

**Note on the Second Meeting of the Bureau of the
17th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**
30 January 2009, Bangkok, Thailand

Introduction

1. The second meeting of the Bureau of the 17th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) took place on 30 January 2009 in Bangkok.
2. The meeting was chaired by the Chairperson of CSD-17, H.E. Gerda Verburg (the Netherlands). The following Vice-Chairs attended the meeting: Ms. Ana Bianchi (Argentina); Mr. Javad Amin-Mansour (Islamic Republic of Iran); and Dr. Kaire Munionganda Mbuende (Namibia). Vice-Chair Ms. Tania Valerie Raguz (Croatia) could not attend the meeting, but provided written inputs on agenda items. The Secretariat was represented by Mr. Tariq Banuri, Director, DSD/DESA and Mr. Aslam Chaudhry, Chief, Global Policy Branch, DSD/DESA. Besides the official participants in the meeting, senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, and Food Quality of the Netherlands, attended to assist the chairperson.
3. The draft agenda was approved by the Bureau.

Agenda Item 1: Welcome remarks by the Chairperson and updates by the Chairperson and Bureau Members on their recent activities

4. Minister Verburg opened the meeting by asking participants for information on their recent activities in support of the CSD. Dr. Kaire M. Mbuende informed that an intersessional meeting entitled "*African Agriculture in the 21st Century: Meeting Challenges, Making a Sustainable Green Revolution*" will take place in Windhoek, Namibia on 9-10 February 2009. The meeting is co-organized by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Government of Namibia and the DSD/UNDESA.
5. Minister Verburg informed that she attended the Green Week in Berlin, which included a summit of agricultural ministers from around the world. The summit focused on food security and the declaration will serve as an input to CSD-17. In the press conference, ensuing the summit, Minister Verburg stressed the importance of the outcomes of CSD-17 to advance the implementation of sustainable development agenda, especially in the areas of agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. Towards this aim, she emphasized the need to come up with concrete and action-oriented recommendations. Minister Verburg also mentioned that she met the Czech Minister for Agriculture, H.E. Petr Gandalovic as Chair of the EU, and discussed with him the preparations for CSD-17. The Czech Republic will have the Presidency of EU during the CSD-17.
6. Mr. Banuri informed the participants that he has attended a brainstorming meeting of experts organized by the Government of the Netherlands in collaboration with

UNDESA to assist in the preparations for CSD-17. The brainstorming session was organized in Washington DC on 22 January 2009 and included experts from major institutions dealing with the issues of the current CSD cycle. He said that the participants of the brainstorming session held high expectations for a strong outcome of CSD-17. Several decisions had been made in key inter-governmental forums, including previous CSD sessions, on matters before CSD17, and the need was to build on already agreed outcomes instead of simply repeating past agreements.

Agenda Item 2: Preparations for CSD-17 and its IPM

7. The Chair invited the secretariat to brief the Bureau on the preparations for CSD-17 and its IPM. Mr. Banuri started by formally introducing Mr. Aslam Chaudhry as Chief of the Global Policy Branch—previously called the Policy Coordination Branch—which coordinates the actions of the entire Division in support of the CSD process. This appointment took place because of the departure of Mr. Juwang Zhu, who had previously headed the Policy Coordination Branch. He also said that on this occasion a few additional changes had been made in the internal organization of the Division for Sustainable Development with a view to strengthening its effectiveness in meeting its mandates.
8. The preparations for the learning centre activities, partnership fair and side events are proceeding according to schedule, and all of these activities will feature strongly during the CSD session. Requests have been received for side events during the IPM period. The Secretary-General's reports on the topics under consideration by the Commission during the current cycle have been prepared and posted on the website.
9. Concerning the preparations for the CSD-17 session, the Secretariat has responded to several informal requests for briefings. A formal briefing was held with the African Group with regard to the Meeting in Windhoek, Namibia. At the IPM, the Secretariat will organize a general briefing for the Member States, Major Groups and the United Nations Agencies in New York. The Chair said that she will attend the briefing.

Agenda Item 3: Organization of Work

10. The Bureau discussed the organization of work for the IPM and main session. The Secretariat informed the Bureau about the request received from the Regional Commissions to have a time slot of 2 hours (instead of the provisional allocation of 90 minutes) to present their contributions and inputs to the session. In this regard, Mr. Banuri conveyed the rationale provided by the Regional Commissions in support of their request. After extensive discussion on the pros and cons of accommodating this request, the Bureau decided that in view of the heavy agenda in front of the Commission, it will not be possible to allocate more than already planned 90 minutes for their interventions. They asked the Secretariat to work with the commissions so as to make the most optimum use of the allocated time of 90 minutes.

11. The Bureau discussed the merits and demerits of the two options for organization of work proposed by the Secretariat. A key difference between these two options is how to organize the discussion on cross-cutting issues, inter-linkages and means of implementation during the session. The first option assigns the responsibility to both working groups, while the second option assigns it to one of the working groups. Several other elements came under discussion as well, , such as the organization of the working groups, preparation of the negotiating text, and whether a single working group can be assigned the responsibility for a separate segment on cross-cutting issues, inter-linkages and means of implementation etc. Other Bureau members expressed consideration for divergent opinions on these issues within their respective regional groups.
12. The Bureau recognized that these options have not yet been discussed thoroughly with the regional groups/Member States. The Chair requested each Vice Chair to further consult the two options with their respective groups and provide feedback before the next Bureau meeting for finalizing the option.

High-level Segment

13. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that it is common practice during the high level segment of the main session to organize ministerial round tables. The Bureau will discuss topics and speakers for each round table, and asked the Secretariat to prepare a proposal in this regard. The Bureau also considered the themes communicated by one of the Vice-Chairs, Ms. Tania Valerie Raguz (Croatia) in writing. The Bureau was of the opinion that the intersessional meeting in Windhoek, Namibia and discussions during the IPM will be instrumental in identifying keynote speakers and priority topics for the round tables.
14. The present draft work programme needs to include an agenda item on the election of the Bureau for CSD-18 for the last day.

Shepherding Assignments

15. The Bureau discussed shepherding assignments and division for work among the Bureau members for the partnership fair, major groups and learning centre activities, including chairing of thematic working groups during the IPM and main session, respectively. The Chair sought an expression of interest from the Bureau members present in the meeting. A decision to this effect will be made in the next Bureau meeting—once views of all Bureau members become known. Appointment of the Rapporteur was also deferred until the next meeting.

Agenda Item 4: Future Meetings of the Bureau

16. The following is the schedule of future Bureau meetings:
 - Third meeting of the Bureau: 22 February 2009 in New York, prior to the IPM,

- Fourth meeting of the Bureau: 25 March 2009, Den Hague, the Netherlands, and
- Fifth and final meeting of the Bureau: 3 May 2009 in New York, immediately prior to the CSD-17 Session.