

Canadian Environmental Network CONSULTATION REPORT

*(Consultation Delegates – please note – this report will be made publicly available on the RCEN website.
Please provide additional comments/concerns to the National Caucus Coordinator for distribution to Caucus.)*

Title of Consultation: Fourteenth Session of the Commission for Sustainable Development (CSD 14)

Date(s) held: May 1 – 12, 2006

Location: United Nations (New York, NY)

Author(s)

Name and Affiliation:

Randy Christensen, Sierra Legal Defence Fund, member of the Canadian Delegation for CSD 14

Contributor(s)

Name and Affiliation:

Number of ENGO Delegates at Consultation:

1 ENGO representative on the delegation; 1 youth representative on the delegation; a number of Canadians participated in CSD 14 as civil society members

what was the purpose of the consultation?

The consultation occurred during the 14th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD).¹ Since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio, the CSD has met each year to further the implementation of “Agenda 21”.² Agenda 21 is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, Governments, and Major Groups in every area in which humans impact on the environment. The CSD was created to ensure implementation of the goals and principles in Agenda 21.

At CSD 11, the parties agreed that instead of reviewing all issues covered in Agenda 21 each year, issues would be broken down into thematic clusters, which would be addressed in two consecutive years, the first year being a review year and the second year consisting of a policy (negotiation) year.³ During the review year, discussions focus on (i) identifying obstacles and constraints; (ii) lessons learned and best practices; as well as (iii) next steps. **CSD 14 was a review year looking at a thematic cluster of energy, climate change, air pollution and industrial development.**

In addition to the four thematic areas, there are “cross-cutting” issues of: poverty eradication; changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production; protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development; sustainable development in a globalizing world; health and sustainable development; sustainable development of small island developing States; sustainable development for Africa; other regional initiatives; means of implementation; institutional framework for sustainable development; gender equality; and education. There was also a specific focus on “Small Island Developing States”.

The purpose of the review that occurred at CSD 14 was preparation for CSD 15, the second implementation cycle – the Policy Session -- under the thematic clusters of [Energy for Sustainable Development; Industrial Development; Air pollution/Atmosphere](#); and [Climate Change](#) (30 April - 11 May, 2007). At CSD 15, the

¹ The CSD 14 website is continuously updated and may be found at: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/review.htm>.

² Agenda 21 may be found at: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/agenda21/english/agenda21toc.htm>

³ The report of CSD 11 found at: <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N03/384/79/PDF/N0338479.pdf?OpenElement>.

Commission will decide on measures to speed up implementation and mobilize action to overcome obstacles and constraints, and to build on lessons learned.

what were the outcomes of the consultation?

As CSD 14 was a review year, the session mostly consisted of the exchange of information and member countries issuing statements that position the countries for the negotiations at CSD 15. As RCEN ENGO delegate, I was able to attend daily meetings of the Canadian delegation to provide input and views regarding Canadian positions and other issues raised during the proceedings.

The “Chairman’s Summary” provides a comprehensive overview of the issues discussed at CSD 14. Part 1, found at <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/documents/chairSummaryPartI.pdf>, covers discussions from May 1 through 9. Part 2, found at <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/documents/chairSummaryPartI.pdf> covers the “high-level” segment where ministerial level representatives were in attendance (Minister Rona Ambrose was expected to attend, but did not. Canada’s Ambassador for the Environment, Karen Kraft Sloan, attended in her place.)

Canada made multiple “interventions”, which may be found at: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/statements.htm#8may>. Canada’s intervention in the session entitled “The Way Forward”, which set out its priorities for CSD 15, highlighted the role of development assistance, market signals and public-private partnerships.

As a member of the Canadian Delegation, I was invited to submit a half-page report that was included in the Canadian Governmental Delegation Report, along with a statement on behalf of NGOs, Trade Union, Women, Youth, and Indigenous Peoples. A copy of my submission and the major groups statement appears at the end of this report.

Further, a tool known as the “matrix” has been created – and will be updated further. Prepared by the CSD Secretariat it is an information tool aimed at facilitating thematic discussions during CSD 14. It is based on information submitted by Governments, UN agencies, Major Groups, and on Secretary-General’s reports, Partnerships for Sustainable Development registered with the CSD Secretariat, as well as on information emerging from the regional implementation meetings. It is a work in progress and will be updated to reflect discussions during CSD 14. The matrix may be found at: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/documents/matrixCSD14.pdf>.

