

## **Note of the informal consultation of the CSD-16 Bureau**

1. On 25 September, Minister Francis Nhema, Chairman of CSD-16, chaired an informal consultation in New York on preparations for CSD-16. Minister Juan Mario Dary, Vice-chair (Guatemala) attended the consultation. Ambassador Daniel Carmon, Vice-chair (Israel) was represented by a senior official from the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations. Senior officials and advisors from Guatemala and Zimbabwe, as well as the Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Sustainable Development (CSD Secretariat), and staff from the Secretariat, also attended the consultation.

### **Preliminary discussions**

2. Minister Nhema welcomed Minister Dary and other participants to the informal consultation. He took note of the ongoing consultations among the groups of Asian and East European States and looked forward to the nominations of the Vice-Chairs representing the two regional groups.
3. Minister Nhema emphasized the importance of the Bureau working as a team. He pointed out that the issues before the Commission (agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa) are extremely important to developing countries. The thematic issues are inter-linked, feeding into each other, and impacting on other issues, such as biodiversity, energy and climate change. The Commission should therefore adopt a holistic approach in its review of these issues.
4. Minister Nhema further stressed that CSD-16 provides a timely opportunity to push forward the agenda and to advance implementation. CSD-16 should evaluate progress in implementation, and where progress is found lacking, examine the “why” by identifying barriers and constraints. The Bureau will focus on the broad picture of global implementation and set priorities of the Commission’s work through full consultations with member States. In this regard, he expressed his confidence that the secretariat would provide the Bureau with all necessary support.
5. Minister Dary shared Minister Nhema’s emphasis on adopting a holistic approach to the review of the thematic issues and on focusing on identifying barriers and constraints in implementation. He also stressed the importance of bringing the outcome of COP 8 of the UNCCD to CSD-16.
6. Ambassador Carmon, through his representative, conveyed his views on the importance of CSD-16, which concerns “bread-and-butter issues”. His representative shared the preliminary comments of the WEOG on CSD-16, expressing WEOG’s support for a successful conclusion of CSD-16. He also expressed WEOG’s hope for a careful planning of the session, including the review of the follow-up to CSD-13 decisions on water and sanitation.

### **Briefing by the Secretariat**

7. At the request of Minister Nhema, the OIC of the Secretariat briefed the Bureau on the status of preparations for CSD-16. He indicated that the programme of activities for CSD-16 will include the opening of the session; a review of overall progress in implementation; thematic discussions, including regional perspective discussions, based on the outcomes of regional implementation meetings (RIMs); a SIDS day; a review of CSD-13 decisions on water and sanitation; and a High-level Segment. Upon its full constitution, the Bureau will examine options for the organization of work for CSD-16, in consultation with member States.

8. The OIC also informed the Bureau of the dates, venues and ongoing preparations of the regional implementation meetings for CSD-16. He drew the attention of the Bureau to the remarkable collaboration among UN organizations in preparation for the RIMs. The five Regional Commissions have taken the lead in organizing the RIMs, and have committed additional funds in support of the RIMs. United Nations organizations, including FAO, UNEP, UNDP and UNCCD, and ISDR, have been actively engaged in supporting the RIMs.
9. The OIC also highlighted the contributions of FAO to the preparation of documentation of CSD-16. FAO has already provided inputs to the CSD secretariat and additional inputs are expected. Other organizations, including the secretariat of UNCCD and IFAD, will also contribute to the documentation of CSD-16.
10. The Bureau was also informed of proposals of inter-sessional activities for CSD-16, including one possible inter-sessional event focusing on Africa and another on desertification. Announcements of these events will be posted on the CSD-16 website once details are available.
11. The representative of Ambassador Carmon informed the Bureau of a high-level panel discussion on water and sanitation, to be organized as part of the WATEC – an international event on water and environmental technology to be organized in Tel Aviv on 30 October to 1 November 2007. The panel discussion will address issues related to CSD-13 decisions on water and sanitation.
12. The OIC also briefed the Bureau on major groups' preparations for CSD-16, including the preparation of major groups' discussion papers. He outlined the envisaged entry points for major groups' contributions during CSD-16. The OIC also summarized the preparations for the Partnerships Fair. Preliminary information on CSD-16 Partnerships Fair is already available on the website of CSD-16.
13. The Bureau expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for the briefing and reiterated its emphasis on identifying barriers and constraints, lessons learned and best practices, on the basis of case studies and tangible examples. In this connection, Minister Nhema suggested that discussions at the RIMs could contribute to the collection of success stories and lessons learned. Minister Gary also mentioned that other regional events, including regional gatherings of ministers of environment, could contribute to CSD-16.
14. In this context, the secretariat informed the Bureau of ongoing efforts to bring CSD case study database up to date. In addition to its value in disseminating success stories, the database has provided a useful basis for the preparation of CSD Matrix in its recent sessions.

### **Future Bureau meetings**

15. Minister Nhema underscored the importance of the nominations of the remaining Bureau members and discussed possible dates for future Bureau meetings. It was tentatively agreed that the Bureau would meet in December to consider options for the organization of work for CSD-16. In the meantime, Minister Nhema, Minister Dary and Ambassador Carmen will continue consultations with regional groups and will use their participation in RIMs and other international events to consult with member States and mobilize support for CSD-16.