

**Informal Comments of
The United States Delegation
Commission on Sustainable Development
New York 25 March 2003**

Future Organization and Methods of Work of the CSD

- In general terms, we support a variant of Norway's proposed "Option 4," in which CSD 11 should decide themes for the next two cycles. Future "policy sessions" should then decide the theme for the second cycle hence.
- Future CSDs should focus on a very limited number of issues. We are comfortable with the WEHAB themes and are very comfortable with "Water" and "Energy" as themes for the next two CSD cycles.
- With regard to the Program of Work discussed in paragraph 40 of the Secretariat's paper, we very much like a two-year cycle, as this captures the spirit of Johannesburg quite well.
- We are encouraged by much of what we find in the Secretariat's paper. If we're not mistaken, however, it appears that the Secretariat's proposal actually entails a three-year cycle that would be extremely complex.
- Moreover, we must remain conscious of the number of meetings already on the international calendar. We wonder if the Secretariat's proposed process keeps with the International Environmental Governance decision reached at Cartagena and paragraph 156(a) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, which calls for efforts to "streamline the international sustainable development meeting calendar and, as appropriate, reduce the number of meetings, the length of meetings and the amount of time spent on negotiated outcomes in favour of more time spent on practical matters related to implementation."
- Using the same basic structural elements of the Secretariat's proposed superstructure for the CSD, we suggest some simple modifications that would yield a cleaner, more streamlined process that truly maintains two-year work cycles. (See attached)
- We support considering regional issues during the two-year cycle, but rather than having a series of regional fora, we believe it would be better to embed regional break-out discussions in an opening "Global & Regional Review Session" done at UN Headquarters at the beginning of each cycle.
- Under our proposal, the second major part of the "Implementation Year" would be an "Experts Forum" focused on forward-looking action. The first meeting of the second year would be an "Action Forum" focused on activities and national and multilateral initiatives that promote implementation. The two-year cycle would conclude with a "Policy Session" which assimilates the results of the previous three meetings.
- We believe that this approach would keep us focused on implementation in what would truly be a two-year cycle.
- In sum, let's keep the regional reviews embedded in a "Global and Regional" session, as limiting such discussions to the regional commissions would not allow for the rich types of exchanges we would hope to see between regional actors and donor countries and the international financial institutions.

CSD 11 Program of Work

Ministerial Segment

- As the first session of the CSD session to take place since Johannesburg, CSD 11 must demonstrate that the CSD is serious about changing the way it does business and focusing on implementation. Putting the Ministerial segment up front is a good start.
- We support Ministerial roundtables. We're not so sure, however, that the proposed themes sufficiently reflect the forward-looking, implementation-focused path set by the WSSD for the post-Johannesburg CSD. Ministers might find it useful to address issues such as "Lessons learned from Johannesburg" or "Visions for State of the World in Ten Years."

Non-Ministerial Segment

- We hope to see greater opportunities for inter-active dialog during the non-Ministerial segment. For example, it appears that there is currently little opportunity built into this segment for multi-stakeholder participation following Thursday of Week 1.
- We believe it would be useful for the Secretariat to organize a series of panel discussions on topics such as "Integrating Scientific and Academic Expertise in the Work of the CSD" or "Processes to Enhance Multi-Stakeholder Participation."
- As for the decision document to be adopted at CSD 11, we believe that it should be sparse and clean. Such a document should:
 1. Define the themes for the 2004-05 and 2006-07 CSD cycles and set the basis for defining subsequent themes during future "Policy Sessions."
 2. Identify the basic superstructure of meetings to be organized, for both the "Implementation Year" and the "Policy Year" components.
 3. Lay the foundation for the Secretariat to ensure effective multi-stakeholder participation, capacity building, facilitated dialogues, and activities that promote new and strengthened partnerships and initiatives.
 4. Enable the Secretariat to establish flexible and transparent mechanisms for voluntary self-reporting by partnerships.

Enhancing the Contributions of Implementation Actors

- The U.S. views enhanced multi-stakeholder participation as an important outcome of the CSD. We should change the way we think about the role of major groups in that their participation is not so much an "input" to the CSD, but rather, their role in implementation is an "output."
- We agree strongly with paragraph 73 of the Secretariat's paper, which calls for multi-stakeholder dialogues to be spread throughout the CSD process. Such participation is not just a matter of one or two days.
- The "learning center" proposed in paragraph 84 represents another type of important CSD outcome: increased capacity building for implementation. This entails a very different concept of what the CSD does, i.e., we do more than talk – we line up trainers to promote implementation. We agree with the sentiment and challenge offered by this proposal and we urge others to do the same.
- Likewise, we strongly endorse the Secretariat's proposals for enhancing scientific and academic contributions to the CSD. Again, we should look at their participation in terms of "outputs," not as "inputs." We believe that scientific advice to policymakers is an important "outcome" that should result from a CSD "Experts Forum."

