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# **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUES: LEARNING FROM THE UNCSD EXPERIENCE**

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# **Multi-stakeholder Dialogues: Learning from the UNCSO Experience**

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*An Independent Evaluation Prepared by  
the **Consensus Building Institute***

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## **WORKING PAPER**

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### Four Years of Multistakeholder Dialogues at the CSD

The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (UNCED) in 1992 established the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) with a mandate to implement the sustainable development principles outlined in Agenda 21, and to do so by an inclusive process of international deliberation and decision-making. From its inception, the CSD, aided in this respect by its hortatory orientation, was highly participatory in structure and outlook compared to other fora of intergovernmental negotiations.

As part of its stocktaking at Earth Summit+5 in 1997, the United Nations General Assembly directed the CSD to strengthen its high-level policy debate through more extensive interaction with representatives of major groups. In response the CSD has integrated two-day multistakeholder dialogue segments into its annual sessions. The stated purpose of the multistakeholder dialogue is to inform the inter-governmental decision making process. This is to be achieved through equal-level and direct exchanges of views and experiences between these major groups and governments on selected problems, as well as consideration of possible solutions. The dialogues precede a Ministerial or “High-Level” segment and the elaborate intergovernmental negotiations resulting in the final Decisions issued by the CSD and submitted through ECOSOC to the UN General Assembly for approval.

The dialogues have focused on the role of specific economic sectors in achieving sustainable development. Reflecting the work program of the CSD as a whole, the areas examined have been: industry and sustainable development (CSD-6); sustainable tourism development (CSD-7); sustainable agriculture (CSD-8); and sustainable energy and transport (CSD-9). In a statement of great symbolic value, the Chair of the CSD has facilitated the dialogues in each year and the outcomes of the deliberations have been entered into the official record of the meetings in the form of a Chair’s Summary. The dialogues have involved, to different degrees, representatives from all nine sectors officially designated by Agenda 21 as “major groups”(NGOs, local authorities, business & industry, farmers, trade unions, scientists, women, youth and indigenous peoples). In preparing for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002, the CSD Secretariat commissioned this evaluation of its multistakeholder dialogue experience to-date.

## **Dialogue Objectives, Design and Impacts: Organizer, Participant and Observer Perspectives**

The central research question for this study is: how successfully has the CSD conducted its multistakeholder dialogue segments? Effectiveness was assessed in terms of number of indicators, including:

- The degree to which participants, observers and experts in the substantive fields involved consider the outcomes of the dialogues fruitful and legitimate.
- The degree to which the dialogues have influenced the formulation and implementation of sustainable development goals and strategies in the topic areas they address.
- The degree to which the dialogues have generated concrete follow-up efforts.

Overall, the dialogue experience was positive for a great majority of major group delegates. Four out of five of the respondents to a survey conducted as part of this study said they would accept an invitation to participate in a future CSD multistakeholder dialogue. Even participants who were quite critical of the CSD as a whole credited the dialogues as a worthwhile endeavor.

Organizers and participants approach the CSD with a multiplicity of objectives:

For the organizers, the primary objective of the dialogues is to provide an opportunity for government and major group representatives to engage in joint problem-solving. While we are still some distance away from realizing such a vision, the dialogues have helped calm fears of improper crossing of boundaries and created an infrastructure of networks that can be deepened and widened. Both of these are preconditions for drawing participants from the governmental and non-governmental sectors more fully into meaningful modes of exchange and consultation that dialogues can facilitate.

The priorities of major group delegates were to obtain references in the negotiated decision that is the official output of the CSD, inject specialized knowledge and values into an important policy forum on sustainable development, and building consensus across major groups. Each of these goals is complicated by the institutional norms of intergovernmental fora, the difficulty of amalgamating different types of knowledge into coherent policy prescriptions, and the requirements— in terms of time, resources and mastery of dialogue process mechanics – for forging consensus between variegated and internally divided interests on controversial policy issues.

Still, the mere conducting of the dialogues are a forceful political statement in line with Nobel-prize winning economist Amartya Sen's impassioned case for extending participatory practices, and stakeholders are keen to safeguard the space available for self-expression that the CSD has created for them. Beyond theoretical considerations of the advantages of democratic deliberation, the CSD dialogues have also made a concrete difference in terms of knowledge dissemination, as evidenced by findings regarding changes in the level of

understanding among civil society delegates of each other's positions and the transposition of data and ideas presented during the dialogues by one party into another's policy prescriptions. However, stakeholders see exchanges between major groups and government representatives as more limited in their usefulness.

Reactions to a number of key aspects of the dialogue process were solicited from major group participants. Work at the preparatory stage was found to be intense and resource-constrained, involving wide consultation within civil society sectors for the production of a dialogue starter paper and the assembly of delegations. CSD Secretariat support and engagement with the Bureau were found to focus primarily on procedural aspects of the process. The perception was widespread that the preparatory process could be rendered more efficient if it went further in crystallizing the agenda for discussion and consolidated possible areas of agreement among major groups.

Topic framing was found to be extremely challenging for the organizers, and a source of frustration for many stakeholders, who thought the dialogue topics were not sufficiently clear and precisely defined. The sense of spontaneity that is supposed to infuse the dialogues was appreciated by many government representatives, despite some initial apprehension about the changes in protocol. Still, the Chairs needed to be constantly vigilant to keep participants from reverting to prepared statements. The quality of discussion and the atmosphere between the major groups appear to have generally improved over the course of the four years, but facilitation expertise was found to vary. The lack of clear process rules created significant stress for participants at various times before and during the dialogues.

While participants' enthusiasm has been dampened by limited tangible results from the CSD generally, and from the dialogues in particular, a series of benefits, from capacity-building and learning on the part of stakeholders to building enhanced trust between them, did emerge. Perceptual and practical changes included a renewed commitment to sustainability for many major group participants and information-sharing, negotiation and lobbying activities that they engaged in when they returned home.

## **Assessing the Dialogue Processes and Outcomes: Strengths and Areas of Improvement**

Dialogue process and outcomes were assessed against two guiding principles, efficiency and evenhandedness. Two different aspects of the CSD dialogue process were measured against these criteria:

- 1. The correspondence between the various written documents that are produced as inputs for, or outputs of, the CSD multistakeholder dialogues.**

We analyzed two sets of CSD documents -- CSD-7 and CSD-9 -- to trace the evolution of key ideas from the stakeholders' dialogue starter papers through to the final decisions arrived at by the Commission. The main objective of this analysis

was to determine the degree of cross-fertilization and to highlight some of the shortcomings in process design that may currently stand in the way of a fuller integration between the intergovernmental and the civil society components of the CSD.

The degree of overlap in stakeholders' perspectives on problems and strategies varied from topic to topic. Still, in both the years examined, potential areas of agreement could be derived from the background papers. These could have been further fleshed out to provide a clearer basis for agenda-setting for the dialogue sessions and a more focused discussion.

The Chairman's Summary in CSD-9 was found to be an accurate and equitable representation of major group concerns. But it also faced the challenge of capturing an array of salient discussion points with enough structure to facilitate assimilation of major groups' contributions by governmental representatives. It was not apparent which of the listed issues or recommendations are considered by the major groups to be the more important ones.

