from each group. After brief presentations by representatives from each working group, discussion was then opened up to the floor. This session was important in allowing delegates to identify priority issues, which they felt were absent from the discussion and should be included within the Agenda of the WSSD.



Report-back from the 7 dialogue groups

SUSTAINABLE CITIES & COMMUNITIES

Herbert Girardet (The Schumacher Society) gave a clear representation of how discussions within this group have unfolded. Whilst acknowledging the



Herbert Girardet

importance of rural affairs, he determined that the groups' attention has been focused on urban sustainability within the UK. Sub-dialogues have been taking place within the group centred around; Awareness Raising and Public Engagement, Innovative Approaches to Planning, Liveability vs. Sustainability, and Strengthening Local Economies.

Responses from the floor focussed on the need for a more inclusive, people centred, bottom-up approaches to be taken towards sustainability initiatives at the local level. A clear concern exists that economic regeneration is being given priority at the expense of the rural and development aspects of sustainable development. Local authorities were challenge to ensure continued recognition and involvement of the environment at the local level, and to create spaces in which the inclusion of sustainability can take place. Experience sharing and the dissemination of information from the local to national and international levels were outlined as being essential.



Chris Church

Chris Church of the Community Development Foundation focussed on poverty and development. He talked about the enabling of neighbourhood renewable and local action worldwide as key mechanisms to reduce poverty and strengthening civil society. As the agenda for

WSSD unfolds, development and poverty issues are featuring with increasing frequency. Considerable support was offered by delegates for the formal inclusion of these issues into the Sustainable Cities & Communities dialogue group.

ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE

Garry Foster (Southampton Environment Centre) presented the core work of the Energy & Climate Change group. The aim of discussions is *"to inspire the government with a compelling vision for a sustainable energy future created in full consultation with UK civil society."* Dialogues have so far focused on four key sub-topics:

1. National awareness raising in terms of global warming and energy policy response
2. Building sustainable energy policies and capacities at local level
3. The nurturing and rapid growth of a UK sustainable energy industry

4. UK global policies and intermediate technology initiatives in developing countries

A priority issue arising from the floor was a reduction in green house gas emissions. Debate entered into whether or not the 60% reduction target determined by the Royal Society on Environmental Pollution was a realistic and achievable figure. It was suggested that a framework to achieve any reduction would need to include the setting of goals and targets, national emission limits, and issues of contraction and convergence. The General Agreements on Trade and Services (GATS) were discussed in the context of restricting national regulations at all levels.

Jonathon Isherwood

(DULAS Ltd) gave a brief overview of the priorities and recommendations from the group relating to renewable energy in the UK. Market demand is essential to drive renewable energy technologies forward; clearly supporting economic and fiscal policies have a critical role in creating this demand.



Jonathon Isherwood

Civil Society must be shown why they should make the shift away from non-renewable resources, and the urgency of this transition must be stressed. The setting of binding local and national targets will help. A number of concrete points of action are required from the UK Government prior to the WSSD, including a reform of National Energy Transfer Agreements, measures to support the spread of and implementation of good practice, and an intention to address training and skills deficits.

SUSTAINABLE PRODUCTION & CONSUMPTION

Andrew Blaza (Imperial College/UNED-UK Committee) outlined the key issues and priorities arising from the round table discussions, which were held in 2001, as the basis for the high-level workshop, "It's Your Choice! Helping to Make Sustainability a Reality," which subsequently took place on 20 February 2002. The objective of this process is to *"...provide Government and UK major groups with an agreed framework of practical actions for changing production and consumption patterns, at National levels of UK society, which would be carried forward to Preparatory Committee Meetings (PrepComs), the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and beyond."* The groups so far have focused their discussions on food,



Andrew Blaza

domestic goods, tourism, transport, water, and energy. Within each of these areas a number of crosscutting themes have been considered, especially solid waste management, education, consumer awareness, and the need to draw direct links between production, consumption and disposal.

Comments received from delegates centred around education, awareness raising and 'green' consumer information, the role of young people, the role of advertising agencies, mode of production, and the need to place greater emphasis on reducing levels of consumption. It was agreed that these would all be given full consideration at the 20 February workshop.

POPULATION & SUSTAINABILITY

Catherine Budgett-Meakin (UNED-UK Committee coordinator of the Population & Sustainability group) described how population issues have not been profiled thus far in the WSSD preparatory process, as many see any quantitative concern about human numbers as intrinsically coercive, or as invariably leading to less emphasis on other important measures to relieve poverty and the promotion of social justice. Discussions within this working group have focused on human and reproductive rights for women, awareness raising, increased access to family planning resources, and reproductive health care.

