

Note of the CSD-16 Bureau on its Second Meeting

1. The Bureau of the 16th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-16) held its second meeting on 23 January 2008, in Beijing, China, on the margins of the International Conference on Combating Desertification. Minister Francis Nhema, Chairman of CSD-16, chaired the meeting. Ambassador Daniel Carmon, Vice-Chair (Israel), Mr. Tri Tharyat, Vice-Chair (Indonesia), and Mr. Sasa Ojdanic, Vice-Chair (Serbia), attended the meeting. Vice-Chair Juan Mario Dary (Guatemala) was unable to participate due to a scheduling conflict. The Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Sustainable Development (CSD Secretariat), and staff from the Secretariat, also attended the meeting.

Introductory remarks by the Chairman

2. Minister Nhema thanked the host Government and the Secretariat for making arrangements for the Bureau to meet on the margins of the International Conference on Combating Desertification. Noting that Vice-chair Juan Mario Dary could not attend the meeting because of a scheduling conflict, Minister Nhema requested the CSD Secretariat to brief Vice-Chair Dary on the discussions of the Bureau meeting.
3. Since the first Bureau meeting held last December, the Secretariat has revised the proposed organization of work for CSD-16 in response to the comments and suggestions made by Bureau members. Minister Nhema invited the Secretariat to introduce the revised organization of work, highlighting the changes that have been made.

Updates on preparations for CSD-16

4. The revised proposal contains information on session-by-session arrangements. In this regard, the OIC of the Secretariat brought to the attention of the Bureau thematic sessions featuring joint reviews of agriculture and rural development, and of drought and desertification, as requested by the Bureau at its first meeting.
5. In reviewing the changes made, Bureau members underscored the importance of holding thematic sessions continuously and requested that the date, time and room arrangements for these thematic sessions be readjusted accordingly.
6. Arrangements for discussions with Major Groups and representatives of partnerships initiatives during thematic sessions have also been revised with a view to further enhancing the interactive dialogue among various implementation actors.
7. Regarding the High-level Segment, the Bureau took note of the updates on the proposed Ministerial Roundtables; it further emphasized the importance of making appropriate arrangements to facilitate Ministerial participation in the informal, closed, early morning meeting – also known as Straight Talks.
8. The Bureau took note of a Matrix sample, prepared by the Secretariat at the request of the Bureau. The Bureau encouraged the Secretariat to continue its work on the Matrix, which will serve as a user-friendly information tool in the preparation of CSD-16 and during thematic discussions at CSD-16.
9. The Bureau considered the revised arrangements for organizing the review of CSD-13 water and sanitation decisions, now scheduled to take place in the second week of CSD-16.
10. At the request of Minister Nhema, the OIC of the Secretariat also provided an update on the preparations of documentation, planning for Partnerships Fair, Learning Centre and Side Events, as

well as the SIDS Day. The Bureau noted the progress made and requested the Secretariat to prepare a Bureau chairing schedules so that Bureau members could fulfil both their chairing responsibilities for thematic sessions and for their involvement in regional discussions, Partnerships Fair, Learning Centre and dialogue with Major Groups.

11. With regard to the selection of panellists for thematic sessions, the Bureau reiterated the importance of having a diverse, balanced group of panellists to stimulate thematic discussions at CSD-16. The Bureau agreed to follow up with their respective regional groups on early submission of information on recommended panellists.

Status of contributions in support of CSD-16

12. The Bureau was further briefed on the status of contributions in support of CSD-16. In considering the crucial role the Trust Fund plays in supporting the broad participation of experts from the least developed countries, as well as representatives of Major Groups from developing countries, the Bureau agreed to bring to the attention of member States the current lack of funding support for CSD-16 with a view to mobilizing additional resources in the coming months.

Other Business

13. The Bureau considered the application of the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux International for accreditation to CSD-16 as an intergovernmental organization. After hearing a background briefing by the Secretariat and reviewing the original application letter, the Bureau agreed to forward the request to member States for decision at the start of CSD-16.
14. The Bureau discussed the date of the next Bureau meeting and agreed to consult further in the coming weeks. In the meantime, the Secretariat would continue its consultation with relevant UN entities about the date and venue of an inter-sessional event focused on Africa, taking into account the outcome of the ECA RIM.
15. In closing, Minister Nhema emphasized the importance of getting a message out – that the issues on the agenda of CSD-16/17 are extremely important for sustainable development across the globe; and that CSD-16/17 provides an important and timely platform for moving this agenda forward.