

**Note on the Fifth Meeting of the Bureau of the
17th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

(3 May 2009, UN Headquarters, New York)

Introduction

1. The fifth meeting of the Bureau of the 17th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-17) took place at UN Headquarters in New York on 3 May 2009 prior to the beginning of CSD-17 session.
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 H.E. Dr. Kaire M. Mbuende (Namibia). The Secretariat (DSD/DESA) was represented by Mr. Tariq Banuri, Mr. Aslam Chaudhry, Ms Kathleen Abdalla, Mr. Nikhil Chandavarkar, Mr. David O'Connor, Ms. Irena Zubcevic and Ms. Federica Pietracci. Ms. Vivian Pliner represented the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. The Chairperson was assisted by some senior officials of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature, and Food Quality of the Netherlands.
3. The draft agenda was approved by the Bureau.

Agenda Item 1: Updates by the Chairperson and Bureau Members on their Recent Activities

4. Minister Verburg opened the meeting and informed the Bureau that she attended a meeting of the FAO Committee on Agriculture in Rome where she highlighted the importance of issues forming the agenda of this year's session, and informed the participants about the innovations introduced by the Bureau in the organization of work. The Chair also gave a briefing of her meetings with the senior FAO officials.
5. Mr. Javad Amin-Mansour informed about his participation in a half-day leadership retreat on urban-rural linkages organized by the major groups. He informed that 35 individuals representing various major groups attended this retreat, wherein he gave a briefing to them about the CSD-17 organization of work. He relayed major groups' commitment to cross-sectoral policy making work, as well as following up the implementation of decisions reached at the CSD.
6. Ms. Ana Bianchi and Ms. Tania Raguž informed about the briefing that was organized for all Member States on the preparations of CSD-17 on 28 April 2009. They drew attention of the meeting to the concern expressed by various delegates about the lack of clarity between the negotiated outcome of the CSD-17 and the Shared Vision. Their response to this concern was that Shared Vision would be a non-negotiated document reflecting Ministers vision on the way forward—and essentially emerging from the discussions of the roundtables.

Agenda Item 2: Updates by the Secretariat

7. Mr. Tariq Banuri provided detailed account of briefings given to various groups on the preparations of CSD-17. These included briefings to: (i) all Member States (referred under para 6 above), (ii) Group of Latin American and the Caribbean Countries and, (iii) Ambassadors of Eastern European Countries. During his briefings, he highlighted the innovations introduced in this year's organization of work and the rationale behind these innovations. He also informed the Bureau about the new websites (Facebook, LinkedIN and Twitter) on sustainable development being managed by the DSD.

8. Te Bureau was informed that the Group of Latin American and the Caribbean Countries has nominated the candidature of the Minister of Environment of Guatemala for the Chairmanship of the eighteenth session of the CSD. Regional groups of Asia and Africa have endorsed the nomination of Philippines and Libya, respectively, as Vice-chairs of CSD-18. Nominations from Western European and Others Group and Eastern European Group are still pending.

9. Mr. Chaudhry briefed the Bureau about the contacts made so far to line up keynote speakers for the opening of the High-level segment of the CSD-17 and potential panelists for the Ministerial roundtables.

Agenda Item 3: Review of Organization of work for CSD-17

10. Mr. Banuri informed that the Deputy-Secretary-General will attend the opening session of the CSD-17 on 4 May in the morning.

11. Ms. Pliner informed the Bureau that the Special Rapporteur on the right to food would like to have a "Note" distributed to the Member States during the CSD-17 session. The Bureau decided to distribute the "Note" as a background document and to post it on the CSD-17 website.

12. It was decided in line with the usual practice that a maximum of 5 minutes will be allocated for group statements and 3 minutes for individual country statements. Individual countries that may not get the opportunity to speak can send their contributions to the Secretariat, and these will be posted on the CSD-17 website.

13. Regarding the negotiations process, arrangements for on-screen editing have been finalized. At the end of each day, text compiled in real time will be posted on the secure UN intranet site. Delegations will be able to access the latest text using protected user name and password that they can obtain from the Secretariat.

14. It was reiterated that negotiations will take place in closed meetings where only Member States have the right to negotiate the text. The Major Groups and representatives of the UN system may attend but are not entitled to take part in negotiations. The Bureau agreed that the negotiating texts of both working groups will be separated; and a new draft of compilation/agreed text will be produced by the end of the first week.

15. To facilitate the dialogues of Ministers with the Major Groups, Policy Research Community and the Heads of UN System Organizations, two concept notes have been

produced describing contents and modalities of these dialogues. These concept notes are available on the CSD website.

16. Concerning the dialogue of Ministers with the Heads of UN System organizations and Heads of governing bodies of the UN system, Mr. Banuri informed that DSD recently organized a meeting with the Secretaries of the UN governing bodies in which they were informed about this upcoming dialogue and its objectives. The meeting agreed to name this session as “Straight Talk” as was the case in previous sessions and due to an informal nature of the meeting. Mr. Sha Zukang, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs has been invited to deliver welcoming remarks.

17. Concerning the opening of the High-level segment, the meeting was informed that the Secretary-General has confirmed his participation in the event that will take place in the General Assembly Hall. Some Bureau members stressed the importance of having keynote speakers who have championed the cause of sustainable development, as well as having balance in regional and north-south representation.

Agenda Item 4: Other Business

18. The Bureau discussed the possibility of having a two-year Bureau to coincide with the CSD two-year cycle, and decided to consult further on this issue during the course of CSD-17 session.

19. It was decided that the Bureau will meet at the end of each day of meetings during the course of CSD-17 session, unless otherwise advised.

20. Representatives of the Major Groups Organizing Partners met with the Chair and relevant members of the Bureau and discussed the scope of their involvement in the CSD-17. They welcomed the innovative approach of increasing researchers' input into the CSD process, while stressing the importance of retaining the special cohesiveness that the Major Groups framework has enjoyed within the CSD since its creation.

Summary of Key Decisions

- Agreement on the opening of the CSD-17 including time allocation for making statements (5 minutes for groups and 3 minutes for individual countries). All statements will be posted on the CSD-17 website
- Agreement on the modalities of negotiations and posting of text on secure intranet site.
- Agreement on the distribution of the “Note” of the Special Rapporteur on the right to food as a background document of the CSD-17.