This well-rounded presentation induced a range of responses from the floor. Delegates vigorously pursued the theme of international finance, conveying beliefs that current policies work against the health education structure. A call came to address economic migration. The group was urged to not to focus purely on numbers, rather, human rights and demographics should be central part of the debate.

UK IN THE WIDER WORLD

Georgina Ayre (UNED-UK Committee UK Preparations for Earth Summit 2002 Coordinator), reflected on the work of the dialogue group, whilst also addressing concerns raised from the floor during the day's earlier presentations, which centred around the compatibility between globalisation and sustainable development.

As Discussions within the UK in the Wider World group straddle some of the most controversial and contemporary possible issues for the WSSD agenda,



Georgina Ayre

these issues are being dealt with under three broad headings:

1. Poverty & Development
2. Peace & National Security
3. Globalisation & Sustainable Development

Priority issues and recommendations arising from this group evoked an energetic response from the floor. At the centre of many concerns was the connection to be drawn between environmental/social problems and nation/international conflict. Equally so, a number of delegates felt passionately that trade agreements (arms, food, etc) and the role of the World Trade Organisation need to be addressed at the WSSD. The call for radical reforms in these areas was clearly audible, in order to enable global progress towards

sustainability. The continuing debate over whether or not globalisation can be reconciled with sustainable development continued. Recommendations for a global framework to manage globalisation in a way that works for sustainable development was met with fierce opposition from some who are strongly opposed to globalisation. This debate remains without consensus.

BIODIVERSITY & NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION

Speaking on behalf of the Biodiversity & Natural Resources Conservation group, **Dr. Chris Spray** (Northumbrian Water), expressed concern that biodiversity is not being included within UK Government Summit preparations as a stand-alone subject. Equally so, it does not appear that it will be given its own space on the WSSD agenda. Despite this, UK Civil Society has identified biodiversity as a priority issue that should be addressed in Johannesburg.

Dr. Spray's presentation focused on five key issues, which have arisen from discussions:

1. Biodiversity and natural resources conservation must be one of the priorities for the UK Government and others at the Summit
2. Need to emphasis integration of biodiversity and natural resources conservation into political decision making
3. Need to engage business and industry within this debate
4. Need to address innovative sources of funding
5. Need to identify and report on examples of best practice within the UK, including the Darwin Initiative



Dr. Chris Spray

A wide range of opinions and priority issues were raised from the floor, offering clear indication that Biodiversity and Natural Resources Conservation is an issue that UK stakeholders strongly endorse. At the heart the discussions was the desire to engage business more effectively, and clarify the business role within the debate. With a number of delegates identifying that the onus is placed on local communities to develop, implement, and support biodiversity initiatives, it became clear that the provisions of funds and matched funding is a significant preoccupation for UK Civil Society, and one that needs to be addressed at both the national and European levels. An opportunity to address this lies with the Darwin Initiative. The Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) is central to the debate. Delegates highlighted the absolute need to use the CBD as a platform from which to launch other biodiversity initiatives. The Johannesburg Summit provides an opportunity to capitalise on the forthcoming meeting in the Netherlands on the CBD, and to develop a strategic plan to place pressure on those countries that have not yet signed the CBD to do so.



The morning panel is questioned by a standing room only audience

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Anna Birney (UNED-UK Committee Education Task Force Coordinator) outlined priority issues and recommendations for further action on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The group has adopted these points from a wider consultation process. ESD was identified as a means to the end of implementing sustainable development, rather than a policy option in its own right. Through the evaluation process it has been identified that despite there being a number of examples of good practice within the UK, fundamental problems remain. The subject lacks the kind of 'plain language' required to spark broader understanding, and too little practical action. The absence of comprehensive forums for experience sharing and dissemination of information further hamper the progress of sustainable development in the UK. Inadequate funding for UK ESD initiatives compounds these barriers.

The consultation process has identified a number of practical steps and priority issues, including the establishment of networks and stakeholder forums to allow information sharing, the promotion of accreditation of learning gained in society, and the establishment of an overall work plan including timeframes and clear targets for education within the UK.

