



The Commission on Sustainable Development: Global Marketplace for Ideas and Policies

The Commission on Sustainable Development is a unique UN forum that brings together government officials and representatives from a broad spectrum of civil society to discuss and recommend solutions that promote sustainable development. Meeting in its 14th session at UN Headquarters in New York from 1-12 May, this year's CSD will work toward identifying the barriers and constraints, as well as the lessons learned and best practices, in four largely interlinked areas: energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change.

The Commission was created in December 1992 to ensure effective follow-up of the landmark 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development that took place in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, commonly known as the Earth Summit. After months of delicate negotiations, world leaders at the Summit adopted Agenda 21, a 300-page plan for achieving sustainable development in the 21st century.

- » The CSD is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council with 53 members, each serving a three-year term.
- » Part of the uniqueness of the Commission is the result of the participation of major groups, as defined by Agenda 21, that include women, children and youth, indigenous people, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological communities, and farmers.
- » A five-year review of Earth Summit progress took place in 1997 by the United Nations General Assembly meeting in special session. In 2002, a

ten-year review was held at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa that resulted in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

In Johannesburg, countries reiterated the initial mandate and functions of the CSD as a high level forum on sustainable development, and decided to enhance its role so that it can respond to the new demands emerging from the Summit's outcome.

In Johannesburg, countries articulated a number of issues and goals concerning this year's CSD thematic clusters, including mobilizing financing for environmentally sound technologies, developing and utilizing renewable energy sources, promoting the use of a greater mix of energy technologies, assisting developing countries in adopting cost effective clean energy technologies, and adopting policies to reduce market distortions and promote energy systems compatible with sustainable development.

CSD-14 will feature two parallel plenary sessions during the first week, including expert panels, regional and thematic discussions focusing on interlinkages of issues. The high-level segment promotes ministerial interactive dialogue on how to make a difference in the context of the given themes and to make the way forward. So far, 1,250 Major Groups have registered for CSD-14 and its high-level segment is expected to be attended by about 80 ministers from various countries. In addition, CSD-14 will also feature, the Partnership Fair and Learning Center.

Aleksi Aleksishvili, Finance Minister of Georgia, has been elected as Chairman of CSD-14.

The Partnership Fair

One of the most innovative outcomes of the WSSD process has been the establishment of Partnerships among governments, private sector, United Nations agencies, and major group organizations. These Partnerships – more than 300 have been registered with the CSD Secretariat – have been instrumental in putting ideas into action and delivering sustainable development commitments and goals into practical implementation. At CSD-14, the Partnerships Fair will include Partnership Presentations where more than 30 CSD – registered partnerships will have the opportunity to showcase their activities. In addition, there will be 7 “Partnerships in Practice” interactive discussions on issues related to the CSD-14 thematic clusters and challenges common to all partnerships, such as those related to effective communication strategies, networking, attracting new partnerships and funding. Information desks will also be available for CSD-registered partnerships to display and distribute information and interact with CSD participants. For further information on the Partnerships Fair Activities during CSD-14, please visit: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm>

The Learning Center

CSD-14 features a “Learning Center” during the session that will offer a wide selection of courses on the various aspects of this year’s CSD themes relating to Energy for Sustainable Development, Industrial Development, Air Pollution/Atmosphere, and Climate Change. A total of 17 courses each of three-hour length, have been scheduled. Courses of particular interest may include:

- » “Energy and Sustainable Development-Issues for Public Action: Bringing the Message Home through Journalists & Opinion Leaders” will address the potential constructive role of journalists in increasing awareness and improving discourse on energy sector concerns and addressing challenges faced by journalists in developing countries;
- » “How to Reduce Air Pollution with Cleaner Fuels and Vehicles” by the 2005 MacArthur Fellows Program Award winning expert, Michael Walsh, who will present a comprehensive strategy to reduce vehicle emissions in the most cost effective manner available.
- » “Climate Change Mitigation” by John Heinz Professor of Environmental Policy of Harvard University and John Holdren, who will address the pace and magnitude of mitigation efforts that are likely to be required in order to avoid unmanageable adverse impacts of climate change on human well-being.
- » “Innovative Energy Financing in Developing Countries” promotes the use of private financing for energy and infrastructure-related projects.

For further information on the Learning Center, please visit: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/learning_centre.htm

The Commission on Sustainable Development is the United Nation’s high-level forum responsible for ensuring follow up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, and monitoring progress towards achieving internationally-agreed development goals.

For more information on CSD-14, including the full press kit and schedule of the session visit: www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd14/csd14.htm

CSD-14 will be webcast live at www.un.org/webcast

Media representatives without UN credentials who wish to attend CSD meetings should contact: Media Accreditation & Liaison Unit, UN Department of Public Information, Fax: 212.963.4642 Tel: 212.963.2318

For media queries regarding the CSD, please contact:
Dan Shepard
UN Department of Public Information
Tel: +1 212 963 9495
Fax: +1 212 963 1186
Email: mediainfo@un.org