Background to the Consultation Outcomes

To further the implementation of Agenda 21, UN member countries have also created Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) through the United Nations Millennium Declaration – which range from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 – which form a blueprint agreed to by all the world’s countries and all the world’s leading development institutions.⁴

Additionally, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in 2002 in South Africa, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation was created. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) includes goals on access to energy services for sustainable development to facilitate the achievement of the MDGs; and on diversifying energy supply, including through substantially increasing the global share of renewable energy sources. The JPOI also calls for Sustainable Consumption as a process for reducing the effects of Industrial Development.

⁴ The MDGs and background info may be found at: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/index.asp>.

At the CSD, virtually all countries have aligned themselves with one of three blocks of countries. Canada participates with the JUSCANZ (originally consisting of Japan, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and which now includes all non-EU OECD countries). The EU countries form another negotiating block. The G77⁵+China represent developing countries.

There are also nine Major Groups that have received accredited status at the CSD (Farmers, Women, NGOs, Business and Industry, Children and Youth, Local Authorities, Scientific and Technological Communities, Indigenous People and worker and Trade Unions).

At the opening of the conference, there were objections from some members of G77 countries that the CSD program was not appropriately balanced to all thematic areas. Specifically, there are concerns around issues such as indoor air pollution, technology transfer, and the need to pursue industrialization in developing countries to achieve development goals.

South Africa has also proposed that CSD 15 include a review of the JPOI MDGs. JUSCANZ and the EU oppose this proposal, noting that the CSD Secretariat regularly reports on the progress of the MDGJPOI and that all countries agreed on a program of work at CSD 11.

Other processes may affect how the UN addresses environmental issues. In February 2006, the UN announced the formation of a “high-level” panel review on “system-wide coherence”.⁶ This review is exploring the possibility of integrating disaster relief efforts, development efforts and environmental protection efforts. Some countries, such as France, have proposed that the UN create a permanent organization to address the environment (a more substantial presence than the UN Environment Program).

Minister of the Environment Rona Ambrose, who was originally scheduled to appear during the final days of CSD, did not attend. No other Canadian Ministers were scheduled to attend.

For more detailed descriptions of the proceedings, there are two excellent resources. The International Institute for Sustainable Development (based in Winnipeg) provides daily reporting services from the proceedings, which may be found at www.iisd.ca/csd/csd14/. For the NGO perspective on the proceedings, the Sustainable Development Issues Network provides a daily publication *Taking Issue*, which may be found at www.sdissues.net/SDIN/.

what are the implications of the outcomes of the consultation?

The outcomes of CSD 14 form the foundation for the negotiations that will occur at CSD 15. A number of preparatory processes will occur prior to the commencement of CSD 15, which provides opportunities for involvement to the Canadian NGO community.

First, as a Major Group, the NGO caucus is given the opportunity to produce a 1000-word policy statement, which will be translated into all the UN languages and sent to official participants at CSD. Preparation of the NGO statement is being coordinated by the CURES-Network (<http://www.cures-network.org/>). An explanation of the steps and timing of the process is set out in the May 12, 2006 issue of *Taking Issue*, found at www.sdissues.net and those wishing to become involved in the process should sign up for the SDIN-Info listserv found at the same site.

⁵ See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Group_of_77 for more about the G77.

⁶ Announcement found at: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sgsm10349.doc.htm>.

Second, Gary Pringle, head of the Canadian Delegation indicated a willingness to accept input from Canadian NGOs in addition to the formal consultations conducted by Foreign Affairs.

Finally, prior to CSD 15, the Canadian Government will participate in an Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (“IPM”) from February 26 to March 1, 2007. Canadian NGOs will want to consider providing input to the Canadian Government prior to this meeting.

what action, in your opinion, should be taken by the ENGO community in the aftermath of this consultation?

I recommend that the ENGO community consider the following actions:

- ENGO reps that attended CSD 14 should give detailed comments regarding their impressions, concerns and objectives for CSD 15. I will be providing my comments to the Canadian delegation before the end of July and I will circulate those comments to interested parties for feedback and revise as appropriate. (please email me at rchristensen@sierralegal.org if you are interested in reviewing).
- Canadian ENGOs should follow and participate in the development of the NGO statement that is being coordinated by the CURES-Network.
- Canadian ENGOs should seek a meeting with the Canadian Delegation prior to the IPM in February 2007.
- Canadian ENGOs should consider submitting appropriate experiences for inclusion in the Matrix.

Additionally, *Taking Issue* offered the following advice to the NGO community on the closing day of CSD 14.