Responses from the floor reinforced the belief that education and awareness raising are high priority issues for UK Civil Society. Comments from delegates identified the need for an accelerator mechanism for policy engagement. It was proposed that this would not only enable the development of a formal structure for ESD, but would also open up opportunities, currently absent, to allow individuals receiving sustainable development education to put such learning into practice. Working professionals were identified as a critical area for focus. Appropriateness of scale and sector specific strategies must be given consideration to ensure the effective delivery of ESD. Critically, the perception of ESD as a white, middle class, agenda also needs to be addressed. Education for all, not just the privileged, was the call of the day.

The morning session then broke for lunch, during which the Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future (formerly UNED Forum) Annual General Meeting was held for Stakeholder Forum members.

Key Priorities from a Multi-Stakeholder Panel

After the lunch break, a multi-stakeholder panel was invited to outline the priority issues and recommendations of their respective groups for Earth Summit 2002. Jonathon Porritt (Chair, UK Sustainable Development Commission) maintained an energetic debate between the panel and delegates. The session provided an effective platform for stakeholders to inform the audience with up-to-date accounts of the preparations currently underway for the WSSD, and to use the delegates as a sounding board to gain wider feedback on their priority issues.



Jonathon Porritt chairs the multi-stakeholder afternoon panel



INDUSTRY

Lord Richard Holme (Business Action for Sustainable Development – BASD), struck the right note by highlighting the need to inspire individuals to give greater thought to the role of businesses as both a cause and a solution to many of the problems associated with sustainable development. The transition in the political role of business was highlighted, indicating that businesses have a substantial part to play in international politics. It was suggested that this function should be extended to include international decision-making processes. It was especially interesting to hear about the work of BASD, and the key target of business and industry to bring a greater focus on practical action to the WSSD. Key points raised about governance, justice, and the exclusion of developing countries elicited an animated response from the audience.



Lord Holme

Delegates spoke with a unanimous voice on issues of Corporate and Financial Social Responsibility, identifying these as being critical to the success of the Summit. In response, Lord Holme identified micro-finance and micro-credits as being key considerations to addressing issues of

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A Vision for Our Common Future: The UK's Contribution to the Earth Summit 2002

Mr. Michael Meacher, MP, Minister for the Environment

DRAFT SPEECH

Introduction

The timing of this event is particularly important coming as it does just before the Second Preparatory meeting in New York. UNED UK and Stakeholder Forum will be participating actively at that event and are keen to ensure that the views expressed here today are fed into the process.

Stakeholder involvement is crucial if we are to achieve the aims and objectives of WSSD. I know that some of you have expressed concerns that stakeholders have not been fully engaged in the preparatory process. That is why I welcome today's event, which complements the workshop held by BOND last week, at which environmental and developmental NGOs discussed what role they might play.

Today is about what you can do.

I would like to talk briefly about how we see preparations for the Summit progressing; the work we have been doing with stakeholders and where we see opportunities for further co-operation.

"Brainstorming" meeting

Last week the UN held a brainstorming meeting in preparation for the 2nd PrepCom. From that informal meeting, I am encouraged to hear that some key points of agreement are emerging. I would like to focus on four of those:

- Whilst we all recognise that there is more to do this should not undermine the progress that has been made over the past 10 years and on which we need to build.
- There are clear signs that the "bottom-up" process for formulating the WSSD agenda, to ensure that all countries have a voice, is generally achieving its aims. We recognise however, that the lack of a clear agenda has hampered preparations for the event and has discouraged some key players – including civil society – from committing real resources to the process.
- WSSD needs to have a real focus on delivery. An important outcome will be agreement on innovative, more effective, means of implementing commitments.
- Finally, all parties agree on the importance of the involvement of stakeholders and the multistakeholder approach. This will be key to that implementation.

Involving stakeholder groups

One of our key objectives is to help raise awareness of WSSD and to use the Summit as a focus to encourage individuals and organisations to commit to sustainable development and its potential for improving the quality of life of this and future generations. This is a challenging goal. And certainly one about which we need to be realistic.

There will be a substantial group of people (including some in the media) who will have no interest in WSSD or in what it hopes to achieve no matter what we, collectively, do.

But we know that there are individuals and groups who, with more information, might play more of an active role in the Summit and recognise the importance and the relevance to them of what we hope to achieve. It is in this area where we feel there are opportunities to work together more effectively with other stakeholders.

We are already making progress in this area working with other departments, the devolved administrations, local and regional government, business and other key stakeholder groups – including young people, the Trade Unions and the faith communities. UNED-UK, with whom we are working closely, has an important role to play, and are carrying out work in this area on our behalf. Today's Conference has I hope highlighted what progress they have made as well as identifying some of the barriers to effective civil society participation.

