

CSD-11 PARTNERSHIPS FAIR – REPORT

April 29 to May 8, 2003

Over 200 voluntary partnerships were launched during the Johannesburg Summit process by governments, major groups, the UN system and other relevant stakeholders to complement government action, bring about direct results on the ground and contribute to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

A Partnerships Fair was introduced as an experiment and organized as a parallel activity to the official discussions at the 11th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-11). It provided a venue for existing and potential new partners of sustainable development partnership initiatives to network, create synergies between their activities, identify new partners and/or funding and learn from each other's experiences. The Fair offered an opportunity for those involved in existing partnerships to update other CSD participants on progress made, share ideas on follow-up within the CSD-process and, in some cases, launch new partnerships.

Forty-eight partnerships were showcased in the Fair's events over 8 days during the official hours of the CSD (10am-1pm, 3-6pm). Partners discussed their specific partnerships mainly through panel discussions and presentations. In some instances there was inter-active dialogue with the audience, however most sessions were more of an exercise in information-sharing and lessons learned.

Overall the Fair was well attended by government delegates, UN officials, major groups - particularly NGOs, trade unions, and business representatives - and academia. Some delegations had a consistent presence at all of the Fair events. Precise numbers varied but an average of 30 people attended each session.

Issue areas discussed in the partnerships presentations included biodiversity, energy, health, land and agriculture, and water. Discussions on means of implementation centered around capacity-building, education, technology-transfer, finance, access to information and information for decision-making.

Given the general nature of this CSD session, the Fair did not focus on any particular theme. However, to the extent possible, given the applications submitted, events related to partnerships in a similar field - such as energy, water and capacity-building - were clustered together.

In addition to the individual partnership presentations, several moderated discussion sessions were organized during the Fair; the room was also made available at certain times as an Open Forum for networking and match-making between partners and potential partners. These sessions were less well attended as they were not structured in the way that they could have been had CSD-11 had a more thematic focus.

Most of the partnerships featured at the Fair were developed within the framework of the WSSD process. Some of the initiatives were based upon on-going partnerships that had been significantly enhanced in the light of WSSD, through the addition of new partners or a broader geographical focus. Over 260 partnerships had been posted on the official CSD website at the time of CSD-11; see:

(www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships.htm)

Due to the space constraints of Conference Room B in the basement of the Secretariat building, it was not possible to incorporate an exhibition as part of the Partnerships Fair. However, tables were set up at the back of the room Fair for the display and distribution of informational materials on partnerships, and these were fully utilized by participants.

At one of the Partnerships Fair events on 6 May 2003, the Italian government announced its willingness to host and organize, in cooperation with the CSD Secretariat, an international Forum on Partnerships to be held in Rome, Italy in Spring 2004. The Forum aims to contribute to the implementation of sustainable development through partnership initiatives.

Evaluation

The views of Partnerships Fair event organizers are being solicited; others who attended the CSD-11 Partnerships Fair are also invited to provide feedback to the Secretariat. All comments will be taken into account when planning future such events. Therefore, please send any comments on aspects that might be organized differently another time, as well elements that should be retained, to:

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