The Role of the CSD as a "Focal Point" for Partnerships

- It is important to look at new concepts of CSD "outcomes." The CSD can achieve its mandate by providing a forum for enhanced and new partnerships and initiatives.
- We are drawn to the Secretariat's suggestion that we are in an "experimental phase." We are very much in an experimental mode about how to establish flexible, transparent, credible, and voluntary reporting mechanisms for partnerships.
- We believe the effort to establish the sort of partnerships database noted in paragraph 90 of the Secretariat's paper is a good step in the right direction. We're aware that several non-government organizations are interested in developing databases on partnerships and we would be interested in any further thoughts the Secretariat might have on this matter.
- The U.S. supports the "Bali guidelines" on partnerships. These guidelines could be the answer for those who wish to see formal guidelines. If we go beyond the "Bali guidelines" at this juncture, however, we may be getting ahead of ourselves. For now, our goal should be to get partnerships established. Once we gain more experience with partnerships, perhaps we could consider in the future whether this experience warrants a need for new guidelines.
- We very much appreciate the Secretariat's organization of a "partnerships fair" for CSD 11. In keeping with the notion that we are in an "experimental mode," this fair could be another means for reporting by partnerships on their activities.

Secretariat's Proposed Structure for Future Work Cycles

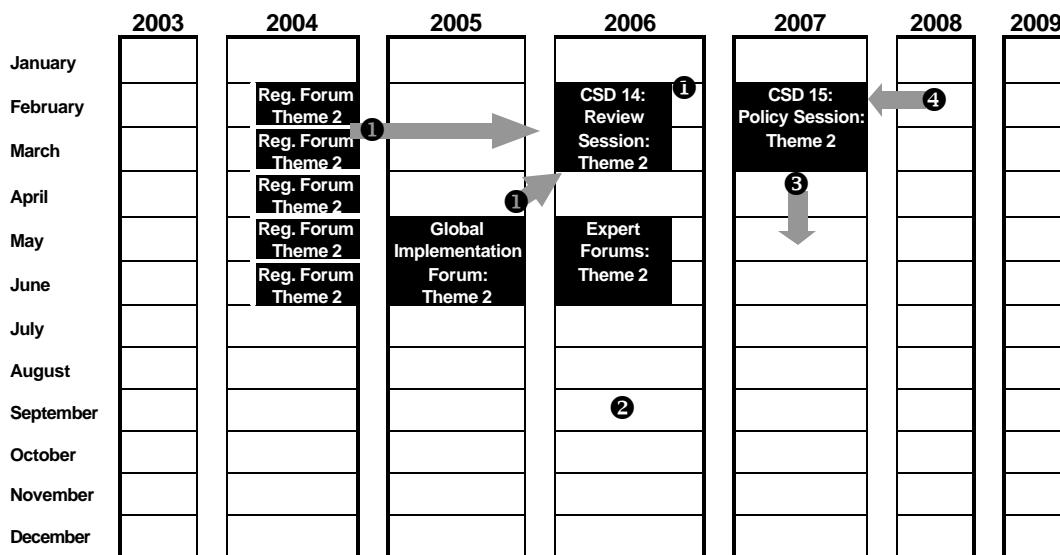
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
January							
February		CSD 12: Review Session: Theme 1	CSD 13: Policy Session: Theme 1	CSD 14: Review Session: Theme 2	CSD 15: Policy Session: Theme 2	CSD 16: Review Session: Theme 3	CSD 17: Policy Session: Theme 3
March		Reg. Forum Theme 2		Reg. Forum Theme 3		Reg. Forum Theme 4	
April	CSD 11: Decision on Program of Work	Reg. Forum Theme 2		Reg. Forum Theme 3		Reg. Forum Theme 4	
May		Expert Forums: Theme 1	Global Implementation Forum: Theme 2	Expert Forums: Theme 2	Global Implementation Forum: Theme 3	Expert Forums: Theme 3	Global Implementation Forum: Theme 4
June		Reg. Forum Theme 2		Reg. Forum Theme 3		Reg. Forum Theme 4	
July							
August							
September							
October							
November							
December							

- Concerns**
- Process is too complex.
 - Multiple issues addressed in different stages at same time.
 - Complexity of process could inhibit efforts to provide for more direct and substantive involvement of international organizations and major groups.
 - Backward-looking, report-driven process, not enough focus on implementation, forward-looking actions.
 - Review Year effectively becomes "PrepCom" for Policy Year.
 - In practice, each work cycle would stretch out over a four-year span.