We are also working with other partners on specific projects. For example, in September last year, I launched the WWF "Our World" project designed to engage young people in WSSD. This brought together WWF, DEFRA, the Department for Education and Skills and the devolved administrations and is a good example of the kind of multi-stakeholder approach that we want to encourage.

Working with organisations like UNED, local authorities and NGOs can be a much more effective way of getting the message across for two other reasons. Firstly, as professionally run organisations you will often already have structures in place to reach a wide audience that we could not possibly hope to reach on our own. Secondly, we recognise that people who might "switch off" in response to a government message or campaign, no matter how worthy, might well be less cynical when that message comes from you.

We believe it is particularly important to make the wider, global aims of the Summit more meaningful at a local level. It will be difficult. The language we use, the formal UN and EU processes we have to navigate, the number of "Summits" and international meetings that are held, the concept of sustainable development itself – all this can have a negative impact. It helps to reinforce the feeling that "this is nothing to do with me"! But if we can help people to understand the relevance of these issues to their everyday lives then I believe we can make a difference.

We have now agreed a communications strategy the purpose of which is not simply to raise awareness of WSSD but also to identify ways in which we can work more effectively with all the key stakeholders. We are currently in the process of setting up a wider stakeholder group to discuss the strategy and consider practical ways in which we can take it forward. The exact composition of the group has not yet been decided but we would very much welcome UNED-UK's participation, especially in its role as a representative body where it can act as an effective means of consulting and informing a wide group of organisations or individuals.

Other ways in which we can offer some practical support is via the Sustainable Development website, which is currently being made more user-friendly and informative. For example,

it will include a more detailed diary of UK events and projects. We would be happy to include any proposals you might have. We are also considering ways in which we might be able to showcase UK activity and progress for the Summit. It is on issues like these that we would welcome your views and participation.

Whilst I hesitate to raise the next issue for fear of the bulging postbag which may follow, both myself and my Ministerial colleagues have been surprised that we have not had more representations about the Summit. It might be that you are waiting for the Agenda to be confirmed but I would urge you, if you do have concerns or proposals that you want to feed into the preparatory process, to do so now. And it is not just DEFRA or DFID Ministers with whom you should raise these issues but also relevant Ministers in other Departments.

WSSD is relevant across the whole of Whitehall and has high level commitment from the Prime Minister down. A Cabinet Committee has been established under the chairmanship of the Deputy Prime Minister to develop, co-ordinate and – importantly – **deliver** the Government's strategy for WSSD. Clearly that strategy is closely linked with the Government's support for reform of the terms of trade with developing countries. And with the Chancellor's progressive proposals on measures to tackle global poverty, including the creation of a \$50 bn International Development Trust Fund.

The private sector

A key stakeholder group that I have not specifically mentioned is the private sector. There is a steadily growing recognition that the private sector has a vital role to play in the delivery of sustainable development and therefore needs to make a meaningful contribution to the Summit. That is not to say that the private sector should bankroll the Summit or its outcomes. Rather, we need a genuine partnership between government, business and civil society which can deliver benefits that neither party can achieve alone. Forging this partnership could be one of the most significant outcomes of the Summit.

This is why we are working on the five sectoral initiatives for sustainable development in the areas of, – water supply and sanitation, financial services, tourism, energy and forestry. Each of these has a different degree of government, private sector and civil society involvement which, taken together, offer examples of the sorts of partnerships for delivery that can be developed. We are also engaging with individual companies and business organisations to ensure that UK business other than in these five sectors have the opportunity to play a meaningful role in the Summit.

UK priorities for WSSD

At this stage the Summit agenda has still to be formally agreed. But the UN Secretary General's recent report shows a welcome degree of convergence between the concerns of different regional groups.

Within the UK Ministers have considered what our priorities and objectives should be for the Summit. We aim to encapsulate all three pillars of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental – and to address the need for action both in the North and in the South. We also want to emphasise practical implementation, including the engagement of civil society, especially business and NGOs, in partnerships to follow up WSSD. Above all, our priorities are focussed on policy areas where we think the UK can add value.

The UK's overarching strategic objective is to **eradicate poverty by making globalisation work for sustainable development**. Here the prime responsibility is on governments to agree – and implement – the right framework conditions for global sustainable development. The poverty emphasis is essential, though we also need to address the wider issue of making globalisation work for all. We will be pursuing this in close co-operation with other Departments including DFID and HMT, given the close links with the post Doha new trade Round and the Financing for Development process, which culminates in Monterrey in March.