Finally, we found that a series of suggestions that the major groups appeared to have put forth with a certain measure of emphasis at CSD-9 were not reflected in the final Decision. This was particularly true for recommendations pertaining to the more sensitive areas under consideration. Both political realities and the organization and lack of clarity and prioritization in the presentation of the stakeholders' recommendations could explain the very limited uptake of major group contributions during CSD-9.

## **2. The structure, facilitation and flow of the actual dialogue discussions.**

Many hold that the dialogues are not sufficiently dynamic and do not realize their full creative potential. Factors that contribute to this assessment are the geography of the meeting rooms; timing of the dialogues; facilitation style, which can be cumbersome and lacking in focus; unwieldiness of a large group getting ever-larger as more of the nine major groups officially designated in Agenda 21 take a place at the table. Above all, topic selection plays a large role in terms of achieving coherence in the dialogue discussion and complementarity with the intergovernmental debate.

To appraise the degree to which the dialogue exchanges were adequately structured to permit coherent messages to emerge, we analyzed the flow of the discussion during the CSD-6 dialogues. We found that the pre-established themes did not mirror the conceptual frames or priority concerns of the participants. The lack of theme specification and facilitation focus had a number of implications for the quality of the dialogue: it introduced discontinuities that make it difficult to follow – and contribute to – the multiple conversational threads that were being carried on at once and it generally kept the discussion at a very high level of generality.

To appraise the extent of overlap among the topics dealt with in the intergovernmental negotiating sessions and the multistakeholder dialogue, we identified the relative

prominence allocated to different topics in the respective policy arenas during CSD-8. We found that the dialogues during CSD-8 focused to a significant degree on issues that were already contentious in the intergovernmental arena; that controversy among major groups could actually push governments toward a greater, rather than lesser, level of generality of language, at least in some instances; and that major groups do indeed provide perspectives that expand the intergovernmental debate. Importantly, the most productive, in terms of incorporation into the governmental negotiations, appear to be suggestions that fall into the category of new ideas.

Among indicators of process effectiveness, representation is perhaps the most daunting. While most surveyed participants were remarkably satisfied with the richness and breadth of experience represented by their delegations, interviews showed sometimes-sharp divisions within and across major groups. International organizations, including CSD, continue to wrestle with balancing notions of voice and accountability.

Given the legal obstacles and political resistance to non-state actor involvement, we are arguably still establishing the procedural preconditions for real substantive input on the part of major groups. Still, as the MSD process matures, there is a broad call for a more results-oriented approach. Many strive for the achievement of concrete initiatives with specified targets and timetables. So far, attempts to continue the multi-stakeholder dialogue in a more focused and continuous form have been made at the dialogues during three of the four years under examination. Problems encountered once such efforts met with the endorsement of the CSD, which typically involved some political battles, have included funding constraints, inadequate facilitation, and the transfer of responsibility onto institutions not able or willing to play the part assigned to them. Two of these efforts could therefore not be sustained, but the third is progressing apace, making some substantive headway. While the focus on operational partnerships is getting stronger, other developments should also be considered when assessing the impact of the multistakeholder dialogue. Among these are adaptations of the CSD's multistakeholder dialogue model within other international fora such as the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) and the International Freshwater Conference, held in Bonn, Germany in December 2001.

## **Recommendations to CSD and Major Groups**

The CSD and the major groups have invested significant resources to carry out the multistakeholder dialogues. It nonetheless appears clear that some modifications to the current process would help maximize the benefit to the participants and generate substantive outcomes. The space, guidance, flexibility and incentives must be such that major groups and government delegates are able to develop and implement new commitments to sustainable development.

The overall assessment highlights six elements that need to be incorporated into a dialogue structure – representation and participation; time constraints; agenda setting; facilitation; linkage to decision-making; and follow-through. The key is to see all stages of the process as a whole. These stages are (i) the preparation phase, (ii) the CSD Session, and (iii) the follow-up or implementation phase. To produce and deliver on actionable outcomes, the official

proceedings must be preceded and followed by more intensive and ongoing cooperation among the major groups, as well as interaction between governments and stakeholders.

Keeping funding and institutional constraints in mind, we offer a series of suggestions that participants and organizers may want to consider. Which of those are appropriate in the CSD context may ultimately have to be determined through a “dialogue on dialogues.”

The specific recommendations are:

- 1. Clarify objectives;**
- 2. Sharpen the thematic focus;**
- 3. Conduct a Situation Assessment during the preparatory phase;**
- 4. Devise ground rules for interaction before during and after the CSD sessions;**
- 5. Provide additional facilitation;**
- 6. Help follow-through on outcomes achieved.**

## Four Years of Multistakeholder Dialogues at the Commission on Sustainable Development

### The Rise of “Multistakeholdership”

#### The Challenge of Sustainable Development

For the past fifty years, the international community has grappled with various models of development. If anything, the task became more arduous with the emergence of various environmental crises. Beginning in the 1970s and culminating in the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (UNCED) in 1992, environmental concerns forced a reassessment of the global agenda. The theoretical elegance of the very term “sustainable development” -- representing a search for a system of wealth production that respects environmental imperatives – barely conceals the contradictions it harbors.

The challenge of reconciling economic and ecological needs at the local, national, and global levels, is primarily about responding to competing claims, both conceptual and concrete. Some authors go so far as to argue that “a truly ‘global partnership’ for sustainable development would require an *internationally agreed upon constitution* for the global village, with clearly articulated goals, international financing and specific criteria for monitoring and enforcing sustainability rules.”<sup>1</sup>

Such a vision implies consensus building on an unprecedented scale. And while it is indisputably beyond the mandate of the United Nations Commission of Sustainable Development (CSD) to broker the creation of a comprehensive world charter – and, indeed, the desirability of such a charter is itself open to wide debate – creating a unifying vision of a collective future is nonetheless a large part of the task assigned to it.

Non-state actors are central to this vision. “Multistakeholdership is the wave of the future,” proclaimed Cielito F. Habito, the Chair of the Sixth Session of the CSD who presided over the first official multistakeholder dialogue segment. “[It] is a necessary condition for sustainability; I firmly believe that *there is no other way*.”<sup>2</sup> This assessment is increasingly echoed in many quarters of international governance, where the concept of broad “ownership” of decisions and action plans is increasingly thought to enhance their legitimacy and facilitate their implementation.

<sup>1</sup> Mehment, Ozay. (1999, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition). *Westernizing the Third World*.

<sup>2</sup> Cielito F. Habito, “Multistakeholdership at the U.N.CSD: A Coming of Age,” in Strauss, M. (ed.) *The Dialogue Records: Year One*, New York: Northern Clearinghouse (1999), p.5.

## The Participation Gap

Participation is among the strongest themes that have emerged over the past decade of intense reflection about sustainable development. The debate has broadened and taken on new contours as globalization has come under increasing scrutiny. Some observers argue that current patterns of integration are a mere extension of trends shaping the world since the dawn of colonization. But many observers discern qualitative changes that alter the spheres of influence of social, economic and political actors and entities in fundamental ways.

