

## **B. Multi-stakeholder's dialogue**

10. At its 9th meeting, on 9 May, the Commission decided to include in its report the Chairperson's summary of the multi-stakeholder's dialogue (E/CN.17/2003/CRP.3), which read as follows:

### **“Introduction**

“1. As part of the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, both Governments and major groups were encouraged to contribute to an interactive multi-stakeholder dialogue session, which was held on 1 May 2003. The discussions were candid and enriching, and reflected serious attempts by all parties to enhance the participation of major groups in activities of the Commission.

“2. The deliberations sought to cover four key areas:

- Participation and representation of major groups in Commission meetings
- Contributions of major groups to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation)
- Future work programme, organization and methods of work of the Commission
- Accountability and responsibility of major groups in implementation.

“3. A key theme emerging from the dialogue was the renewed commitment to addressing sustainable development within a multilateral framework, as well as the central role of the human-centred and rights-based approaches to sustainable development.

### **“Participation and representation of major groups**

“4. There was recognition that the Commission was one of the few forums within the United Nations that allowed a diversity of stakeholder groups to effectively participate and contribute to a major multilateral process. Many participants asked for participation from other sectors of stakeholders and governments as well. The trade unions stressed the need for more balanced participation, reflecting the three dimensions of sustainable development.

“5. The Commission was asked to give consideration to broadening participation to include consumers, faith-based groups, parliamentarians and the media. There was agreement on the need to include vulnerable groups such

as people with disabilities and the elderly, as well to recognize the important role played by educators in the future work of the Commission. The women's group also emphasized the importance of appropriate gender balance in all meetings of the Commission.

“6. Several delegations expressed their strong concern over the small number of stakeholders from the South in the major group delegations to the Commission. To address this imbalance, there were calls and pledges by delegations from both the North and the South to access resources from better resourced organizations and donor agencies to support the participation of major groups from developing countries in order to foster a more geographically balanced representation of major groups at future meetings.

“7. There was also support for the inclusion of major group representatives in national delegations as a mechanism to enhance their participation in the work of the Commission. Several countries reported that they regularly included major groups in their delegations, with constructive results, and encouraged others to do the same. Major groups welcomed the proposal but also supported the Commission's practice of selecting major group participants through self-organized mechanisms to assure transparency. In this regard, the accountability of participants to their local constituencies remained crucial.

“8. Youth emphasized the importance of its political contribution in decision-making, in particular at the national level. In many developing countries, youth are a significant political constituency and can exercise leadership by actively participating in political debates within their own countries.

“9. It was emphasized that all parties had an obligation to ensure that appropriate major group representation was considered and accommodated within the Commission.

#### **“Contributions of major groups to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation**

“10. There was consensus that the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation was not the responsibility of Governments alone, but that stakeholders also have a crucial role to play in its implementation. The business community said that they considered voluntary partnerships as a key instrument in mobilizing its support for achieving the Commission's objectives. Business prioritized job creation, providing services and developing innovative technologies as key contributions from their sector.

“11. Representatives of the scientific and technological community stressed their dual role as providers of authoritative scientific information for decision-making as well as educators of the public. There was a need for an international commitment to narrow the knowledge divide between the developed and developing countries through international support for, and investment in, the development of the capacity of developing countries to generate knowledge. The role of indigenous knowledge and its complementarity to scientific knowledge was noted. The scientific community noted the need for a balance between public and private sector funding for research.

“12. Local government representatives emphasized the need for more resources for local-level initiatives. The considerable work being done by local authorities in implementing Agenda 21 was noted.

“13. The issue of trade-distorting agricultural subsidies was raised and noted as a serious constraint on the achievement of sustainable development goals.

**“Future work programme, organization and methods of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development**

“14. The comments of major groups indicated support for the proposed two-year cycle of the new work programme and for water and energy as priority areas for the first two cycles. Farmers drew specific attention to the importance of linking water to food security issues. There was also general support for the proposed regional implementation forums, which were seen as ways to increase major group participation in the monitoring and implementation efforts.

”15. Several major groups proposed the inclusion of stakeholders in expert groups or subcommittees that may be created in the future work of the Commission. While some of these mechanisms could involve specific major group sectors, including scientists, others could be of a multi-stakeholder nature. Calls were made for major group participation in all steps of the implementation process from developing programmes to monitoring their progress.

“16. Indigenous peoples and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) proposed a rights-based approach, the use of prior informed consent and respect for cultural diversity as general principles that should be underlying the future work of the Commission. Gender issues and gender equity need to be mainstreamed into the future work of the Commission. A gender analysis of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation was requested.

“17. The need to strengthen stakeholder networks, in particular at the country, regional and subregional levels, is important in order to promote concerted effort on issues related to implementation targets of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

**“Accountability and responsibility of major groups in implementation**

“18. There was a need for a special arrangement that allowed for civil society or major groups to report to the Commission. As the Commission moved towards a more implementation-oriented focus, it needed to ensure that non-State actors were also brought into the implementation framework. For example, women’s groups made concrete suggestions that the Commission should develop indicators and reporting mechanisms to demonstrate its mainstreaming of gender issues. Delegations supported the participation of all stakeholders in monitoring and assessment and emphasized the value of using sustainable development indicators.

“19. The Chairperson thanked all of the participants for the maturity and deep thought they had given to the issues at hand and assured participants that the contents of the dialogue would be brought forward during the ensuing deliberations of the eleventh session of the Commission.”