Against the background of our strategic objective of making globalisation work for sustainable development, the UK will pursue a limited number of more specific objectives. These will include the development of tripartite initiatives with business and civil society – and capacity building will be an important cross-cutting element. They are:

- Freshwater and oceans
- Access to sustainable energy
- Sustainable development initiatives for Africa
- Resource productivity/efficiency worldwide (including the use of scientific and technological knowledge)

These combine a focus on the South with a clear recognition that the North needs to put its own house in order. They can be pursued through a number of channels, including the preparation of EU position papers, input to the development of the “external dimension” of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy, activity in the G8 and the all important work of developing sectoral and regional deliverables with other partners. Of course, putting our house in order will also be addressed through other action, for example, to ratify Kyoto and the Stockholm Convention (on Persistent Organic Pollutants – POPs) in good time for Johannesburg.

Clearly, there are overlaps between some of our objectives and synergies can be developed between them. They link up with the five tripartite ‘business’ initiatives being developed in response to the Prime Minister's challenge last April, particularly those on water, energy and financial services. There is also scope to consider cross-cutting issues such as the possibility of commitments from business on reporting and corruption, or the further development of measures to overcome barriers to private investment in developing countries.

Conclusion

WSSD provides us all with an excellent opportunity and a very real challenge. Our main goal must be to ensure that the results of the Summit are both practical and deliverable. And that they are aimed at the implementation of sustainable development in both the “North” and the “South”. In developing these “deliverable” initiatives we place a strong emphasis on the importance of the involvement of civil society, including the Private Sector, NGOs and Local Authorities.

This is a much more complicated task than merely negotiating text. And we don't have much time. But I hope that we will all take something **positive** away from today's event and will continue to build on what has already been achieved. ●

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equity and redistribution of wealth, as well as achieving progress towards sustainable development at a global level. In keeping with this there was a call to involve business at all levels within the Summit process, and not limit input to multinational corporations.

Lord Holme concluded by stating that one achievement of the WSSD should be the formation of a 'Global Deal,' wherein the developing world would take environmental matters seriously when the developed world begins to take development seriously.

TRADE UNIONS

Sharon James (Trades Union Congress) focused on the social priorities for the WSSD, expressing concern that environmental issues are moving higher up the agenda, while the social agenda is falling behind. A priority for the preparations must therefore be to push forward on social issues. The promotion of social justice as a core set of principles in the WSSD agenda was encouraged. Poverty eradication was flagged up as a potential driver of the social agenda. It was



Sharon James

suggested that the creation of jobs and the enforcement of fundamental rights of workers, both in the UK and abroad, could help achieve poverty eradication. To this end, the key consultation bodies for the UK Government on environmental policies need to actively involve workers in the discussions on sustainable development. Workers need to be informed of, and understand what activities are taking place for the policies to be effective.

In response to questions over distribution of wealth and financing for sustainable development, opposition was expressed to the type of top-down approach of globalisation where only a small group of people benefit. A more preferential focus would be fundamental democracy with increased attention on human rights of workers and communities, and freedom from slavery and discrimination. Employees of all organisations should be provided with the opportunity to unite to halt exploitation. The absence of a representative body for workers within the developing world was highlighted as a major problem, determining that local businesses are being lost as indigenous peoples are forced out of traditional work. Such trends imply that sustainable development is not working for all. This problem was recognised by the Trade Unions, and it was determined that workers in the developing world are in an unprotected sector. The International Trade Union Movement is looking into the issues surrounding small producers in an attempt to secure their future.

WOMEN

Helen Carey (Director, National Federation of Women's Institutes – WI) spoke on the merits and achievements of Local Agenda 21 with great enthusiasm, describing it as 'the operating manual for



Helen Carey

looking after the biosphere.' Ms. Carey stressed that Agenda 21 did not need to be re-invented at the WSSD, but should be used as the basis for future sustainable development initiatives. There are approximately 15,000 social projects currently underway involving the Women's Institute. A good lesson to be taken from these is the success of starting small and allowing projects to grow naturally over time. There is need for commitment to action from all world leaders to make more projects such as these a reality.

Women were identified as the nurturers of the community and therefore as having a significant role to play in the achievement of sustainable development. To this end, there needs to be an increase in the presence of women in Parliament in order to allow them to become more active and influential within the debate.