It is a lesson recognized by the policy community relatively recently that top-down approaches and narrow disciplinary boundaries yield unsatisfactory results. Indeed, “participatory” has become something of a catch-word, in tribute to the recognition that conciliation among conflicting interests and objectives is part and parcel of policy production in a world of vast value, power, and cultural divides.

Still, these differentials cannot be eradicated with pronouncements on empowerment. We face the double challenge of giving voice to newly assertive actors on the international scene and establishing how to move from parallel representations of reality and aspirations to a truly integrated assessment on which policy and partnerships can legitimately be based.

The CSD’s multi-stakeholder dialogue segments are an effort to operationalize the ambitious principle of inclusion in international deliberation and decision-making. As such, they represented from the outset a bold leap into largely uncharted territory for which the CSD is universally commended. No matter what the imperfections, the experiment, now in its fifth cycle (1998-2002), has laid a foundation for institutional adaptation and learning on which to build improvements of use to *all* CSD participants -- governmental and non-governmental -- in pursuit of sustainable development objectives.

Inge Kaul of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), who identifies the “participation gap” as a key shortcoming in contemporary global policymaking, puts forth the proposition that “international cooperation is still primarily an intergovernmental process in which other actors participate on the fringes, *undermining the effectiveness of traditional efforts* to address global policy issues.” (Emphasis added). Exclusion – or muddled efforts at inclusion, which amount to the same thing – are thus seen to have not merely a neutral but a detrimental effect on the continuing health of our institutions. If we meet the necessary philosophical and operational requirements, Kaul concludes, “by expanding the role of civil society and the private sector in international negotiations, governments can enhance their leverage over policy outcomes while promoting pluralism and diversity in the process.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Kaul, Inge et. al. (Eds.) *Global Public Goods – International Cooperation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.*” New York: Oxford University Press (1999). p.xxvi.

Many NGOs have a strong presence in international sustainable development policymaking.<sup>4</sup> They are part of extensive “issue networks” through which ideas are filtered, knowledge disseminated, decisions made and resources distributed. Similarly other constituencies, especially certain sectors of business and industry, enjoy access to national policy-makers and diplomatic emissaries, and can profoundly shape negotiation outcomes.<sup>5</sup>

Governments never devise their negotiating positions in a vacuum. But which elements of “civil society” wield how much influence on policy-making in inter-governmental fora – and what avenues are available to them to make themselves heard – currently varies. Each institution, agency or commission makes up its own rules of engagement. Some diplomats are deeply apprehensive about assigning an enhanced role to actors that escape governmental restraint. They are concerned about the possible repercussions on both the global stage and in their domestic settings, and they adhere to a conventional notion of governance based on state dominance. Others see the “independent sector” as the repository of skills, knowledge and resources that are essential to making real aspirations of a more prosperous and equitable world. Governments, as a matter of course, retain strong coordination and leadership functions.<sup>6</sup>

The CSD, a product of the UNCED process that has allowed generous access to non-state actors, is at the forefront of experimentation in this domain. Since 1998, multi-stakeholder dialogue segments are held as part of CSD’s official meetings. Their declared purpose is to inform the inter-governmental decision making process of the CSD by allowing equal-level and direct exchanges of views and experiences on problems and consideration of possible solutions between major groups and governments. The term “major groups” refers to those sectors of society identified by Agenda 21 as playing a particularly crucial role in the development and implementation of policies for sustainable development. The category includes NGOs, local authorities, business and industry, farmers, trade unions, scientists, women, youth and indigenous peoples.

This integration of multistakeholder dialogues into the CSD’s official process was a giant step towards the formalization of the major groups’ roles as active contributors to sustainable development assigned to them by Agenda 21. Currently in its fifth year of activity, the process devised by CSD is simultaneously spreading to other United Nations

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<sup>4</sup> See for example Chatterjee, Pratap and Finger, Matthias. *The Earth Brokers: Power, Politics and World Development*. London: Routledge (1994), ch. 4-8.

<sup>5</sup> Witness, for example, the role played by the chemical and agricultural industries (strawberry growers) in the evolution of the Montreal Protocol on the reduction of ozone-depleting substances.

<sup>6</sup> See for example an excerpt from a report on deliberations by the Group of 77 on how to build global negotiating Capacity that included the following summary: “Management capabilities, technological absorption and adaptation and infrastructure creation and maintenance are all crucial for meeting development needs . . . These are not merely a function of financial resources, but also rely on exchange and knowledge production by a series of institutions that can act in concert. Among such actors are policy-oriented think tanks, the scientific community and the private sector, *all of which can be mobilized towards the design and implementation of policy initiatives, though government leadership is necessary to make these forces coalesce.*” (Emphasis added). In Consensus Building Institute, *The Group of 77: Building Global Negotiating Capacity: A Final Report*,” (June 1, 2000).

fora and coming under scrutiny by participants intent on reforming certain aspects of it. It therefore appears to be a propitious moment for review of the exercise.

Lessons learned through such studies could help modify and expand the dialogue structure in order to promote meaningful consultations between governmental and non-governmental actors and generate useful follow-up actions. Recommendations that emerge can also help the variety of intergovernmental, national and private fora which are adopting – and adapting – the dialogue model as a way to conduct more productive and transparent deliberations.

## **The Road Towards Multistakeholder Dialogues at the CSD**

### **The United Nations and Civil Society in the Field of Environment and Development**

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have been active to varying degrees within the United Nations system since its establishment in 1945.<sup>7</sup> Relations with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) are governed by Article 71 of the U.N. Charter, which holds that ECOSOC may make “suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence...”

NGOs played an advisory role in the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment that took place in 1972, which also marked the arrival of more advocacy-based organizations, like Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace, and the beginning of a dramatic increase in the presence of environmental NGOs in the South. These entered into sometimes uneasy alliances with their colleagues in the North.

UNCED has become a watershed with respect to civil society participation. While some dismiss the “spirit of Rio” as a myth, the Summit lingers in the collective imagination as a defining moment. UNCED was distinctive in that it involved an unprecedented number of NGOs. It ended with a call in Agenda 21, the voluminous program of action that is one of its main legacies for a partnership between NGOs and governments. It also resulted in the creation of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD).

The venue opened the gates for previously non-accredited NGOs (including single-country NGOs) to gain consultative status with ECOSOC. It also provided the impetus for a review of “formal procedures and mechanisms for the involvement of these

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<sup>7</sup> For a detailed treatment of UN-NGO relations, see e.g. Peter Willets (ed.), *Consultative Status for NGOs at the United Nations in “The Conscience of the World”: The Influence of Non-Governmental Organizations in the U.N. System*; Weiss, T.G. and Gordenker, L. *NGOs, the UN, & Global Governance*, Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers (1996); Krut, Riva, *Globalization and Civil Society: NGO Influence in International Decision-Making*, Discussion Paper No.83, UNRISD (April 1997) available at <http://www.unrisd.org/engindex/publ/list/dp/dp83/toc.htm>. See also the United Nations web page on the subject at [http://www.un.org/partners/civil\\_society/ngo/ngoindex.htm](http://www.un.org/partners/civil_society/ngo/ngoindex.htm).

organizations at all levels from policy-making and decision-making to implementation.” (Agenda 21, para. 27.6.)

