



**CSD 11 Informal consultations, 24 – 26 March 2003, New York
Swiss interventions**

1. Future Programme of Work of the CSD

The future programme of work of the CSD and its working modalities are closely interlinked. I would therefore like to briefly touch upon organizational aspects before talking about possible criteria for the selection of topics for the work programme.

Switzerland is of the opinion that the future CSD work programme should allow for both predictability and flexibility: On the one hand, we would not want to negotiate every other year which topics the CSD is going to deal with next. On the other hand, it is nearly impossible to fix a programme of work for the next ten years that anticipates all relevant developments. We thus need to find the right mix between those two options, as mentioned in the Secretary General's report. Therefore it seems to us that proposed option 3 should be pursued, although it needs some further adjustments, because it does not fully provide the basis for the focused discussion that we are looking for.

Concerning the thematic structure we believe that the CSD should be organized in two-year thematic cycles. Thus the same overarching topic would be on the agenda of two following CSD meetings, one year with a special focus on implementation and exchange of information, one year with a special focus on the policy dimension. This would allow for a focused discussion and in-depth analysis and for an effective follow up thereafter with respective policy decisions.

What are relevant **criteria for selecting the topics** for our future programme of work? – From a Swiss point of view, the most important criteria is that the CSD deals with the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development, namely the economic, social and ecological dimension. There still is much work to do on all levels to better integrate the dimensions and adopt coherent approaches. Therefore, the special focus of the CSD should be on the linkages between the three dimensions of sustainable development. In this regard, the matrix proposed in the Secretary General's report could be a useful instrument for identifying relevant topics. Similarly, the proposed structuring of possible topics in three main categories can be helpful.

For Switzerland, another important criteria is the question whether there already exists a competent process or institution which deals with the proposed topic in a satisfactory manner. If this is the case, we would not see it as a priority for the CSD to deal with this topic. Instead of duplicating existing work, the CSD should concentrate on areas, which are not yet appropriately dealt with.

2. Future Organisation and Methods of Work of the CSD

States agreed at the WSSD in Johannesburg, that every second year should be a negotiation year in the new CSD. We further agreed that the number of themes addressed in each session should be limited. Consequently, we believe that the CSD should be organized in **two-year thematic cycles**. This means that the same overarching theme would be on the agenda for two CSD meetings. In the first year, with a



special focus on implementation, exchange of information, best practices and so on. In the second year, with a special focus on the policy dimension.

This organizational structure would allow for a focused discussion and in-depth analysis as well as an effective **follow up with relevant policy decisions**. Thus, negotiations in the CSD should be used to address gaps in the international system for sustainable development. In any case, the CSD should remain an attractive platform for a high-level political dialogue on sustainable development issues.

We have some reservations concerning the **schedule of meetings** that is proposed in the Secretary General's report. It seems that it would rather lead to a proliferation of meetings instead of reducing their number as originally intended by the WSSD decisions (§ 149 lit. e Pol). This is an aspect that we need to look into in more detail, keeping in mind the need for an appropriate involvement of the regional level.

Another element of the future organisation and methods of work that we need to elaborate further, since it has not been dealt with in detail in the Secretary General's draft report, is the development of an effective **review and monitoring mechanism**. To monitor and measure progress in the implementation of the Rio and Johannesburg decisions will be one of the main tasks of the new CSD. Implementation can be significantly improved through regular reviewing and monitoring of activities undertaken and results achieved. Therefore, an efficient and effective review and monitoring mechanism will be a crucial element of the CSD's new organisation and methods of work.

Both types of WSSD outcomes - the WSSD Plan of Implementation and the Partnership Initiatives - should be reviewed and monitored by the CSD. It should do so by receiving and discussing reports. Reports from countries as well as reports from Partnership initiatives. In order to facilitate reporting, the CSD should agree on a set of guidelines and criteria. Beside reports, we should also consider new forms of monitoring and reporting. In this context, it would be worthwhile to explore the possibility of peer reviews.

3. Organisation of Work during CSD 11

We welcome the efforts undertaken to better integrate the ideas contained in the Secretary-General's draft report with the proposed Organization of Work for CSD 11. We believe that there has been some progress in this respect, but there still remains room for improvement. Some of the ideas contained in the Secretary-General's draft report are still not reflected in the proposed Organisation of Work for CSD 11.

Maybe the most important question with regard to the proposed Organization of Work is: **How are we going to make sure that our Ministers can give the expected guidance for the future work of the CSD and the respective negotiation process?** With the current proposal for the organization of work, their scope of influence seems to be quite limited. In our view, the link between the High Level Segment and the negotiations needs to be stronger and much clearer.