Delegates challenged the power of the voice of women as a singular stakeholder group, questioning whether or not they were listened to. Ms. Carey responded by stating that the WI as a protest group could never achieve all it hoped to, but with such members, and with such a large outreach base, they have a strong voice, which cannot be ignored.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Sally Nicholson (WWF-UK) was extremely effective at highlighting the importance of NGO's from all sectors, working together to secure practical and constructive recommendations for the WSSD. She called for UK Civil Society to start drawing the right linkages between the poverty, environmental, and development agendas. The divergence that still exists between NGO and Government opinion on policies of trade liberalisation and foreign and direct investment must be bridged to secure progress towards a sustainable future.

Delegates responded by highlighting that at a domestic level, resource efficiency was outlined as a focus issue – this would involve reducing the ecological footprint of the UK, and bring issues of sustainability into the lives of individuals. It was concluded that the overarching theme



Sally Nicholson

here is social and environmental justice – equity for today and equity for future generations.

Barry Coates (Director, World Development Movement) described the raft of broken promises since the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. He placed emphasis on the danger of forgetting the development aspect of the WSSD – with wide spread perception that this is to be a Summit on the Environment, more needs to be done to flag up the poverty and development



Barry Coates

agendas. Mr. Coates argued for reform in the World Trade Organisation agreements, to ensure that globalisation works for poorer nations. A current concern is that sweeping liberalisation has caused profound changes in societies around the world, and that Governments have withdrawn from regulation. In order to counteract this course, it was suggested that boundaries around market economies would effectively regulate companies in the public concern. International environmental and social standards, which progress beyond voluntary agreements would help strengthen this regulation. These priority issues for the summit were received with support by the floor.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Mike Ashley (Local Government International Bureau) described how 93% of all local authorities within the UK were – to some degree – involved with Agenda 21 by 1999. However, there is extreme irregularity in both



Mike Ashley

quality of initiatives and commitment to implementation at the local level. To address this, the Local Authority Self-assessment Scheme has been designed to accelerate the progress of local sustainability. Additionally a think-tank approach has been

taken on to kick-start local government authorities into embracing sustainable development. Priority issues arising from this think-tank were:

1. Governance and poverty
2. Social/cultural issues of globalisation
3. Urban planning and environmental degradation
4. Full-blown economic globalisation

At the local government level, the International Council for Local Environment Initiatives (ICLEI) has been designated to co-ordinate input for the WSSD. A central aim for this initiative is the mainstreaming of sustainable development. However, it is well recog-

nised that although such mainstreaming can be effective for achieving sustainability at the local level, it can also become too generalised, with detail being stripped away to leave the dry and non-innovative aspects of any initiative behind.

Unanimity came from delegates on the apparent demise of LA21 in the UK Government's future planning. Grave concerns and anxieties were expressed about the loss in momentum of, and decreased support for LA21. In 2000 LA21 reached a milestone where all Local Authorities were required to have implemented a strategy for local sustainable development. Two years on, Community Strategies/Local Strategic Partnerships/Structural and Local Plans are replacing this strategy. Skills, resources and local authority employees are being taken away from LA21 projects and put into aforementioned programmes. This approach to sustainability initiatives is inherently unsustainable, the WSSD must address this, and any new policies at the local level must look to ensure continuity of existing initiatives and integration of these into future strategies. Delegates stressed that LA21 should not be forgotten, but should become a core component of, and provide a strong base from which, future programmes can be developed.

YOUTH



David Woolcombe

David Woolcombe (Director, Peace Child International) offered a thought-provoking presentation on the importance of involving young people and youth advocacy groups in preparations for, decisions taken at, and implementation of initiatives from the WSSD.

It is essential to gain the youth perspective on issues which are to be tackled at the WSSD. Today's young people are to be the implementers of our recommendations, and will carry the responsibility of sustainable development into the next era. It would therefore be entirely wrong to exclude them from this debate.

Looking forward into the future, the effectiveness of Youth Forums was questioned. It was strongly advocated that young people excel at practical and local action, far more than they do with words alone. Engagement through action rather than discussion or consultation was outlined as a key mechanism for encouraging youth to become more active in the domestic and international sustainability arena.