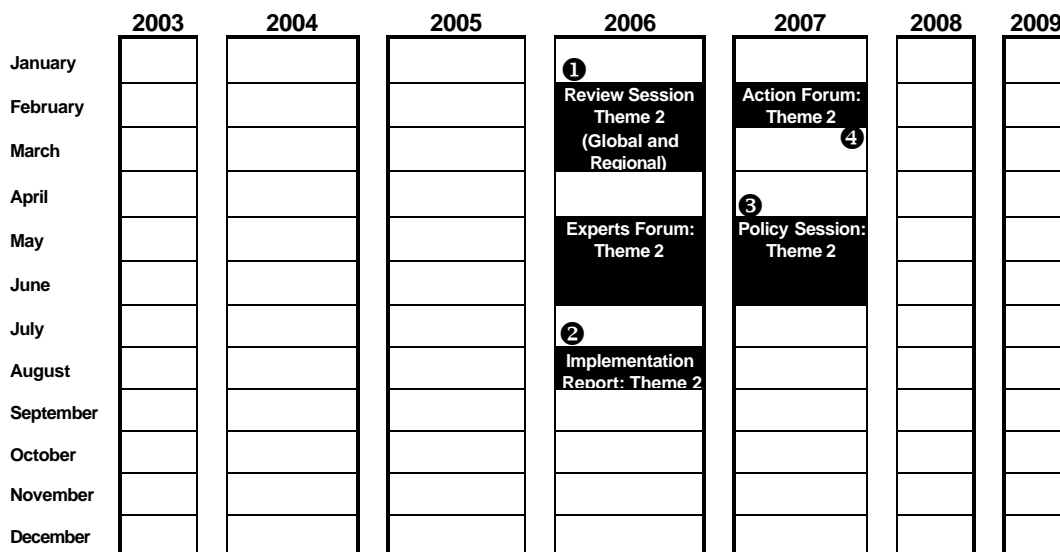
Suggested Modifications to Work Cycle (using Secretariat's proposed second work cycle as an example)

1. Combine Regional (2004) and Global (2005) Implementation Forums into "Global and Regional Review Session" in (2006). This session at UN Headquarters would begin with parallel regional discussions and then conclude with a global discussion.
2. Secretary-General's "Implementation Report" to come out in August 2006. Would be a comprehensive resource for further implementation discussions in 2006-2007 and beyond.
3. Shift Policy Session from Feb/March of Policy Year to May/June of Policy Year
4. Add an "Action Forum" to the Policy Year. The Action Forum would be a 1-week multi-stakeholder meeting for the development and enhancement of implementation initiatives, including partnerships.

Second work cycle as proposed in Secretariat's paper



Second work cycle with suggested modifications



Comparison of Secretariat's Proposal and Modified Structure

Secretariat's Proposed Structure for Future Work Cycles

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
January							
February		CSD 12: Review Session: Theme 1	CSD 13: Policy Session: Theme 1	CSD 14: Review Session: Theme 2	CSD 15: Policy Session: Theme 2	CSD 16: Review Session: Theme 3	CSD 17: Policy Session: Theme 3
March		Reg. Forum Theme 2		Reg. Forum Theme 3		Reg. Forum Theme 4	
April	CSD 11: Decision on Program of Work	Reg. Forum Theme 2		Reg. Forum Theme 3		Reg. Forum Theme 4	
May		Expert Forums: Theme 1	Global Implementation Forum: Theme 2	Expert Forums: Theme 2	Global Implementation Forum: Theme 3	Expert Forums: Theme 3	Global Implementation Forum: Theme 4
June		Reg. Forum Theme 2		Reg. Forum Theme 3		Reg. Forum Theme 4	
July							
August							
September							
October							
November							
December							

Modified Structure for Future Work Cycles

	2003	2004 Implementation Year	2005 Policy Year	2006 Implementation Year	2007 Policy Year	2008 Implementation Year	2009 Policy Year
January							
February		Review Session Theme 1 (Global and Regional)	Action Forum: Theme 1	Review Session Theme 2 (Global and Regional)	Action Forum: Theme 2	Review Session Theme 3 (Global and Regional)	Action Forum: Theme 3
March							
April	CSD 11: Decision on Program of Work						
May		Experts Forum: Theme 1	Policy Session: Theme 1	Experts Forum: Theme 2	Policy Session: Theme 2	Experts Forum: Theme 3	Policy Session: Theme 3
June							
July							
August		Implementation Report: Theme 1		Implementation Report: Theme 2		Implementation Report: Theme 3	
September							
October							
November							
December							