



HELLENIC PRESIDENCY - 3 April 2003

Preliminary views of the European Union on CSD

I. Future Programme of Work

- General comments on the selection of issues:
 - 1) All issues of CSD, should be addressed in an integrated manner, taking into account the 3 dimensions of sustainable development, as well as a gender perspective.
 - 2) Focus should be on the achievement of the MDGs and targets and objectives agreed upon at Johannesburg.
 - 3) The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation should form the basis of the work programme. Overlapping with work done by other bodies should be avoided and focus should be on those areas where the CSD can bring most added value.
 - 4) Among the sectoral themes, special emphasis should be given to water and energy, which are not addressed comprehensively elsewhere in the UN system.
 - 5) Cross-cutting issues of the JPoI, such as poverty eradication and sustainable production and consumption patterns, need to be addressed.
- The concept of a matrix listing issues and their inter-linkages is a good starting point, but the EU is concerned that:
 - the proposed matrix (Annex I) does not allow for a holistic, comprehensive consideration of important horizontal, cross-cutting issues of the JPoI and sees the need for further clarification discussion and consideration.
 - The integrative approach of themes, one of the main achievements in Johannesburg, is missing
 - Only environmental issues are “specifically related” to sustainable development.
- EU believes that sustainable development should be integrated and mainstreamed in the UN system and does not consider “general development issues” to be conceptually separable from sustainable development.
- Thematic issues should be mainly based on the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, resulting from agreement between all parties.
- Consideration should also be given to the timing of specific issues in the WP, taking also into account the timing of other relevant international meetings.
- Priority issues to be addressed during the first cycle should be addressed by the ministers.

II. Organisation of work

- The EU welcomes the proposal of a new two-year work-cycle (Review/Policy year), and the increased attention on implementation at the regional level. The internal structure of each two-year work-cycle is rather complex and may need to be simplified. More clarification is needed on the actual timing of CSD main sessions (Review/Policy) and the proposed meetings.

- One important issue that the EU would believe needs more consideration and more concrete proposals is that of reporting and monitoring (including the development and use of indicators for monitoring). Regional reports to the CSD could be considered as one option.
- On the selection of issues, the EU considers option 3 as most feasible, as it combines predictability and flexibility. The EU believes that the work programme should ideally be flexible enough to address emerging issues and deal with changing trends.
- In line with the above, the EU would prefer adopting a longer term work programme, consisting of 4-6 cycles (8-12 years), but would also be flexible with the proposal of 3 cycles (6 years). There should be no more than three themes per two-year cycle.

III. Participation

- The EU is of the opinion that the CSD should remain a high-level policy forum on sustainable development, where ministerial involvement continues to be important. Increased and active participation of Ministers is necessary to keep the high profile of CSD sessions.
- Having the Ministerial segment in the beginning is generally accepted for CSD 11, but this should not be seen as a “precedent” for the coming sessions. For future sessions, the Ministerial segment could be placed either at the end or at the beginning, as would be more appropriate, to allow for Ministers to meaningfully contribute to the outcome of those sessions.
- Ministerial participation in both years is essential for keeping the high profile of CSD. The idea of Ministerial round tables during Review Sessions should be explored.
- Participation of other Ministers (apart from Environment) should be encouraged.
- Advantage should be taken of existing regional initiatives.
- Overlapping activities between UN agencies and programmes should be avoided. Synergies should be explored and enhanced, where possible. CSD Bureau could work closely with ECOSOC Bureau and the Bureau's of other functional commissions to establish standing lines of communication and methods of coordination. CSD also needs better cooperation with other UN Agencies and Programmes, particularly UNDP and UNEP, which have important programmes for following up WSSD. Coherence in the follow-up to Johannesburg, Monterrey and other major UN conferences is crucial, and the work and future recommendations of the AHWG on this issue should be taken into account in this respect.
- The division of labour in the UN system in the follow-up to Johannesburg and the new role of task managers should be clarified.
- Civil society should be actively involved in the whole work-cycle of CSD, both implementation/review and policy sessions. Interaction between Ministers and High-level representatives of major groups during the High-level segment should be encouraged. The role of the scientific community as well as the role of educational community, is important. The role of the business sector should also be reinforced, following the positive results obtained in Johannesburg through the Partnership Initiatives. The engagement of all multistakeholders should be supported, allowing their active participation in the process of monitoring and assessment, including the ministerial roundtables.

IV. Partnership Initiatives

- The EU confirms its position that partnership initiatives are not to be seen as replacing or substituting, but rather as supplementing the efforts and commitments made by governments in achieving the targets set by the Johannesburg PoI and the MDG's. The EU supports the Bali Guidelines, which helped shape the conceptual basis for partnerships.
- CSD has an important role to play in monitoring what partnerships are delivering and assessing what makes for a successful outcome, it can therefore be a focal point for information exchange and dissemination of best practice.
- To assist with this and to help CSD keep track of implementation on the ground- it will be important to develop an efficient, transparent, flexible and voluntary reporting and monitoring system, emphasising outputs rather than processes.
- The EU generally agrees that there should be review of partnerships, relevant to the themes decided in the multi-year work programme.