The results of the review (Resolution E/1996/31 and Decision E/1996/297) were not as sweeping as some had hoped and others feared. It stressed the need for a better balance between Northern and Southern NGOs, and for more participation from developing country NGOs. A key issue that remained open is whether NGOs should have any informal involvement in the UN system beyond ECOSOC, especially as regards the General Assembly and Security Council.

The vision of Agenda 21 is inherently participatory. It holds that “one of the fundamental prerequisites for the achievement of sustainable development is broad public participation in decision-making. Furthermore, in the more specific context of environment and development, the need for new forms of participation has emerged.”<sup>8</sup> As a step towards meeting this challenge it created the major group concept and categories (departing from the terminology prevailing previously, which subsumed many different sectors and actors under the generic “NGO” appellation). The entire Section III, is devoted to “Strengthening the Role of Major Groups.” It encompasses 10 Chapters (23 to 32), one per major group plus a preamble.

## **The Commission on Sustainable Development**

The UNCED process also spawned a new institution: The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) is a functional commission of ECOSOC mandated to promote the implementation of Agenda 21. Its Secretariat resides within the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA). The terms of reference of the CSD, as well as its composition, organization of work, relationship with other UN bodies, Secretariat arrangements, and guidelines for NGO participation are spelled out in UNGA resolution 47/191, 1992. The CSD mandate includes:

- Ensuring effective follow-up to UNCED;
- Enhancing international cooperation and rationalizing intergovernmental decision-making capacity; and
- Examining progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the local, national and international levels.

Since its first substantive session in June 1993, the CSD has met annually at UN Headquarters in New York. The Commission is made up of representatives of 53 governments elected for a three-year term. Each year, a core group of governments form a Bureau to manage and oversee the proceedings. The head of the Bureau is the Chair, assisted by several Vice-Chairs.

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<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, the second of three instruments adopted by UNCED, called for the involvement in environmental management of citizens at “the relevant level,” and recommends access to information and judicial and administrative redress for environmental harm.

The CSD's first multi-year program of work reviewed the implementation of each chapter of Agenda 21, the Forests Principles and the Rio Declaration at all levels of governance.<sup>9</sup>

Building on its origins, the CSD's rules for civil society involvement have been comparatively liberal. Many NGOs accredited to UNCED sought and were given access to the follow up process through what is known as the CSD List. As of November 2001, the full list of NGOs with consultative status amounted to approximately 3000 organizations.

## **The Multi-stakeholder Dialogues Take Shape**

The Program of Work for CSD-6 through CSD-10 (1998-2002) was laid out at "Earth Summit+5," the UN's first stocktaking exercise following the Rio Earth Summit. At the end of rather fractious deliberations, the UN General Assembly, meeting in the 19<sup>th</sup> Special Session, stipulated that the CSD should conduct "a high-level policy debate aimed at consensus-building on sustainable development." As an integral part of that effort, the CSD should "strengthen its interaction with representatives of major groups, including through greater and better use of focused dialogue sessions, and round tables." (UN Document A/RES/S-19/2, 1997). The multi-stakeholder dialogue segments were instituted in response to this request.

The precise form the dialogues took emerged from a mix of prior experience and improvisation to meet the CSD's institutional requirements. Inspiration was in part drawn from the Local Agenda 21 experiences, the National Councils for Sustainable Development, and proceedings at the UN Conference on Human Settlement, (Habitat II) which is remembered by many as a high point of civil society engagement in international negotiations. "Earth Summit+5"(June 23-27, 1997) also set important participatory precedents: for the first time in the U.N.'s history, representatives of civil society organizations – comprising each of the nine major groups – made statements in a General Assembly Plenary meeting. Less dramatic but equally important for the subsequent dialogues was a week-long series of panel discussions, each of which focused on lessons learned, priorities and future expectations presented by one major group. These miniature dialogues were an official part of the proceedings of the Commission and were chaired by a CSD Vice-Chairperson.

Starting at CSD-6, the duration of each multistakeholder dialogue segment has been two days, typically scheduled at the beginning of the regular CSD Session. The dialogues precede a Ministerial or "High-Level" segment and the elaborate intergovernmental negotiations resulting in the final Decisions issued by the Commission and submitted through ECOSOC to the UN General Assembly for approval.

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<sup>9</sup> For a more comprehensive analysis of the first years of the CSD's work, see e.g. Chasek Pamela, "The UN Commission on Sustainable Development: The First Five Years," in *The Global Environment in the Twenty-first Century: Prospects for International Cooperation*, UNU Press, (2000) pp. 378-398, See also, Khor Martin, "The Commission on Sustainable Development: Paper Tiger or Agency to Save the Earth?" in Bergesen, H.O. and Parmann, G. (Eds.), *Green Glove Yearbook of International Co-operation on Environment and Development*, Oxford: Oxford University Press (1994), pp.103-113.

The dialogues have involved representatives from several major groups and focused on the role of specific economic sectors in achieving sustainable development. They have thus been organized thematically and aimed for interactive discussion between major group and government representatives. Following is a list of dialogue segments since 1998, their focus, and designated participating major groups:

#### Industry Segment at CSD-6 in 1998

- Main focus: industry and sustainable development
- Participating major group sectors: industry, trade unions, NGOs
- Dialogue topics: Responsible entrepreneurship; Corporate management tools; technology cooperation and assessment; Water, industry and cleaner production.

#### Tourism Segment at CSD-7 in 1999

- Main focus: sustainable tourism development
- Participating major group sectors: industry, workers, NGOs/community organizations, and local authorities.
- Dialogue topics: Industry initiatives for sustainable tourism; Influencing consumer behavior to promote sustainable tourism; Promoting broad-based sustainable development through tourism while safeguarding the integrity of local cultures; Protecting the environment; Coastal impact of tourism.

#### Agriculture Segment at CSD-8 in 2000

- Main focus: role of sustainable agriculture
- Participating major group sectors: farmers, business, workers, NGOs with indigenous people and scientists integrated in the four groups.
- Dialogue topics: Choices in agricultural production techniques, consumption patterns and safety regulations; Best practices in land resources management to achieve sustainable food cycles; Knowledge for a sustainable food system: identifying and providing for education, training, knowledge-sharing and information needs; Globalization, trade liberalization and investment patterns: economic incentives and framework conditions to promote sustainable agriculture.

#### Energy and Transport Segment at CSD-9 in 2001

- Main focus: role of energy and transportation in sustainable development
- Participating major group sectors: local authorities, scientists, business, labor, and NGOs.
- Dialogue Topics: Achieving equitable access to clean energy: incentives, subsidies, regulations or voluntary measures?; Eco-Efficiency, eco-effectiveness or business-as-usual -choices for producing, distributing and consuming energy; Public-private partnerships for de-carbonizing the transportation system; Sustainable transport planning -choices and models for human settlements designs and vehicle alternatives.