Influencing the final policy document, coming out of CSD 15, starts immediately following CSD 14. Using the content of the final outcome document of CSD 14 and the Matrix, you can do the following:

- Lobby your national governments! Inspire them to make a strong outcome document.
- Contribute to the Matrix online by sending in your good and bad examples as instructed on www.un.org/esa/sustdev/.
- Start national and local campaigns on the cluster issues and involve media.
- Seek out possible allies among major groups and start working with them before you come to the CSD.
- Read the official UN documents which form the basis for the UN negotiations. These documents will most probably be available from January onwards, on the CSD website mentioned above.
- Create and organize relevant side events. (OBS: check the Taking Issue number on side events and make sure yours won't fall into the snooze category...) Make sure you organize your events according to the timelines and procedures set up by the CSD.
- Visit the CSD homepage every week to look for new material. Also visit regularly www.anped.org, www.sdissues.net, www.twinside.org.sg/ and www.elci.org/.

CSD – 14 Reporting Telux – NGO Submission (Submitted by Randy Christensen for inclusion in the Delegation Report)

CSD 14 generated considerable interest among NGOs with nearly 1,300 NGOs registering for the proceedings. A full record of publications, interventions and other information for NGO participation at CSD 14 may be found at www.sdissues.net.

The concerns and priorities of Canadian NGOs overlapped largely with those of NGOs based in other countries. NGOs expressed concerns regarding an overemphasis on voluntary cooperation and partnerships with a corresponding under-emphasis on regulatory approaches, transparent reporting, good governance and public participation in decision-making processes. The NGO community recognizes the central role that private entities play in energy services provision and industrial development, but felt that CSD sessions featuring the business community lacked adequate participation by other major groups and were too focused on a limited representation of the private sector (e.g., in one session, businesses aligned with fossil fuels and nuclear were heavily represented while there were no representatives of renewable energy sources).

With regard to CSD 15, NGOs support a focus upon: removal of environmentally harmful subsidies (particularly in the energy sector); efforts to internalize the environmental costs of industrial activities (particularly in the energy sector); better promotion of renewable energies; expanded reporting of energy statistics (particularly related to greenhouse gases and renewable energy expansion); increased focus on corporate accountability; promotion of sustainable consumption and production; and promotion of good governance (both governmental and corporate, with recognition of the critical role of civil society).

STATEMENT on behalf of NGOs, Trade Union, Women, Youth, and Indigenous Peoples (included in the Canadian Reporting Telex).

1) We want to remind you that, as prior agreed upon, sustainable development is **not sustained economic growth**, but aims to meet the basic needs of all people—women, men and children--within the carrying capacity of the planet. We remind delegates that the CSD review must mainly focus on Agenda 21 and JPOI targets with the comprehensive input necessary for a successful outcome. There has emerged in CSD 14 and many other international fora **overwhelming emphases** on market-based and technologically driven solutions as the only way to implement sustainable development.

2) **Genuine sustainable development** involves the promotion of self reliance and local economies; gender equality and women's empowerment; the removal of perverse subsidies; participatory decision-making, implementation and follow-up; the internalization of external costs; and the establishment of decentralized services such as renewable energy production, access to water, and access to modern energy services. **Review of national and international experiences should integrate these elements!**

3) Good governance is a pre-requisite for effective investments in sustainable energy and in actions to resolve issues of climate change and atmospheric pollution. Good governance is equally important at a corporate level. In the aftermath of Enron and WorldCom, it is essential for corporations and the private sector to continue to demonstrate real mechanisms for corporate accountability, and this should take place within a transparent and regulatory environmental framework with effective enforcement and compliance of environmental and health laws.

4) Securing investments for sustainable energy initiatives within indigenous peoples and local communities is a serious priority in both developing and developed countries. However, the current regime of industrial and energy related development within the territories of indigenous peoples, world wide, has a long history of human rights violations. There is a need for mechanisms for the private sector and investors to recognize the self-determination and rights of indigenous peoples, as well as the principles of human rights.

5) In particular inter-generational equity needs to be adopted comprehensively by the private sector if it is to provide truly sustainable solutions. Currently the market is excessively focused on short-term profit, which leaves youth with an impoverished environment as their inheritance. We must remember that future generations will have to bear the consequences of our shortsighted decisions today.

6) Workers and trade unions are involved in strengthening the social pillar and encourage employees to join up. The existing CSR instruments need to be strengthened in terms of accountability, transparency and participation and have to focus on the core business activities.

To achieve sustainable industrial development and reach the MDGs we need decent jobs and environmental protection at all levels of economy.

7) NGOs would like to stress that in the current situation the world need urgently to move away from the fossil and nuclear energy systems, as part of sustainable development. New renewable energy solutions are the only way to give access to modern energy services in a sustainable way for the two billion that are currently excluded from them.