

MAIN AREAS OF WORK AND INITIATIVES OF THE SECRETARIAT IN PREPARATION FOR THE 2002 REVIEW OF PROGRESS ACHIEVED SINCE UNCED

(Informal briefing paper by DESA)

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1 BACKGROUND

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development stressed the importance of early and effective preparations for the 2002 review and assessment of progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and of other outcomes of UNCED, to be carried out at the local, national, regional and international levels by Governments and the United Nations system, so as to ensure high-quality inputs to the review process. The Commission encouraged effective contributions from, and involvement of, all major groups.
2. While specific decisions on the preparatory process will be determined by the UN General assembly at its 55th session, the Commission invited early preparations at the local, national and regional levels which should commence immediately after the conclusion of the eighth session of the CSD.
3. The Commission invited the UN Secretariat, working in close cooperation with UNEP, the United Nations Regional Commissions, secretariats of UNCED-related conventions, as well as other relevant organizations, agencies and programmes within and outside the UN system, including international and regional levels, in a coordinated and mutually reinforcing way.

2 NATIONAL LEVEL PREPARATIONS

4. Among the important objectives of the preparatory process leading to the 2002 review of progress achieved since UNCED are the following:
 - a. Mobilizing awareness, interest and involvement at the national level with active and participatory involvement of national governments, major groups and the media; and
 - b. Ensuring an organic link between and effective contribution from national preparatory activities and assessments to regional preparatory processes and, subsequently, into the global preparatory process, including intergovernmental preparatory meetings.
5. The Commission on Sustainable Development invited all governments to undertake national review processes as early as possible. The Commission agreed that national reports that have been prepared by governments since 1992 on national implementation of Agenda 21 and to which major groups have contributed, could provide a fair basis for guiding national preparatory processes.

6. In the 1997-2001 period DESA working closely with national governments and using information contained in national reports submitted to the CSD is preparing country profiles, Which would cover most of the main thematic areas of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. In addition DESA in consultation with other parts of the Secretariat, is currently elaborating a proposed framework which could provide a reasonably consistent approach to the 2002 reviews to be undertaken at the national, regional and international levels. Such a framework, in a form of a short and user-friendly questionnaire, will not solicit any additional thematic information, but rather would allow countries to identify the main accomplishments since UNCED long with the main constraints and challenges which countries have encountered. In order to ensure information would be available by the time regional reviews would commence, the Secretariat and ICLEI is in the process of preparing the second Local Agenda 21 surveys.
7. In addition to undertaking national assessments using national reports, it would seem important to create incentives that would enhance a stimulating and participatory environment for preparations at the national and local levels. Therefore, the UN Secretariat in inviting all countries to launch the following three initiatives for the purpose of creating such incentives: "101 ways to promote sustainable development"; Sustainable development visions for the 21st century." And children's Agenda 21 Posters". The general objective of these initiatives is to enhance greater participation and interaction among national and local authorities, major groups and media. Consequently, these initiatives would have the potential of raising the effectiveness of national preparatory processes, lead to a greater commitment to sustainable development by all partners involved and enhance a sense of ownership of these preparatory processes among the public at large. More specific description of these initiatives is as follows:

"101 ways to promote Sustainable Development"

Countries are invited to select one sustainable development activity, that took place in their country following UNCED and which, in their view, brought the most successful results. Nominations could be made by national and local authorities, non-governmental organizations could be made by national and local authorities, non-governmental organizations and professional associations, international organizations, media institutions, etc. and range from successful policy reforms to specific projects at the local/community levels. The nominations would need to meet the following criteria:

- a. Be aimed at implementing specific objectives of Agenda 21;
- b. Be consistent with the three goals of sustainable development i.e. have economic, social and environmental objectives, targets and outcomes;
- c. Achieved tangible results;
- d. Be designed and/or implemented in a participatory way with involvement of multiple stakeholders;
- e. May involve an element of international cooperation (bilateral, regional or multilateral).

The national selection process is expected to contribute to the overall assessment of progress achieved since UNCED at a country level, identify specific ways of implementing Agenda 21 at the local and national level, and promote partnerships. In

addition, this initiative would produce a collection of successful national/local policies and actions, identify new promising approaches, and may give examples of effective international cooperation in support of national efforts.

“Sustainable Development Visions for the 21st Century”

Countries are invited to organize a national level competition involving major groups in which the participants would be invited to prepare short essays outlining their visions of sustainable development challenges, concerns and opportunities. Such a competition could also include an inter-generational aspect, whereby the visions of more mature people might be challenged or complemented by the visions of the youth.

“Children’s Agenda 21 Posters”

Countries are invited to organize national level competition involving school children ages 7-12 in which the participants would be invited to draw posters capturing their sustainable development aspirations and concerns. The competition could be organized with involvement of national teachers’ associations.