In 2002, multi-stakeholder dialogues continue to be held during CSD-10 as part of the preparatory process leading up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development

(WSSD). This is the first time that all nine major groups identified in Agenda 21 partake as distinct entities, a logistical challenge that has highlighted and exacerbated some of the limitations in the current process design.

## **An Evaluation of the CSD's Multistakeholder Dialogues**

This study looks back on the four years of experience with multistakeholder dialogues at the CSD. It complements other recent assessment efforts, such as the Report of the Secretary-General on *Cooperation between the United Nations and all relevant partners, in particular the private sector*, issued in August 2001 (A/56/323). Based on extensive research conducted over the course of ten months, we review various elements of the CSD multistakeholder process as it evolved from its Sixth through its Ninth Session. We identify strengths and areas for improvement based on organizer and participant feedback (Chapter 2) as well as on independent analysis of the inputs, structure, and outcomes of the dialogue segments (Chapter 3). Drawing on this analysis, we offer some recommendations for fine-tuning the process (Chapter 4).

The study was commissioned by the Secretariat of the CSD as part of its ten-year review of progress in UNCED follow-up for the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), to be held in Johannesburg in early autumn 2002. It was designed and carried out by the Consensus Building Institute (CBI), an independent not-for-profit provider of mediation services based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.<sup>10</sup>

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For more information on The Consensus Building Institute, please visit [www.cbuilding.org](http://www.cbuilding.org).

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## Dialogue Objectives, Design and Impacts

### Organizer, Participant and Observer Perspectives

#### Measuring “Success”

The central research questions we seek to answer in this study are: have the CSD multi-stakeholder dialogue segments been successful? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the participatory model involved? Prescriptively, how should intergovernmental policy forums like these structure participation to ensure constructive input from a wide set of stakeholders? And, finally, what institutional constraints need to be overcome to increase authentic receptivity to policy advice emerging from the ranks of non-governmental actors?

“Success” is difficult to measure. In this study we have attempted, through the application of a variety of research tools – including direct observation, analysis of survey results, seventy in-depth interviews ranging anywhere from forty minutes to two hours, review of background papers and negotiating texts, and viewing of video-taped documentation of CSD multi-stakeholder dialogue segments – to assess both participant satisfaction and the impact of stakeholder dialogue on policy-making.

More specifically, effectiveness indicators include:

- The degree to which the CSD dialogues have met the primary goals of the organizers and stakeholders.
- The degree to which participants, observers and experts in the substantive fields involved consider the outcomes of the dialogues fruitful and legitimate.
- The degree to which government representatives attach importance to the dialogue process and the policy recommendations produced.
- The degree to which the dialogues have influenced the formulation and implementation of sustainable development goals and strategies in the topic areas they address.
- The degree to which the dialogues have generated concrete follow-up efforts.

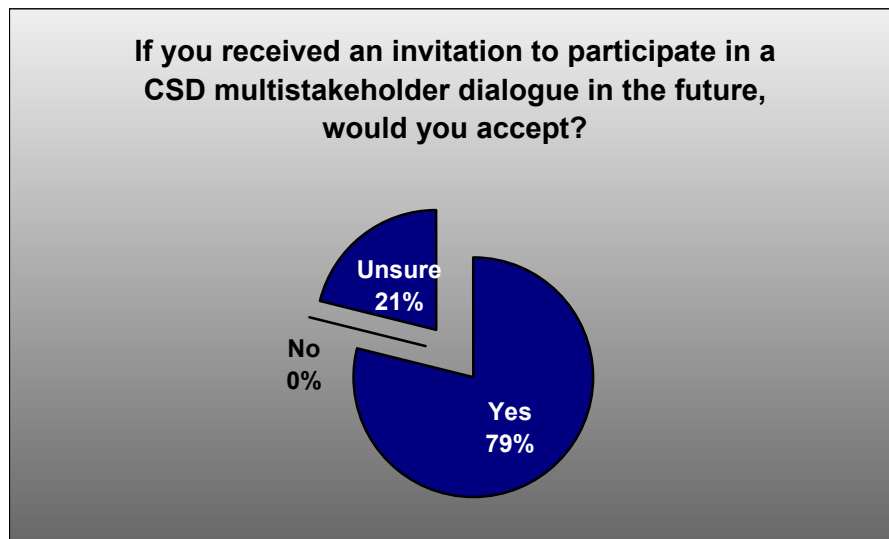
These indicators raise essential questions about the motivations and expectations of the organizers and participants, the perceived comparative advantages and opportunities offered by the CSD dialogues, and the degree to which their structure has succeeded in

soliciting the types of expertise and experience that match the overall goals of multistakeholder dialogues and the CSD more generally.

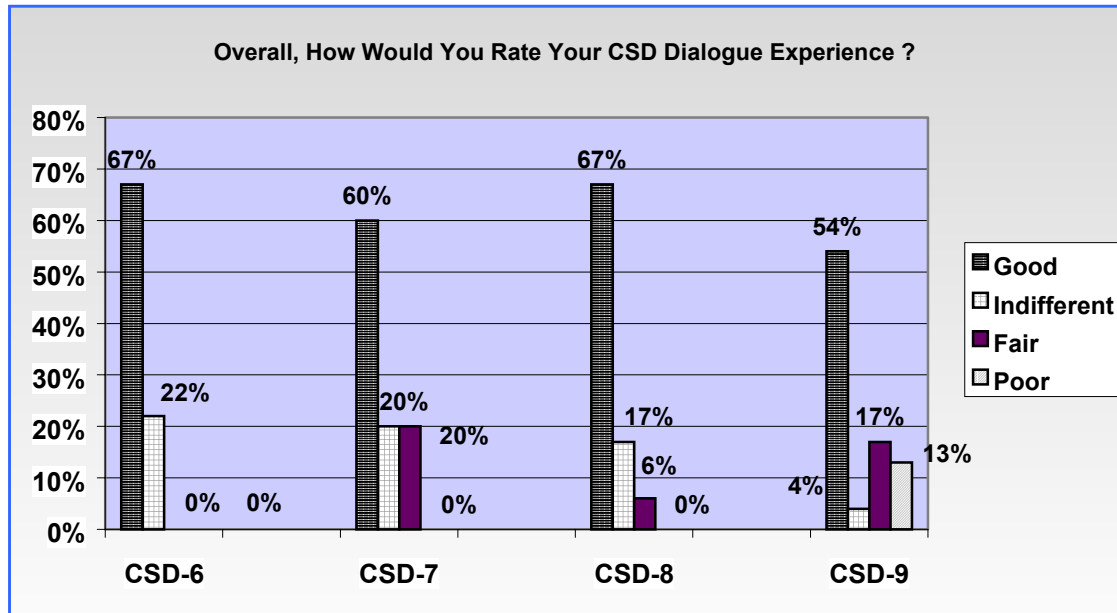
This chapter will first review the way the different players have approached the dialogues and how they evaluate the results in light of their aspirations. In a step-by-step discussion of the process, we try to highlight challenges and constraints as well as accomplishments and an appreciation for the massive organizational effort involved and the symbolic significance of the endeavor. What emerges is a picture of people speaking sometimes to and sometimes past each other. It is important to remember, however, that breaking new stylistic and substantive ground in a highly politicized environment is necessarily fraught with difficulty. The most important question is where we find ourselves after years of effort – what has been learned?

