

**Note on the Third Meeting of the Bureau of the
17th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**
22 February 2009, UN Headquarters, New York

Introduction

1. The third meeting of the Bureau of the 17th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) took place on 22 February in New York prior to the beginning of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting (IPM).
2. The meeting was chaired by the Chairperson of CSD-17, H.E. Ms. Gerda Verburg (the Netherlands). The following Vice-Chairs attended the meeting: Ms. Ana Bianchi (Argentina); Ms. Tania Raguž (Croatia); Mr. Javad Amin-Mansour (Islamic Republic of Iran); and Dr. Kaire Munionganda Mbuende (Namibia). The Secretariat (DSD/DESA) was represented by Mr. Tariq Banuri, Director, Mr. Aslam Chaudhry, Chief, Global Policy Branch, Ms Kathleen Abdalla, Chief Emerging Issues Branch, Mr. Nikhil Chandavarkar, Chief Communication and Outreach Branch, Mr. David O'Connor, Chief Policy Analysis and Networks Branch, Ms. Irena Zubcevic and Ms. Federica Pietracci. In addition, a few senior officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, and Food Quality of the Netherlands, and the Netherlands mission to the United Nations attended the meeting 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 giving a short summary of the two very successful intersessional meetings held in Bangkok, Thailand and Windhoek, Namibia, respectively as well as of the UNEP Governing Council meeting in Nairobi, Kenya. Concerning the UNEP meeting, Minister Verburg informed that she spoke there on the importance of sustainable green revolution in Africa, and in gender forum she focused her remarks on the contribution of women to green revolution as a key group. She also informed that she met with the Executive Director of UNEP, Mr. Achim Steiner and invited him to participate at the High-level segment (HLS) of CSD-17. He accepted the invitation. Mr. Banuri, who also had a meeting with Mr. Steiner in Nairobi, informed at that point that Mr. Steiner considers CSD as a high priority forum for UNEP and that there will be more cooperation in the future from both sides.
5. Dr. Kaire M. Mbuende informed about the intersessional meeting which took place on 9-10 February 2009 in Windhoek "*African Agriculture in the 21st Century: Meeting Challenges, Making a Sustainable Green Revolution*". The meeting was co-organized by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Government of Namibia and the DSD/UNDESA. The outcome was the Windhoek High-Level Ministerial Declaration on "*African Agriculture in the 21st Century: Meeting the*

Challenges, Making a Sustainable Green Revolution” which highlighted the importance of having a green revolution in Africa in the context of sustainable development.

6. Mr. Javad Amin-Mansour informed about the intersessional meeting which took place on 28 - 30 January 2009 in Bangkok, Thailand “*Capacity Development Workshop for Improving Agricultural Productivity, Water Use Efficiency and Rural Livelihoods*”. He said that the meeting adapted a number of useful recommendations on improving agricultural productivity, promoting integrated management of land and water resource, providing access to social capital, securing access to tenure and adapting to climate change.
7. Ms. Ana Bianchi reported about the meeting of the Group of 77 and China that took place after the Secretariat provided briefing to the Group about the preparations of CSD-17. She informed that G-77 and China are preparing a policy options document for each theme and that it is very important for them that their views are adequately reflected in the Chair’s negotiating document. She also informed that the Group considered it very important to treat interlinkages, cross-cutting issues and means of implementation separately. Ms. Raguž stated that she has reflected the views of her regional group in the written contribution to the Second Meeting of the Bureau. She emphasized the need for earlier posting of the Note from Bureau meetings so that members of the Bureau could brief their respective regional groups.

Agenda Item 2: Preparations for the IPM

8. The Chair invited the secretariat to brief the Bureau on the preparations for IPM. Mr. Banuri highlighted the process for preparing the Chair’s negotiating document. He informed that professional teams have been established to take notes of the discussions on all themes including interlinkages, crosscutting issues and means of implementation during the IPM. A drafting team will put together the text that will reflect all the views, both consensual and differentiating. The draft will be further reviewed by another team before presenting it to the Chair who will subsequently share it with other members of the Bureau.
9. A concern has been expressed by some Bureau members about the time constraint for all the speakers, so it was decided to strictly adhere to limit the time for statements by groups of countries to 5 minutes and 3 minutes for individual countries. It was also agreed to start and conclude the sessions strictly on time.
10. It was also decided that the Chairperson will preside over IPM sessions, but that other members of the Bureau should be ready to chair when the Chairperson is not available.
11. The Chairperson with other members of the Bureau will give a briefing to all Member States and UN System Organizations on the preparations for CSD-17 on Thursday, 26 February in Conference Room 2.