8. The results of national competitions submitted by participating countries, would be broadly publicized by the Secretariat and brought to the attention of regional and global preparatory meetings. Special publications are planned by the Secretariat for presentation to the 2002 main event. Some of the leaders/initiators of the activities identified as the country-finalists could be invited to one of the preparatory meetings or to the 2002 main event (where an exhibit and/or special presentations may be organized)

9. Countries are invited to set national competition processes by 1 December 2000 and provide information of such processes, including on specific modalities for selection of finalists, to the CSD Secretariat as early as possible. Information on countries who have launched either one or more of the proposed initiatives would be posted and regularly updated on CSD web-site. Countries are invited to complete national “101ways” and “visions” competitions and submit information on the finalists by 15 April 2001, so that the results can be compiled and made available to regional and global preparatory meetings. As for the “Agenda 21” posters competition in could be finalized by 1 January 2002.

10. Based on the experience gained in the preparatory process for UNCED, national preparations are greatly facilitated if countries set up national preparatory committees which involve representatives of government, local authorities, professional associations, major groups, media and other partners. Specific partners who could play a catalyzing role at the national level are:

- National Sustainable Development Focal Points/Environment, Development, Foreign as well as relevant sectoral Ministries.
- National Sustainable Development Councils (where they exist)
- National professional and teachers’ associations
- Media
- National Parliaments
- Offices of relevant UN Organizations,
- UN Information Centers

11. National Preparatory committees for 2002 could have the following main functions.
 - a. Undertake national reviews/assessments, using inter alia national reports/country profiles prepared for CSD as well as 2002 “questionnaire”
 - b. Support “101 ways”; Visions and “Posters” initiatives.
 - c. Raise awareness at the local/national levels

REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL LEVELS

12. The Commission on Sustainable Development, while allowing for the originality of regional contributions, has agreed that a certain uniformity is needed in regional preparatory processes. The Commission also underscored the importance of using the high-level intergovernmental processes that exist at the regional level.
13. In response to an invitation of CSD8, DESA on 9-10 June 2000 organized a consultative meeting with senior representatives of UNEP Regional Offices and UN Regional Commissions. The consultative meeting, inter alia, agreed on the following.
14. It would be useful if regional preparatory meetings take place in the period from March 2001 till November 2001. Such timing would allow the regional preparatory meeting to fully benefit from various inputs from national assessments and relevant activities taking place or foreseen at the sub-regional and regional levels; and make their own timely contribution to the “global” intergovernmental preparatory process.
15. If there are relevant regional meetings on environment/sustainable development already planned for that period, regional preparatory meetings could be organized as part of or back-to-back with such meetings. However, if no such meeting is foreseen during this period, special regional prepcoms would need to be organized. An important challenge would be to ensure that regional preparatory meetings involve, both in their preparation and proceedings, all relevant parts of government, as well as stakeholders.
16. The participants in the consultative meeting agreed that it would be essential to secure an outcome whereby the regional preparatory meetings undertake two main tasks:
 - a. Undertake regional assessments of progress, include as appropriate, the results of national assessments, as well as contributions from the stakeholders from the regions. This would include.
 - (i) Main achievements in the region since UNCED in the implementation of Agenda 21 and other outcomes of UNCED, including any major regional, sub-regional and national initiatives towards sustainable development.
 - (ii) Key sustainable development issues, which, in view of the region, require priority attention and action at the global level (where strengthened or new global commitments, agreements and actions are

required in view of the region).

(iii) Issues which, in view of the region, could be more effectively addressed at the regional/sub-regional levels (this would include issues where international cooperation with donors and international organizations is required in support of regional progress, but where no additional global agreements, involving all regions may be required).

(iiii) Specific proposals from the region regarding strengthening or raising the effectiveness of international cooperation, including in proposals regarding regional and international institutions.

17. In preparation for regional preparatory meetings the following activities are underway and/or envisaged:

a) Regional Commissions and UNEP, in consultation with DESA, will elaborate specific modalities of regional preparatory meetings taking into account ongoing and planned regional processes and meetings.

b) Consideration is given to organising sub-regional preparatory meetings in collaboration with relevant sub-regional organisations and institutions.

c) DESA will undertake steps to ensure that the results of national assessments, as well as the results of country-level “101 ways” and “Sustainable Development Visions” initiatives, as described above, are available to regional preparatory meetings.

d) UNEP and Regional Commissions will collaborate to ensure that the results of various international and regional studies and assessments (GEO3; GIWA, economic and development reports and surveys, etc.) are brought to the attention of regional preparatory meetings. Regional preparatory meetings would be also provided with comprehensive background reports with an assessment of progress achieved.

e) DESA during the 17th session of IACSD (September 2000) will further elaborate with the representatives of the UN system and conventions’ secretariats ways of effectively engaging the IACSD Task Managers in regional assessments.

f) In order to take full advantage of the significant additional experience that is available with independent experts and representatives of major groups who have political and practical experiences in the field of sustainable development and have actively been involved in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the local, national and regional levels, DSD/DESA, in collaboration with UN Regional Commissions and UNEP, plans to organise **regional Agenda 21 roundtables**. Such roundtables involve prominent experts from the region and representatives of all key sectors of the society. The main objective of the roundtables would be to elaborate practical proposals and suggest

innovative approaches aimed at expediting progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and, in this context, formulate recommendations for consideration by regional preparatory meetings.

g) UNEP and Regional Commissions will also undertake steps to bring the 2002 review to the attention of various planned regional and sub-regional meetings that are relevant to sustainable development. They will also undertake steps to raise awareness regarding the 2002 process within respective regions.