### **The Major Group Dialogue Experience**

At the most basic level, the test for any initiative is whether participants would return. When presented with a hypothetical invitation to a future multistakeholder dialogue within the CSD context, respondents to a survey of major groups participants (see Appendix 1 for an details on the survey process and response and Appendix 2 for a copy of the survey instrument used) overwhelmingly chose to accept it:



Consistent with these findings, at least 60% of the major group respondents rated their experience at the dialogues as “good” or “excellent” for each of the first three of the four years under examination:



The CSD-9 dialogues received more mixed marks, with slightly less than one third of the respondents judging them “fair” or “poor.” While this assessment could be a reflection of weaknesses in the organization of the dialogues themselves, it also correlates with a wider sense of lackluster performance that surrounded the 2001 CSD session as a whole.<sup>11</sup>

Energies within the multistakeholder process may thus be mobilized or dampened depending on the dynamics engulfing the negotiations as a whole. When the negotiations become, as happened during CSD-9, embroiled in old controversies (e.g. nuclear energy) and encumbered with implicit associations to important related fora (e.g. the climate change talks), less room may be left for the sort of open discourse and creative problem-solving that ought to be the mainstays of the multistakeholder dialogues.

The question of CSD reform is beyond the purview of this paper, though the functions and feasibility of the dialogues are, of course, inextricably linked to the fate of the CSD. What is noteworthy, though, is that even among civil society players who are disenchanted with the current CSD as an institutional vehicle for advancing the sustainability agenda, the multistakeholder dialogue stands out as a valuable mechanism. The summary of workshop proceedings reflecting the views on the UNCED follow-up process of a small group of Southern NGOs pointed out that:

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. the Newsletter on the World Summit issued by the Heinrich Böll Foundation-North America, which reported on the outcome of CSD-9 as follows: “The unwillingness of most of the participating countries to differ from their protective national positions is made especially apparent by the fact that there are nearly no new impulses coming from the outcome document addressing for example the growing gap between South and North in the field of energy use, access to energy or the use of nuclear energy.”

“Participants emphasized the fact that the CSD does not produce substantive outcomes of any kind, since it is a body with no real political power. The only positive feature is the multi-stakeholder dialogue process which elevates the public profile of key sustainability issues.”<sup>12</sup>

One Northern businessman put it more poignantly:

“The multi-stakeholder dialogues are a bit like the lights that are still burning on a stranded ship.”

## **A Multiplicity of Objectives**

The hundreds of people that converge on the CSD every year bring substantively differing agendas. The multistakeholder dialogue is one component of this larger whole, and it is not surprising that the very purpose of the exercise is subject to myriad interpretations. Like most institutional processes, the dialogues are sometimes appropriated by different actors as they seek to pursue their own ends. If people manage to get enough of what they want most of the time, problems do not arise. It is difficult, however, to create a system that is sufficiently dynamic and versatile that it can over time endure an onslaught of disjointed demands over time.

It is important to identify the priorities of the participants. These serve to highlight the relative importance of different process design elements to various groups, and make clear the trade-offs that have been made among stakeholder interests.

### **Priorities of Organizers, Government Representatives and Major Groups**

#### **The Purpose as Framed by the CSD Secretariat**

The CSD Secretariat has a long-standing and firm commitment to bringing multistakeholder input into CSD deliberations. As framed by the Major Groups Focal point, the dialogues’ declared purpose is:

“To inform the inter-governmental decision making process of the CSD by allowing direct exchanges of views and experiences on problems and consideration of possible solutions between major groups and governments..”

The emphasis, hence, has been placed on problem solving in a spontaneous, free-flowing style that makes major groups and government partners in a joint inquiry. This presupposes that participants are willing associates, convinced of the value that each can add, capable of mutual

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<sup>12</sup> *Highlighting Southern Priorities for Earth Summit 2002*, Summary of Proceedings of a Workshop by the same title co-hosted by the Heinrich Böll Foundation and the Stockholm Environment Institute, (June 16-18, 2000), p.44. The workshop brought together a small number of Southern civil society representatives active in the Rio process to discuss concerns and priorities of the South as regards the ten-year review of the Earth Summit.

understanding, and committed to carrying over into their primary spheres of activity the concerns voiced and ideas presented in these interactions.

Such a state of affairs is still distant from the current reality, although it is, in our view, fair to say that the CSD dialogues have succeeded in clearing away key political obstacles that stood in the path of achieving the objective of joint inquiry. One Northern government representative summed it up as follows:

**“The multi-stakeholder dialogues have been evolving and improved over the years. Most countries consider them a major part of the CSD; they are seen as complementary to the rest. The Secretariat has pushed the limits in a good way. It has found a balance between what is possible and what is desirable.”**

By calming fears of improper crossing of boundaries and by creating an infrastructure of networks that can be deepened and widened as appropriate, the preconditions may be in place for achieving a qualitative leap that would indeed match the vision outlined by the Secretariat.

Civil society has come a long way from spectators on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly Hall, where the first session of the multistakeholder dialogues of PrepCom II for the WSSD was held on January 29, 2002, with participation from all nine major groups.

### **The Priorities of Government Representatives**

Still, the CSD remains by its very nature, and placement at UN Headquarters in New York, an institution functioning according to diplomatic imperatives. This presents those conducting the dialogues with something of a dilemma: on the one hand, the CSD's hortatory, non-rule-bound mode accords it the greater liberty that comes with less scrutiny. In fact, it is arguably this extra degree of freedom that can be credited with tolerating innovations such as mainstreaming major group involvement. As one official commented:

**“The perception is, ‘they’re playing in the sandbox.’”**

On the other hand, the iron rule remains: “governments negotiate with governments.” These negotiations are as ritualized, roiling and relentless as any multilateral discussions that revolve around restrictions on national authority.

The size, make-up and technical preparedness of government delegations are highly variable, with some severely stretched by the steady onslaught of written documentation and consultations proceeding on parallel fronts. For delegations with limited capacity, whose members tend to be generalists, the multi-stakeholder dialogues are often experienced as an additional burden, leading to spotty attendance. Other nations reinforce their presence with technical experts whose brief includes covering the dialogue segment. In some cases, these experts send back to their colleagues a detailed account of what they heard from the stakeholders; in others the messages get lost. Where suggestions are picked up from non-state

actors during drafting, the impact of these ideas is more likely to be the product of direct lobbying of government delegates than of dialogue contributions.

