

Note of the CSD-16 Bureau on its Third Meeting

1. The Bureau of the 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-16) held its third meeting on 10 April 2008 at UN Headquarters in New York. At the request of Minister Francis Nhema, Chairman of CSD-16, Ambassador Daniel Carmon, Vice-chair (Israel), chaired the Bureau meeting. Mr. Tri Tharyat, Vice-Chair (Indonesia), and Mr. Sasa Ojdanic, Vice-Chair (Serbia), attended the meeting. Senior officials and advisors from the Permanent Missions of Guatemala, Indonesia, Israel and Zimbabwe also attended the meeting as observers. The Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Sustainable Development and the Secretary of the Commission, as well as other staff from the Secretariat, participated in the discussions of the meeting.

Introductory remarks by the Chairman

2. Because of last-minute logistical problems, Minister Nhema was unable to attend the meeting. A senior official from the Mission of Zimbabwe read out a note from Minister Nhema to the Bureau. In his note, Minister Nhema emphasized the timeliness of the CSD-16 discussions, given the recent price increases in food and agricultural commodities and supply challenges. He invited the Bureau to consider carefully the comments from member States on the thematic topics for discussions and proposed chairing and shepherding assignments to the Bureau. He invited Ambassador Carmon to lead the Bureau meeting as well as the briefing to delegates scheduled for Friday, 11 April.

Updates by Bureau Members on their activities

3. Bureau members provided updates on their recent work in preparation for CSD-16. They have undertaken consultations with their respective regional groups and have encouraged member States to submit recommendations on panellists for thematic discussions. Member States have also conveyed through the Bureau, as well as the Secretariat, comments and views on thematic topics aimed at facilitating discussions.
4. Ambassador Carmon briefed the Bureau on a breakfast meeting he had organized, which was attended by representatives of WEOG and EU member States, as well as representatives of the Secretariat. He emphasized the importance of high-level participation in the CSD discussions to address the growing food crisis and inter-linkages among the thematic cluster of issues.

Updates on preparations for CSD-16

5. At the request of the Bureau, the Officer-in-Charge of the CSD Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the various aspects of the preparations for CSD-16. She conveyed to the Bureau the comments and views expressed by the Group of 77 on thematic topics for CSD-16 discussions. The Bureau welcomed the inputs from member States and held extensive and candid exchanges of views on these comments and views, as well as feedbacks conveyed to the Bureau by other groups of States. After careful consideration of the various inputs, the Bureau agreed on the topics for thematic discussions, bearing in mind that these topics are indicative only and are included in the programme of work to facilitate interactive discussions.
6. The Bureau further agreed on the organization of two parallel Ministerial Roundtables and the thematic focus of the two Roundtables.
7. The Bureau also revisited carefully the options for the SIDS Day, taking into account various factors, including the CSD-13 decision on review of water and sanitation, the thematic schedule of CSD-16,

and the participation of SIDS delegates in the High-level Segment. In the end, the Bureau concurred that the SIDS Day should be kept on Monday, 12 May.

8. With regard to CSD-16 documentation, the Bureau was informed that the Secretary-General's reports for CSD-16 have already been issued in all languages, and they are currently available on the CSD-16 website. In addition, the Secretariat has received background papers from UN agencies. These are being processed for posting on the website.
9. The Bureau further noted the active engagement of Major Groups in the preparations for CSD-16. Some 500 Major Groups representatives have pre-registered to attend CSD-16 and the number of registrations is going up steadily. Among many other planned activities, Major Groups will launch a "Woman as the Voice for the Agriculture Network" (WAVA) during the High-level Segment. On Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 May, Major Groups will organize several field trips, as well as a series of seminars at the Columbia University. Information on how to participate in these trips and seminars is also available on the website.
10. The Bureau was advised that about 15 registered partnerships will make presentations at the Partnerships Fair; and some 28 information desks will be available for use by registered partnerships to display and distribute information relating to their activities.
11. The Bureau further noted that the Learning Centre has received more than 30 offerings in courses relating to the thematic cluster of issues and the Secretariat has found rooms to accommodate 21.
12. In addition, more than 80 Side Events will be organized during CSD-16. The Secretariat will be sending out confirmations in the coming week.
13. The Secretariat has received many recommendations on panelists for thematic discussions and is in the process of confirming their availabilities. Panelists will come from both developed and developing countries, with gender balance and sector balance. Panelists for regional discussions are also being identified. Information on the confirmed panelists for both thematic and regional discussions will be available in the coming week.
14. The Bureau reviewed the applications of several IGOs to attend CSD-16 as observers and decided to distribute the application materials to member States during the briefing on Friday 11 April with a view to facilitating the decision-making by the Commission on its opening day.

Future Bureau meetings

15. The Bureau decided to meet again on Sunday 4 May prior to the start of CSD-16. This Bureau meeting will be followed by a traditional meeting with the organizing partners of Major Groups.