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FINLAND

**COUNTRY EXPERIENCES
IN PREPARING NATIONAL REPORT**

1. The role of national focal point

The national focal point facilitates the process and collects the information from the ministries concerned. She contacts the ministry and the liaison person (interministerial secretariat of the FNCSD) at the ministry, gives information on reporting and supervises that the report is appropriately done. When needed, she asks for comments and additional text from experts.

2. Inter-ministerial coordination in preparing national reports

General coordination is done by the interministerial secretariat of the FNCSD (about 20 members). Many of the members of the secretariat are the coordinators of the reporting in their ministry.

More specific coordination (when input from different ministries is needed to answer a specific question) is done by the focal point in cooperation with the contact persons of relevant ministries.

3. Reconciliation of reporting requirements from different UN system bodies including mandatory reporting for conventions

There is no systematic reconciliation procedure. The experts answering to the questions within their working field are encouraged to use material provided for the other reportings.

4. Capacity and resource issues concerning preparing the national report

The interministerial network of the FNCSD works well as a means to collect the information from different ministries. The idea of the members of the secretariat working as contact persons facilitating the process in their own ministries has proved successful. Anyhow, we sometimes face problems with getting the information from the other ministries. This is mainly when the contact person named by the ministry in question is named outside from the interministerial network and the integration to the process is weaker. This seems to raise the question of the importance of the well functioning network in each single ministry.

The reporting is generally rather demanding and is often considered to take too much time at the expert level.

5. Other issues including difficulties/obstacles encountered in national reporting

Reconciling the results of other reporting in a systematic level has been quite weak in Finland. If this was better done, the work load of a single expert would be lightened. However, it is sometimes hard to know which reportings have been relevant - perhaps the UNCSO secretariat could send a list of relevant UN reportings as an annex to the reporting formula. Furthermore, it would be desirable to connect the future reporting issues and schedules more closely with the other UN reporting procedures. This could be elaborated when the reporting practices are reconsidered after Johannesburg 2002.

In general, the questions have been clear and well formulated. However, more attention should be paid to that the questions would facilitate the needed answers. More examples could be used to clarify the desired scope of answer. A brief text clarifying the objective of each set of questions could be useful. The situation in different countries varies and the questions could reflect this by giving i.e. alternative sets of questions.

Also, the questions haven't often been built taking into consideration the comparability of the answers. The comparability would, however, improve the possibility of feedback and give an extra intensive for the reporting. Creating i.e. a benchmarking system would bring some scope of performance.