If government representatives are to consider the dialogues with the appropriate measure of seriousness, they need to lighten their loads. They are looking for clear messages. They tend to favor conciseness over a cacophony of voices. They also prefer only short presentations of particular case studies. According to one interviewee from a G77 country, the multi-stakeholder dialogues should:

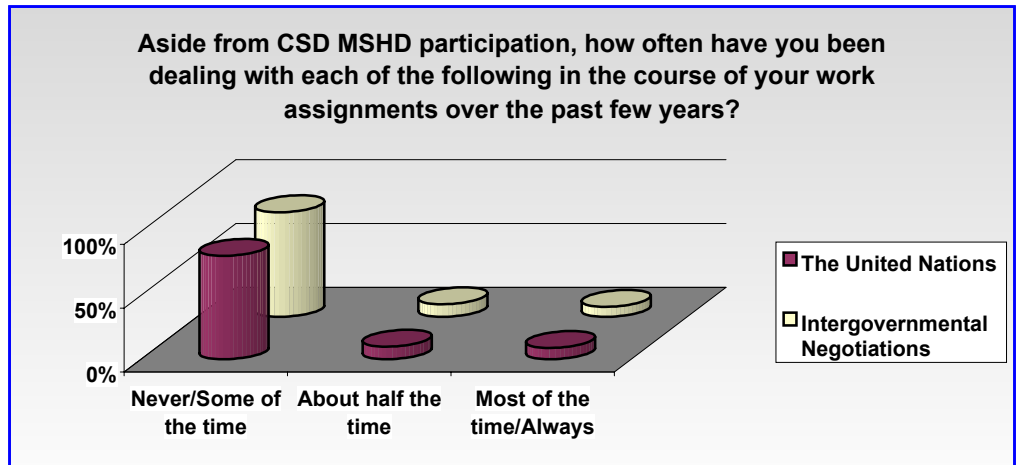
**“Allow the exchange of ideas, not of specific experiences. I don’t want to hear how your NGO built a better bridge. So much stuff is thrown at me already. What would really help is to see agreements emerge among major groups on specific issues. We could say, ‘there is a civil society consensus on such-and-such.’ Then it could have an impact.”**

The main CSD proceedings quickly gravitate towards the crafting of language, a precision tool that in the hands of diplomats generates nuanced meaning easily eluding the uninitiated. Similarly perplexing can be the experience of finding more commotion in the corridors than in the conference room. Said one sympathetic former government official:

**“Understanding the UN is not an easy thing. Say someone comes here from a small Southern NGO. He feels like a Martian and they all think he is a Martian. He will be surprised to find the plenary room almost empty. He may not understand that this is the main ring of a multiple ring circus; it is where they keep the clowns while they’re off preparing the tigers. ”**

**The Priorities of Major Group Representatives**

The bewilderment is not limited to members of small Southern NGOs. While for many of the regulars the annual CSD session is a homecoming of sorts, neophytes can be hard-pressed to find their way through the maze. And relative newcomers to the United Nations, or to intergovernmental negotiations more generally, make up a substantial part of major group participants, as shown in the chart below:



Even people boasting a sophisticated understanding of some aspects of the process may harbor some confusion about how the dialogues fit into the larger picture. One designated major group organizing partners, for example, related the paramount importance of the Preparatory Committee meetings as the occasion where “there is some window to influence the text.” Yet, he was unaware of the fact that national representatives were meant to sit in on the multi-stakeholder dialogues. Another major group organizing partner described her experience as follows:

**“I always felt like I was behind. There are two levels: on the one hand you are trying to understand the process mechanics and on the other there is a political substratum to everything, which is not explicit.”**

Mystification about how the dialogues are connected to overarching and parallel multilateral negotiations can lead to skepticism about the sincerity of the effort. Said one survey respondent, echoing a concern shared by others who don’t want to see multi-stakeholder dialogues become the exclusive mechanism for civil society input in intergovernmental fora:

**“I felt we were invited to be used manipulatively, just to say that there is a multi-stakeholder dialogue.”**

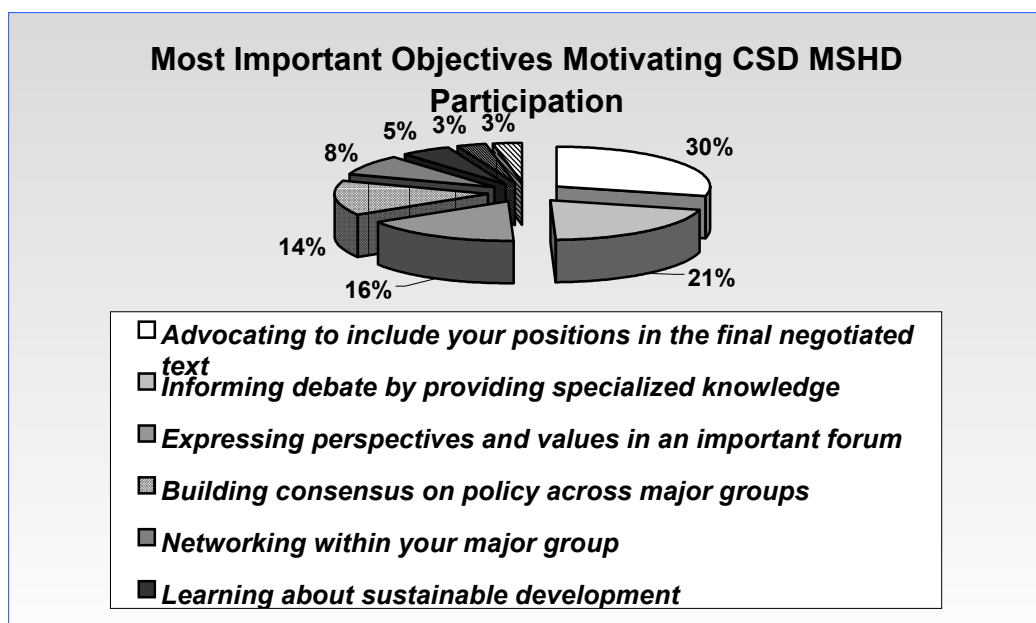
While such allegations of stage-crafting for cosmetic purposes emanate only from a small, disgruntled quarter, the dissatisfaction with the consistent lack of governmental attention and involvement is quite widespread. Equally pervasive, paradoxically, is a sense that government dominance can threaten to overshadow the other stakeholders’ one spot in the sun. Contrast the following two comments, both of which were made in reference to CSD-9:

**“We were sitting there in not-so-splendid isolation. Many governments didn’t even show, we didn’t have high-level people in the room and the Chair had to force them to intervene.”**

Versus:

**“I found the last dialogue the most useful and rewarding . . . the Chair kept the government delegations in check. This is important because the multi-stakeholder dialogues provide the only true opportunity for major groups to voice their opinions and provide relevant information. ”**

These statements reflect fundamentally different expectations about the role of governments in the multi-stakeholder dialogues: some would prefer them as energetic interlocutors, others as attentive addressees. As we have seen above, diplomats bring their own needs and constraints to the mix. In fact, a perception of crowding shared by all actors seems to contribute to a compulsion to jealously guard one’s space.



We now proceed with a systematic overview of the goals that motivate major group involvement in the multistakeholder dialogues. These motivating factors are important because they help explain the strategies that stakeholders adopt in the dialogues.