Miss Yoshi Fenaki (Peace Child International), as a young person herself endorsed and emphasised the importance of generating interest in young people concerning issues of environment and development. During a heart-felt presentation, Ms. Fenaki criticised the media for an apparent lack of interest in sustainable development. The media has an enormous role to play in creating awareness of, and encouraging participation within, sustainability initiatives; yet this

role is neglected. Education was highlighted as a critical mechanism for promoting the concept of, and achieving the behavioural and cultural change that it requires to secure a sustainable future for all. The need for reinforcement of sustainable behaviour within the home and community was also emphasised, as Western consumer culture does not gel with sustainable development, and the support framework



Yoshi Fenaki

within the home does not provide adequate opportunity for children to express their knowledge or desire to live sustainably. The stark reality, therefore, is that unless action is taken at the local level, any environmental education adopted by children will be rapidly lost.

During discussion on the floor, child-to-child and child-to-parent teaching was offered as central to achieving cultural change. Concern was expressed over commercial sponsorship of schools, with delegates expressing that the right to free education should be separated from commercial influence.

Afternoon Keynote Address

*Mr. Michael Meacher, MP,
Minister for the Environment*

Michael Meacher concluded the day with a compelling call for practical action within each sector of UK Civil Society, to ensure the success of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. In a refreshing speech he spoke of delivery, awareness raising and communication, placing poverty eradication and the compatibility between globalisation and sustainable development high on the list of UK Government priorities. Delegates were left feeling encouraged that the UK Government is exploring initiatives that will deliver sustainable development within the UK and abroad. A promise was made that the WSSD would not be about rhetoric, but about innovative and effective means of achieving the goal of a sustainable future.

Minister Meacher raised the following key issues ...

- Stakeholder involvement is essential, and the Government is open to ideas. There is still potential to influence the agenda for the WSSD
- The delivery of innovative and effective means of achieving goals
- Practical action not rhetoric
- Raising awareness of the WSSD; effective media engagement will assist with this

- Private sector have a vital role to play in delivering sustainable development
- Need for tri-partite government initiatives between government, business, and Civil Society

... and these priorities

- Practical implementation of recommendations and policies with the UK
- Policy development where the UK can add value
- The UK's overarching aim is to eradicate poverty by making globalisation work for sustainable development
- Tri-partite Government initiatives for:
 1. Fresh water
 2. Sustainable energy
 3. Sustainable development initiative for Africa
 4. Resource efficiency
 5. For the UK to ratify the Kyoto Protocol and Stockholm Agreement

Recognition was given to the essential need for the UK Government to put its house in order, to ensure that the UK is in a position to positively and effectively contribute to the WSSD. This would involve the full ratification of the Kyoto and Stockholm agreements.

As a clear act of support for the UK preparations for the WSSD, Mr. Meacher remained to take all comments and questions from the floor. Predictably, a broad range of comments were made, ranging from trade and the WTO to population, HIV, poverty and war, climate change, and concerns over the preservation of biodiversity.

As a result of the success of this multi-stakeholder process, Minister Meacher made a pledge to attend a further three stakeholder meetings in the run up to the Summit, to hone the UK's suggestions for practical delivery methods. Attending these meetings will allow him and the UK Government to listen to and learn from the priorities of UK Civil Society. This willingness illustrates the very real promise that the multi-stakeholder dialogue process, as facilitated by UNED-UK Committee, offers for achieving practical action at the national and international levels.

The full text of Minister Meacher's speech can be found on pages vi & vii of this report.



Minister Meacher prepares to answer one of many questions, with Margaret Brusasco-Mackenzie as Chair of the session



Mr. Osborn, Minister Meacher and Ms. Brusasco-Mackenzie compare notes at the conclusion of the conference

Thoughts for Johannesburg

The resounding outcome from the day was a call for practical actions for sustainable development. Michael Meacher and John Gummer shared the view that practicality is at the heart of what needs to be done to stem the tide of criticism commonly heard during the ten years since Rio. Essentially, the UK must be prepared to use every available method to advance and achievement sustainable development, and not just those processes which are politically advantageous. Responsibility does not just fall to governments, but to citizens, key stakeholders, and corporations alike. UNED-UK Committee, through the multi-stakeholder process provides a space in which this can be achieved during preparations for the Johannesburg Summit, and well into the future.

'We have to believe in a just world, as a just world, is the only world that will survive.... at Johannesburg, we hope that a practical expression of that ideal will begin to be shown to a world that desperately needs it.'

