



# What has the Commission on Sustainable Development Accomplished?

## A Look at the Past Fifteen Years

Since its establishment in 1992, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) has been instrumental in launching a number of important initiatives:

### Energy

- Concerned with the effects of lead on children, the CSD in 1995 proposed a global **phase-out of leaded petrol**. The Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles, established at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, supported action plans for a lead phase-out in Sub-Saharan Africa and in countries in other regions, including national-level workshops, public outreach and awareness raising, and sharing of information on health impacts and relevant technical and financial issues. Today, lead is banned from petrol throughout Africa and should be eliminated from the world's fuel supply altogether within the next two years.
- To address sustainable development issues, it is necessary to have as full an understanding as possible of the present situation. A decision of CSD-3 encouraged governments to develop **sustainable development indicators** in accordance with specific national conditions. The UN has worked with many countries since then to develop and implement these indicators.
- While much of the world's attention on **climate change** has centered on mitigation - reducing the emissions that cause climate change - , the CSD has kept a focus on adaptation to climate change, or helping people to live with the changes wrought by climate change, such as droughts, floods and rising sea levels.
- **Access to energy:** Countries agreed at CSD-9 that stronger emphasis should be placed on the development, implementation, and transfer of cleaner, more efficient technologies and that urgent action is required to further develop and expand the role of alternative energy sources. The Netherlands devised a plan to provide 10 million people in developing countries with access to up-to-date energy services through the Energising Development Programme, a joint programme with Germany.
- **Renewable energy:** At the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development, countries agreed to a target of increasing the global share of renewable energy sources in the total energy supply. Now, the European Union agreed to slash carbon-dioxide emissions by 20 percent from 1990 levels by the year 2020 and wants to increase the share of renewable to 20 percent.

### Water

- In 1994, in light of a rapidly growing demand on **freshwater** resources, increased water stress in several parts of the world and growing pollution of freshwater resources, the CSD called for a Comprehensive Assessment of the Freshwater Resources of the World. The final report was presented to the UN General Assembly in 1997. Subsequently, a continuing system-wide assessment process, the World Water Assessment Program, was established to assess the world's freshwater resources, identify critical issues, help achieve sustainable use of water resources and periodically issue the UN World Water Development Report.

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## Hazardous Chemicals

- Concerned about banned or severely restricted industrial chemicals and pesticides, the CSD recommended in 1994 that UNEP and FAO seek a legally-binding status for the Prior Informed Consent procedure for trade of **hazardous chemicals** and pesticides. This led to the adoption of the 1998 Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, which requires that identified chemicals not be exported unless prior consent has been provided by the government of the importing country. The Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management, a new global initiative aimed at making chemicals safe for humans and the planet, was agreed in 2006 and puts the globe on track to meet a commitment made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

## Forests

- In the context of growing worldwide concern about the state of the world's **forests** and alarming rates of deforestation in some countries, the CSD in 1995 established the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) to provide a forum for forest policy deliberations. Subsequently, following the CSD's recommendation, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) created the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF) in 1997 to coordinate action for the management, conservation and sustainable development of forests. IPF and IFF, under the auspices of the CSD, served as the main intergovernmental bodies for forest policy development from 1995 to 2000. They were succeeded by the UN Forum on Forests, still the only permanent global forum on forests today.

## Oceans

- Following a recommendation by the CSD, the UN General Assembly in 1999 established an Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on **Oceans** and the Law of the Sea. The Consultative Process brings Member States, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, and major groups together every year to review developments in ocean affairs and strengthen international cooperation in the sustainable development of oceans and their resources. The eighth meeting of the Consultative Process will take place at UN headquarters in New York in June 2007.

## Working together

- Since its creation, the CSD has provided generous access to major groups and has been at the forefront of experimentation in the participation of non-governmental actors. The first **multi-stakeholder dialogue** segment was introduced in 1998, as a unique participatory mechanism enabling direct interaction between major groups and governments on specific topics. The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development succeeded in integrating major groups even further into the intergovernmental process through new approaches and formats for participation. Through these mechanisms, the CSD has significantly contributed to enhanced dialogue and partnerships among actors at international, national and local levels.

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### More information on CSD-15, including the full press kit, can be found at:

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm>

### CSD-15 will be webcast live at:

[www.un.org/webcast](http://www.un.org/webcast)

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