GLOBAL LEVEL PREPARATIONS

Documentation

18. In February 2000, the Inter-agency Committee on Sustainable Development launched the UN system's preparations for 2002. This included an agreement to directly involve in the preparatory process the Administrative Committee on Co-ordination, which brings together the executive heads of all organisations of the UN system. Consideration is given to preparing an ACC Statement which would outline the collective assessment of progress achieved since UNCED together with main constraints and challenges faced by the UN system. IACSD will also actively work to ensure that the preparatory process, including documentation, benefits fully from technical expertise and analytical capacity of all UN system organisations, particularly those who act as Task Managers for various thematic areas of Agenda 21. At its next session (September 2000) IACSD will consider the format and **the contents of** documentation to be presented by to the global intergovernmental preparatory meetings. The following is, *inter alia*, taken into account in this process:

a) experience gained in preparation of documentation for Earth Summit+5. This includes the timing of circulation of documents (which should be around mid-2001).

b) ongoing and expected assessments prepared by various international organizations as well as the results of other relevant major UN meetings and processes, including "+5" reviews;

Thematic Agenda 21 roundtables

19. In addition to regional Agenda 21 roundtables described above, consideration is given to organising **thematic Agenda 21** roundtables with involvement of prominent experts, policy-makers and representatives of major groups from all regions who have political and practical experiences in the field of sustainable development. The role of such roundtables would be to prepare discussion papers and other analytical inputs to intergovernmental preparatory meetings, with a particular emphasis on promising policies and approaches, and innovative ideas which could foster progress in implementation of Agenda 21. When appropriate, thematic roundtables could be built on relevant results of regional roundtables. In a preliminary way, specific themes for such roundtables could include:

- Promising approaches to integrate economic, social and environment objectives of sustainable development in policy formulation and implementation;
- Innovative approaches to funding of sustainable development activities;
- Finding practical solutions to overcome barriers for effective transfer of environmentally sound technologies;
- Importance of and challenges related to multi-stakeholder approaches to sustainable development.

Involvement of prominent persons and independent experts in the preparatory process

20. DESA is in the process of soliciting views and ideas on ways and means of expediting progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 from a representative group of persons from all regions and from all sectors of society who have political and practical experiences in the field of sustainable development. Views and ideas of these persons will be made available for all involved in the preparatory process.

Facilitating involvement and contributions from major groups

21. Another important area of DESKA work is to facilitate and promote contributions to the preparatory process from major groups taking into account the experience gained by the CSD in organising Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues. Specific suggestions for major groups involvement in preparatory meetings are currently being elaborated in consultation with major groups organisations and will be brought for consideration by governments. The goal is to ensure that contributions from major groups are integrated at all stages of the preparatory process and in the 2002 event itself. In addition, it may also be interesting if major groups organise their own assessment of progress achieved since UNCED, including assessments of the role and contribution of major groups themselves to sustainable development.

OTHER ACTIVITIES RELEVANT TO THE PREPARATORY PROCESS

22. DESA is discussing with IJNDP effective ways and means of its involvement in the 2002 process in particular in support of national level preparatory activities
23. DESA is in the process of elaborating with DPI and other partners a 2002 public outreach/media strategy.
24. DESA is discussing with the Inter-Parliamentary Union possible ways of involving in the preparatory process the IPU Committee on Sustainable Development, as well as of national parliaments.
25. The official 2002 web-site will be launched shortly as part of the official UN sustainable development web site.

SOLICITATION OF EXTRA-BUDGEARY RESOURCES IN SUPPORT OF THE PREPARARY PROCESS.

26. The Commission on Sustainable Development at its 8th session recommended that necessary steps be taken to establish a trust fund and urged international and bilateral donors to support preparations for the ten-year review through voluntary contributions to the trust fund and to support participation of representatives from developing countries in the regional and international preparatory process and the 2002 review event itself. The Commission also encouraged voluntary contributions in regional and international preparatory processes and the 2002 event.
27. At present DESA is considering with OPPBA the most effective ways of establishing a trust fund account in support of the 2002 process. Once the report of CSD8 is approved by ECOSOC, a note verbale soliciting extra-budgetary contributions to the trust fund in support of preparatory activities and travel of representatives of developing countries to preparatory meetings will be sent to the Permanent Mission in New York. DESA is also discussing with potential donors and international and regional organizations their possible contribution to the preparatory process.
 - (ii) Prospective outlooks and main constraints faced by the region, and by the countries of the region.
 - common constraints faced by countries in the region;
 - specific constraints faced by the region (or by the sub-regions);
 - constraints resulting from global developments and changing conditions.
 - (iii) New initiatives and commitments within regions and its sub-regions towards overcoming constraints and fostering further progress.
- b) Formulate **regional “platforms”** which would outline key policy issues, priorities and follow up actions. Such platforms should be based on regional assessments and could focus on:
 - c) results of national, and regional preparatory processes. as well as contributions from stakeholders.

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