Rt. Hon John Gummer, MP

The Future Course of the UNED-UK Dialogue Groups

In response to the outcomes of WSSD PrepCom II, UNED-UK has correspondingly adapted its approach. Strategy meetings are being held to focus each group on the emerging Summit agenda, so as to better define UK Government and Civil Society priorities for WSSD PrepCom III. Modelled in part on the UN Commission on Sustainable Development Secretariat's role to produce a Chairman's Paper, we are endeavouring to prioritise UK stakeholder input into a coherent and focused contribution to the Johannesburg Summit.

What emerged from PrepCom II was a possible framework for the outcomes of the WSSD. This is expected to be:

Type Ia: A multi-laterally agreed high-level political declaration, so-called commitments for implementing sustainable development

Type Ib: A multi-lateral negotiated programme of action for achieving the commitments set out in Type Ia.

Type II: Non-negotiated coalitions of the willing – partnership initiatives between stakeholder groups at all levels contributing to the programme of action and the achievement of commitments made under Type Ia.

Based on these outcomes, future dialogue group meetings are to be structured in such a way that priority issues, recommendations, and points for action are sorted and channeled into the appropriate level of outcome. It is envisaged that this approach will provide greater focus and direction for the groups, and encourage participants to move forward from issue-based towards practical-solution discussions.

Participants are being encouraged to reach consensus on common issues, and put to one side those issues on which they can not agree. Once consensus has been agreed, these points will be given a priority ranking, with no more than five leading issues taken to the WSSD.

During WSSD PrepCom III, (25 March to 5 April, in New York) UNED-UK Committee dialogue group coordinators will be actively participating to ensure that priority issues for UK Civil Society are reflected in the WSSD Agenda. PrepCom III is unlikely to provide an opportunity for placing new issues on the table. Rather, focus and energy will be placed on expanding the current statements contained within the 'Chairman's Paper' to include the priorities for the UK. It is clear that the emphasis will be on practical and workable solutions. Mr. Emil Salim, Chairman of the CSD Secretariat, was both positive about the outcome and realistic about the next steps to take at the press conference where he presented the official document on PrepCom II results: *"Anything that cannot be implemented, even if it's good, we'll throw out of the window."* Prior to this, Charles Nouhan, Stakeholder Forum Deputy Director and UNED-UK Committee Coordinator, attended a meeting Nitin Desai, UN Under Secretary-General and Secretary-General of the Summit, stated that the UN is looking for "...a handful of small achievable initiatives to make up the action plans that a) work and b) can be "brought to scale."

In the short-term, UNED-UK Committee remains focused on its role as a focal point and conduit for many UK stakeholders. Enormous energy is being put into purposeful discussions to ensure that UK stakeholders are in a strong position to contribute meaningfully to the priority issues for the Summit. In the long-term, we will continue to work toward the production of UK Civil Society Report that will be presented to Government, Civil Society, and taken to Johannesburg. The report aims to reflect the high-level priorities for UK Civil Society, and concrete recommendations for implementing sustainable development in the UK into the next decade.

We eagerly embrace the challenge posed by the next six months, and as we move forward thoughts are beginning to turn towards implementation. UNED-UK Committee's commitment extends far beyond Johannesburg, and the multi-stakeholder process will continue to provide a framework by which discussions and actions on implementation can be realised. ●

How You Can Get Involved

- Register for one or more of our dialogue areas by contacting us (below)
- Ask for and distribute additional copies of UNED-UK Committee material
- Visit our websites at www.stakeholderforum.org & www.earthsummit2002.org
- Arrange a meeting for your local community or professional group

UNED-UK Committee

UNED-UK Committee (the United Nations Environment & Development-UK Committee) is a multi-stakeholder forum, originally founded after the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The main output of the Earth Summit, Agenda 21, aims at strengthening the participation of all sectors of civil society in national and international meetings on environmental issues and the larger sustainable development debate.

UNED-UK Committee is a UK focal point for this work, and for the run-up to the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (also known as Earth Summit 2002), to be held in Johannesburg South Africa, 26 August – 4 September 2002. UNED-UK is the UK National Committee for the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and a UK focal-point for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Internationally, the Stakeholder Forum for Our Common Future (formerly UNED Forum) organizes multi-stakeholder events, roundtables and seminars on key issues of sustainable development. It has facilitated stakeholder involvement in the Rio Earth Summit, the Beijing, Copenhagen, and Istanbul processes, related follow up +5 conferences, and at The Hague and Bonn Freshwater conferences.



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are you doing **your bit?**

The United Nations Association of Great Britain and Northern Ireland provides the secretariat for UNED-UK Committee.