

Common Major Group Statement

On behalf and delivered by Youth, Indigenous Peoples, Women, Youth, Farmers, Local Authorities, Trade Unions, Science and Technology and Business and Industry

Friday, April 30 2004. Commission on Sustainable Development, 12th session.

Assessing Major Group participation: Have we made an impact, a difference?

1.

Thank you chairman

We have decided to use the limited time given to each of us, the major groups, to combine our collective thoughts into one statement to you and the members and participants in this 12th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. As such this statement is on behalf of Youth, Indigenous Peoples, Women, NGOs, Farmers, Trade Unions, Local Authorities, Science and Technology, and Business and Industry. We would like to raise some points that we believe will maximize the effectiveness of the participation of the major groups. It is the first time that we as all 9 major groups have joined together to address you. To emphasize this, each of us will take a turn at reading this statement.

2.

We congratulate you, Mr. Chairman and your bureau on the job well done and the enthusiasm and sympathy you have displayed towards involving us, in this session.

It is important that the close and positive collaboration between UN DESA and the major groups is continued, and we take this opportunity to thank the secretariat for their commitment to the Major Groups

We all have positive experiences of this meeting and believe the openness and participatory nature of it should be replicated throughout the UN system.

3.

We believe that the 12th session failed to sufficiently prioritize issues of concern in this thematic cluster. The emphasis of our continued work on these themes must be on involving and empowering the local communities, local governments and indigenous peoples, although all actors on every level play a crucial role and must be involved. We must improve governance through increased participation and through focusing on the management and co-ordination of the complex processes that are required to achieve our goals. The focus should also be on developing the indicators, disaggregated for gender, that are of assistance to those who are to implement the work needed.

It is essential that governments work with major groups and stakeholders to build the collective capacity, and develop interdisciplinary and cross cutting relations. We all need to step up our efforts to raise awareness of the importance of the JPOI, including the MDGs.

We need to mobilize the political will to give the JPOI the highest priority on the political agenda, as well as mobilize the financial resources required. We need to develop and transfer low cost technologies to those communities that, need them most

4.

We recognize the novelty of this type of session and the difficulty involved in treating all the complex issues in an integrated manner.

Without detracting from the importance of the water discussion, we would have liked to have seen equal emphasis given to the sanitation and human settlement issues whereas we believe that they should be fully integrated. In future sessions we should aim to treat all issues equally and in an integrated manner.

The targets that were discussed at this session relate to many more issues than the themes we had on our agenda. Thus the agreed cross cutting issues must be emphasized more in the thematic cycles to help develop a complete picture of the themes on our agenda.

5.

Discussions on water, sanitation and human settlements issues must not stop at CSD 12, as there will be many new pieces of information produced during the intersessional period. Only with thorough preparation based on an engaging intersessional process can CSD- 13 effectively address the obstacles and constraints to progress. The use of tools such as intersessional working groups, an expanded CSD Bureau, regional meetings or other coordinating mechanisms should be considered as a means for continued dialogue, input of new information, and engagement of civil society during the intersession period and beyond.

6.

We, the major groups will commit to the following:

- 1) We will continue to offer our expertise to the CSD process.
- 2) We will continue to enhance partnerships and actions in civil society and beyond.
- 3) We will continue to build on our own capacity through education and awareness raising.
- 4) We will monitor and evaluate progress made so far and recommend changes.
- 5) We will network more effectively, particularly on the themes on the CSD agenda.
- 6) We will engage at all levels to effectively implement the WSSD agenda.

We will be able to complement the efforts of the States to strengthen the capacity of households, local communities, indigenous peoples, women, youth, local authorities, farmers, trade unions, science and technology and the business and industry sectors to be active participants in planning and implementing effective water, sanitation and human settlements programmes.

7.

We will further expand on issues related to format and modalities of these sessions. So far in the CSD sessions, it is at the discretion of the chair and bureau to create the space for major group participation. The potential variety and inconsistency of approach from one year to the other, makes it difficult for us to prepare adequately and pursue the enthusiastic participation of our constituencies. As the chair and bureau changes we cannot be certain of continuity of sensitivity to the role of major groups that you, the current chair, have displayed. Therefore we request that the CSD establish some ground rules for all future participation of the major groups mirroring the openness and participatory nature of this session. Such rules should include productive involvement and participation in official working groups including structured and predefined purposeful moments of input at consequential times.

8.

We believe that the discussion papers produced by each of us should have received more attention in the discussions during the sessions and in the final summary produced. We would like to stress the immense time and effort put into producing these documents. Whereas we congratulate you on covering many of these issues in the summary, we did not get a sense that they played a significant role in this process. It has made us reevaluate the benefit for us as major groups to produce these papers. Major Groups therefore call on the CSD to systematically integrate in the Chairman's summary, a resume of the contributions of the Major Groups.

9.

As a solution to this we propose a special session during the intersessional meeting in February, devoted to reviewing and improving the role and contribution of Major Groups in the practical implementation of the JPOI and MDGs. The basis of this session would be the 9 discussion papers submitted by the major groups for CSD 12. The special session would provide an opportunity to build on those documents and prompt further policy discussions. This would involve the Major Group representatives seated as experts on a panel, to be questioned and challenged by the governments. We would hope that this procedure would be continued from the intersessional into CSD 13 to elevate our participation in an action-oriented agenda, building further on the dynamic and inclusive approach you have adopted in this session.