From our point of view, the key to strengthening this link lies in the three proposed **ministerial roundtable discussions**. They should be complementary to the ministe-



rial statements during the morning sessions and serve as opportunities for ministers to deepen CSD reform issues and give guidance to the forthcoming negotiations. In order to do so, we would propose the following structure, which covers three of most relevant CSD reform issues:

- One ministerial roundtable could deal with the **follow up of the WSSD Plan of Implementation** within the CSD (or in more general terms the type 1 outcomes of WSSD): Aspects of this discussion would include the organization and methods of work as well as the question of the appropriate review and monitoring mechanism. How should the CSD look like in order to be an attractive platform for a high-level political dialogue on sustainable development issues? How are we going to measure progress in implementation? How are we organizing the country reporting? ...
- The second ministerial roundtable should deal with the **follow up of** what used to be called the type 2 outcomes of the WSSD, namely the **Partnership initiatives**, as it is proposed in the Secretary General's report ("Making the CSD a focal point for partnerships"): Question to be debated by ministers would include: How to create a transparent, participatory and credible reporting and monitoring mechanism on the partnerships? What are the guidelines/guidelines for (new) partnerships? How to ensure that partnerships are closely linked to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation? How to facilitate the implementation of partnerships and how to foster new ones? ...
- The third ministerial roundtable could deepen another core issue which is the **future work programme of the CSD**: What does the future agenda for the CSD look like? How much flexibility do we need? How to concentrate on issues that deal with the integration of the different dimensions of sustainable development? How to avoid duplication of work? ...

No need to say, that these roundtable discussions need to be **truly interactive**. (No reading of prepared statements.) Ministers need to discuss amongst themselves and with stakeholder representatives about these issues. They need to find compromises and come to conclusions that lead the way for the negotiations on the practical decisions needed to reform the CSD. These conclusions need to be fed into the negotiation process.

Another issue that needs clarification in the Organization of Work for CSD 11 is how to achieve better involvement and a substantial role for **stakeholders**. What is proposed, is still a rather traditional, government and UN-institutions dominated setting. There is the danger that at least in this respect CSD 11 is going to do "business as usual", despite all contrary intentions. In our view, the Organization of Work needs to specify the stakeholders' contribution. **With regard to CSD 11**, we would propose to

- invite selected stakeholder representatives to participate at the ministerial roundtable discussions (as foreseen in the organization of work) and give them an explicit role/mandate
- devote this year's multi-stakeholder dialogue entirely to the subject of the future involvement of stakeholders in the work of CSD



4. Enhancing contributions from and participation of various implementation actors

The **informal exchanges** among government and civil society representatives during CSD meetings were an important element of the CSD. These exchanges enabled a sharing of experiences and a better understanding of each others concerns. In contrast, the formal “exchanges” during the official multi-stakeholder dialogue segments were perceived less valuable over the years.

Therefore, a **truly interactive way of involving the stakeholders** in the work of the CSD needs to be developed in the follow up of the WSSD. Stakeholders should be invited to participate in discussions and interact with other participants, for example in roundtable discussions. Such dialogues should be moderated by a personality who is able to stimulate discussion and dialogue. In addition, other forms of involvement of stakeholders in the work of the CSD need to be considered, such as interactive workshops, meetings with opinion leaders from the business sector, etc.

Most importantly, we believe that the impact of stakeholders in the work of the CSD would be greatly enhanced, if they were given **an explicit role in monitoring and reviewing the implementation of WSSD and CSD results**. For example, stakeholders could be invited to comment on reports coming from countries or from particular partnership initiatives through the review process. They could thus give their own views – kind of an independent second opinion - on the state of implementation. We are convinced that this would provide the basis for constructive discussions and improved implementation.

Having made the stakeholders equal partners in the CSD and having realized their interactive involvement, the traditional multi-stakeholder dialogue might eventually become redundant.

5. Role of CSD as a “focal point” for partnerships

Switzerland is strongly convinced that the CSD should be the focal point for partnership initiatives. This means that the CSD should provide a platform for

- presenting the partnership initiatives (their partners, activities, results);
- critically appreciating the activities undertaken and results achieved;
- exchanging information, sharing practical experiences and learning from each other in putting sustainable development in practice.

In particular, the CSD should provide a mechanism for reporting on the implementation of the partnership initiatives and consequently serve as a framework for presenting and discussing the implementation reports.

In order to ensure transparency and credibility, an active and meaningful participation of stakeholders should be provided for in the reporting mechanism:

- One important element in ensuring transparency and credibility is a set of clear guidelines and criteria, which have to be taken into account by the partnerships in their reporting.



- Another way of enhancing transparency and credibility would be to formally invite a selected number of stakeholders (i.e. from civil society organizations) to comment on reporting documents submitted by the partnership initiatives and thus give some sort of second opinion.
- A third way of doing so, would be to mandate civil society representatives to conduct reviews or evaluations on selected partnership initiatives. Those reviews will provide an opportunity for independent evaluation of partnerships in light of their stated goals and purposes.

Last but not least, we agree with the proposal in the Secretary General's report to put the Guiding Principles for partnership initiatives, which have been developed in an informal process, on the agenda of CSD 11, since they have not been formally agreed in Johannesburg.

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