

Note of the Bureau of the Twelfth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on its Sixth Meeting

1. The sixth meeting of the Bureau of the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) took place in New York on 19 March 2004. Minister Brende (Norway), Chairperson of CSD-12, chaired the meeting. The following Vice-Chairs attended the meeting: Ambassador Bruno Stagno (Costa Rica), Mr. Toru Shimizu (Japan), Mr. Bolus Paul Zom Lolo (Nigeria), and Ms. Eva Tomic (Slovenia). The Director of the Division for Sustainable Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DSD/DESA), staff from DSD/DESA and officials from the Norwegian Ministries of Environment and Foreign Affairs also attended the meeting.
2. Minister Brende briefed the Vice-Chairs on his meeting with the Secretary-General during which the Secretary-General reaffirmed the importance of following up the World Summit on Sustainable Development and achieving Millennium Development Goals. The Secretary-General highlighted the need for a successful preparatory meeting, to be convened during CSD-12, for the Mauritius International Meeting on small island developing States.
3. Minister Brende informed the Bureau that the Secretary-General confirmed that he would address the High-level Segment of CSD-12, which would be attended by ministers responsible for water, sanitation, housing, economy, development co-operation, as well as ministers of environment. Minister Brende indicated that heads of UN agencies, funds and programmes, and international financial institutions would join ministers at the High-level Segment for interactive discussions, which would be led off by a number of eminent speakers.
4. Noting the useful exchange of views at the briefing held by the Bureau on Monday, 15 March, on documentation for the SIDS preparatory meeting, Minister Brende expressed his appreciation to the Vice-Chairs for their efforts and to Mr. Lolo for chairing the briefing.
5. Minister Brende briefed Bureau members on his recent activities as Chairperson of CSD-12, including his participation in the Rome International Forum on Partnerships for Sustainable Development and an OECD ministerial Round Table on Sustainable Development, which focused on integrated water resources management and sanitation. The Vice-Chairs reported on the ongoing contacts with their regional groups in relation to the organization of work for CSD-12, including the SIDS preparatory meeting.

Organization of work for CSD-12: practical aspects

6. The Bureau exchanged views on the updated organization of work for CSD-12, which had incorporated suggestions from member States and included information on the thematic topics of the High-level Segment. The Vice-Chairs had received positive feedback from their regional groups, with member States generally expressing satisfaction with the updated version. Some delegations had inquired how statements in the High-level Segment would be interspersed with interactive discussions; whether Ministers could speak on more than one topic; and whether there would be a list of speakers for the officials' segment focusing on overall review.
7. After deliberation, the Bureau agreed that the High-level Segment would consist of introductory presentations by eminent speakers, interactive discussions and statements. With a view to integrating statements with discussions, Minister Brende would invite comments

and feedbacks on key issues highlighted by Ministers in their statements. Noting that the list of speakers for the High-level Segment had opened on 16 March and there was strong interest from member States, the Bureau further agreed that it would be necessary to keep some flexibility in relation to the list of speakers and interactive discussions at the High-level Segment. The Bureau reaffirmed its decision not to establish a list of speakers for the officials' segment featuring statements on overall review.

8. Regarding the regional discussion sessions, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that the date of the UN ECE discussion session had moved to 20 April. The Secretariat also advised the Bureau that meeting formats and speakers' arrangements for the five regional discussion sessions had been revised and would be incorporated into the organization of work shortly.
9. With the start of CSD-12 approaching, various components of the programme of work are taking shape. In order to provide delegates and other participants with easy access to updates, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that a web-based CSD-12 in-depth description of activities would soon be posted on the website dedicated to CSD-12 allowing for quick navigation. During CSD-12, hard copies of the daily schedule would be distributed in conference rooms and other venues hosting CSD events.
10. In this connection, the Secretariat informed the Bureau that discussions at the High-level Segment and other activities, such as the opening of CSD-12, a balanced selection of thematic and regional discussions, Partnership Fair events and Learning Centre courses, would be web-cast. This would bring CSD closer to a worldwide audience, helping raise awareness of the issues dealt with at CSD-12 as well as the work of CSD. The Bureau endorsed this initiative and decided to bring it to the attention of delegates at the briefing on Monday, 22 March.

Status of Partnership Fair, Learning Centre and Round Table room

11. The Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the preparations for Partnership Fair, Learning Centre and Round Table room. The Partnership Fair has been fully booked, showing a broad and strong interest in these activities. In addition to presentations, Partnership Fair would feature moderated interactive discussions addressing practical issues, obstacles, and lessons learned. An information booth in the neck area adjacent to the Vienna Café would provide video clips showcasing success stories of partnership initiatives. A full schedule of activities at the Partnership Fair would soon be posted on the web.
12. Like the Partnership Fair, the Learning Centre has been fully booked and its programme is close to completion. The Secretariat provided the Bureau with a set of course descriptions and outlines, which would also be made available on the web shortly. A majority of the courses aim at imparting knowledge and information on practical approaches to overcoming problems and obstacles in water, sanitation and human settlements, while a couple of courses have been re-introduced due to their successes at CSD-11 and popular demand for them.
13. The Secretariat also confirmed the availability of the Express Bar as a venue for bilateral or group roundtable discussions. (The Express Bar is located on the third floor, the south side of the General Assembly Hall.) A central booth would be set up in the neck area adjacent to the Vienna Café to facilitate booking for the use of a roundtable. The Secretariat would provide security and booking assistance, but no other services or meeting facilities, such as microphones or note pads would be supplied.

Organization of work for the SIDS preparatory meeting

14. Minister Brende briefed the Bureau on his various meetings related to the SIDS preparatory meeting to be convened during CSD-12. The Bureau held extensive discussions and exchanges of views on SIDS preparations. The Bureau was pleased to note H.E. Mr. Don MacKay, Permanent Representative of New Zealand, agreed to facilitate informal consultations on SIDS preparations.

Conference call with Organizing Partners of Major Groups

15. Minister Brende shared with the Bureau the results of his conference call with the organizing partners of Major Groups, during which he addressed a number of questions raised by the organizing partners, including those related to their statements and participation in interactive discussions, the composition of expert speakers and panellists and the status of the “think pieces”.
16. Minister Brende emphasized to the organizing partners that in chairing the High-level Segment he would seek to intersperse questions and answers with statements and would try to ensure a proper balance between presentations of views. Regarding the composition of expert panels, Minister Brende stated that the Bureau had made every effort to form balanced expert panels. He clarified the role of the “think pieces” noting that they had been commissioned by the Norwegian Ministry of Environment and represented solely the views of the authors to put concrete information on the table to stimulate discussion. They were not to be considered as official papers.

Accreditation of IGOs

17. The Bureau took note of an update by the Secretariat on the application of intergovernmental organisations (IGOs) for accreditation to CSD-12. The Bureau decided to recommend to the Commission that the WSSD-accredited IGOs be accredited to CSD-12 without going through the accreditation process again.

Briefing by the Bureau and timing of next meeting of the Bureau

18. The Bureau decided to hold a briefing on Monday, 22 March to share with delegates the results of its sixth meeting.
19. The next Bureau meeting will be held through video link with Oslo to review progress in the informal consultations, to be facilitated by H.E. Mr. Don MacKay, Permanent Representative of New Zealand, on matters related to the SIDS preparatory meeting. The specific date and timing of the meeting will be determined later.
20. The Bureau also decided to meet with the organizing partners of Major Groups in New York on 18 April to further review Major Groups’ contributions to CSD-12.