Agenda Item 3: Organization of Work of the CSD-17

12. The Bureau discussed the organization of work for the main session. The Secretariat informed the Bureau that the G-77 and China have expressed a distinct preference for Option 2 of the Organization of Work of the CSD-17, namely to have a separate segment on cross-cutting issues, inter-linkages and means of implementation to be discussed by just one working group. After extensive discussion, the Bureau decided to adopt option 2, while reassigning the thematic issues among the working groups to achieve balance in the workload of both groups. The meeting agreed that one working group will discuss agriculture, rural development and cross-cutting issues, inter-linkages and means of implementation, while the second working group will discuss land, drought, desertification and Africa.

Outcomes and Deliverables of CSD-17 and the High-level Segment

13. The Bureau discussed extensively about the outcomes and deliverables of CSD-17 and all members agreed that the outcome should be sharp, focused and as concrete as possible. Some Bureau members were of the view that the Chair's negotiating document should contain, in addition to the chapters pertaining to six themes of the cycle, a follow-up section that may assign the responsibility for monitoring the implementation of CSD-17 recommendations to some UN system organization or mechanism.
14. The role of HLS was discussed in the context of outcomes and deliverables, considering how it could contribute in raising the overall profile of the CSD. The discussions also focused on organizing the HLS in such a way that would allow the Ministers to provide strategic guidance on the way forward. In this regard, the meeting also considered the possibility of inviting ministers from different portfolios to arrive at a quality outcome. The meeting decided to defer the final decision on the HLS organization of work to a later date. The Bureau hoped that IPM will provide more clarity to the issues that need to be tackled by the ministers.

Shepherding Assignments and Rapporteur

15. The Bureau discussed shepherding assignments and division of work among the Bureau members and decided that the Vice-Chair from Argentina will be responsible for the partnership fair, Vice-Chair from Islamic Republic of Iran for the major groups, and Vice-Chair from Namibia for the learning center. The Vice-Chair from Croatia will assume the responsibility of the Rapporteur.
16. At the end of the meeting, the Bureau members met with the representatives of the Major Groups and discussed their priorities and plans for the IPM and the main session of the CSD-17. The Bureau members welcomed the participation of Major Groups and encouraged their inputs and contributions towards a successful outcome of the CSD-17

Agenda Item 4: Other matters

17. The Chair informed the Bureau about the Fourth meeting of the Bureau that will take place on 25 March 2009 in The Hague, the Netherlands.
18. The Bureau agreed that regional commissions should brief their respective constituencies regarding CSD-17 between IPM and the main CSD-17 session in May. One Bureau member also raised the issue of the possibility of having 2-year Bureau membership to coincide with 2-year cycle of CSD; it was agreed that it merits further discussion and consideration in future Bureau meetings.

Summary of Decisions

- Start the IPM sessions on time and strictly adhere to 5-minute (for groups) and 3-minute (for individual countries) limit for statements.
- Hold Bureau meetings every evening during IPM from 6:15–7:00 pm.
- The Chair will brief the Member States and the UN system on the preparations for CSD-17 organization of work on Thursday, 26 February at 1:15 pm in the Conference Room 2.
- Chair's negotiating document will be distributed to Bureau members by the Chair at 7 pm on Thursday, 26 February 2009. A Bureau meeting will take place same evening at 8:00 pm to review the document.
- Option 2 of the organization of work for CSD-17 was approved, but with reassignment of themes among the working groups: one working group will discuss agriculture, rural development and cross-cutting issues, inter-linkages and means of implementation, while the second working group will discuss land, drought, desertification and Africa. The decision on the organization of the HLS as well as themes for roundtables was deferred to a later date.
- Argentina will have a shepherding assignment for the partnership fair, Iran for the major groups and Namibia for the learning center, while Croatia will assume the functions of the Rapporteur.