### **The Negotiated Text**

As is evident from the survey results reported in the chart above, civil society delegates, on the whole, place a great premium on mentions in the final negotiated text. Some are dismissive of that goal, citing the lack of law-making power of the CSD as a reason not to be overly concerned with the written output of the deliberations. But for many if not most, a reference in the document to their primary concerns or proposals is considered a “result” that can be brought back to boards of directors, bosses and funding entities as evidence of organizational resources well spent.

Participants also seek to leverage endorsement of their ideas on the international level to accomplish change nationally or within their own professional communities. Within large segments of some of the major groups, sustainability-related concerns are still at the margins of people’s consciousness or even perceived as threatening. Similarly, potential social partners are stuck in antagonistic relationships of all kinds. Faced with entrenchment in the rank and file, some major group members try to mobilize the troops through inspiration and obligation from the top. As one interviewee described it:

“On the ground we still have basically the same old relationships [and many] are maintaining a defensive posture. A new and different climate is necessary. You can change the texture of perception of local problems, but that can’t happen unless there is some agreement internationally.”

### **Contributing Specialized Knowledge and Expressing Values in an Important Forum**

Next in importance rank the goals of “informing the debate by providing specialized knowledge” and “expressing perspectives and values in an important forum.” We take them

together because, as indexes of a drive to bring in information of moral worth or practical merit, they are effectively two sides of the same coin.

When asked to identify the high points of their dialogue experience, many referred to making their own substantive contributions or hearing those of colleagues. Said one survey respondent:

**“To include in the formal and informal sessions the idea of ecological debt.”**

Said another:

**“[The high point was] Dismas Okello’s interventions during CSD-8. He turned on its head a debate about organic farming providing the only true solution for sustainable agriculture. He demonstrated how important it is to listen to practitioners, especially from developing countries, when discussing policy options.”**

Expertise comes clothed in many guises. Some people encapsulate their messages in metaphors; others adopt rationalizing methodologies, such as cost-benefit analysis; still others take an overtly advocatory stance and muster “facts” to back up their beliefs. In all these modes of communication, assumptions go unstated and as much information is typically omitted as is revealed.

Exploration and extrapolation become notoriously difficult when several vernaculars collide. Nonetheless, implicit in the exercise of CSD multi-stakeholder dialogues is the very premise that a transition to sustainability presupposes the amalgamation of radically different worldviews. In and of itself, this recognition is part of a conceptual revolution that is moving away from reliance for expertise on an exclusive cadre of development professionals, who in the past have too readily ascribed incompetence to the “target population” – or “developees,” as they have been pointedly described<sup>13</sup> – when problems like poverty stubbornly persist.

### The Discourse on Democracy

As such, the mere conducting of the dialogues are a forceful political statement in line with Amartya Sen’s impassioned case against those who argue that heavily elitist systems, such as the current international governance structure, are more apt to steer a course out of misery. Specifically, Sen cites three potential benefits arising from the extension of participatory practices<sup>14</sup>:

- Their *direct* impact in human living associated with basic capabilities;
- Their *instrumental* role in enhancing the hearing that people get in expressing and supporting their claims to political attention;

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<sup>13</sup> Cooper and Packard (Eds.), *International Development and the Social Sciences – Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge*. University of California Press(1997)..

<sup>14</sup> Sen, Amartya, *Development as Freedom*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf (1999), p.148.

- Their *constructive* role in the conceptualization of “needs” (including the understanding of “economic needs” in a social context).

In the context of the CSD, bullets two and three are particularly applicable, especially to constituencies that have few other outlets or channels through which to communicate with social partners or their domestic political leadership.

From issue framing to preference articulation and solution generation, dialogue can be valuable not only for strengthening each bit of civil society but also for aggregating groups with common interests. The benefit of additional information and hearing a diversity of perspectives accrue to the more inclusive institutions and the peoples they are meant to serve.

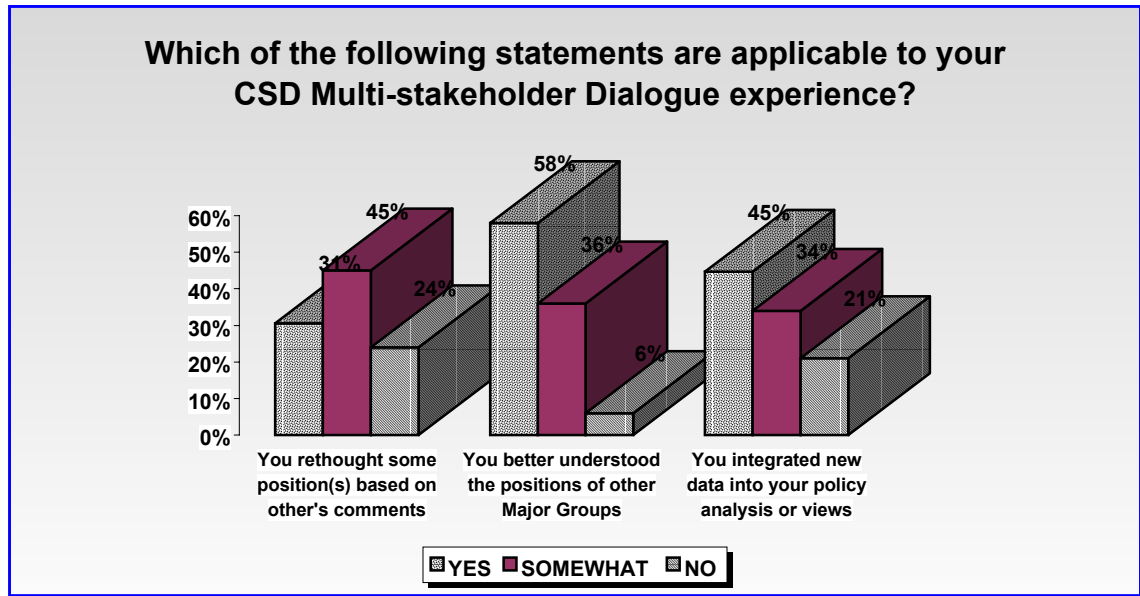
Albert O. Hirshman, in his famous treatise, argues that exit and voice are two alternative levers for expressing distress over the direction an organization, firm, or state is headed.<sup>15</sup> But these modes of expression, which Hirshman argues are crucial signaling devices that allow institutions to repair dysfunction and adapt to new circumstances, can only be adopted by people who are given standing – the means to walk and speak – in the first place. It is thus hardly surprising that stakeholders are keen to safeguard the space available for self-expression – within the dialogues but also through speaking rights in intergovernmental negotiation sessions and informal interactions involving other major group or national representatives – that the CSD has created for them. As one NGO representative said:

**“Stand up and speak your mind like this – in most places you can’t do that in Parliament!”**

Interestingly enough, this space is not primarily seen as a convenient perch from which to look over governments’ shoulders. Not one of the survey respondents identified “monitoring your government’s negotiation position” as an important motivator for attending the CSD dialogues. Thus, stakeholders appear to aspire more to problem-solving than to policing what their government is saying and doing.

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<sup>15</sup> Hirshman, Albert O, *Exit, Voice and Loyalty; Responses to Declines in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press (1970).



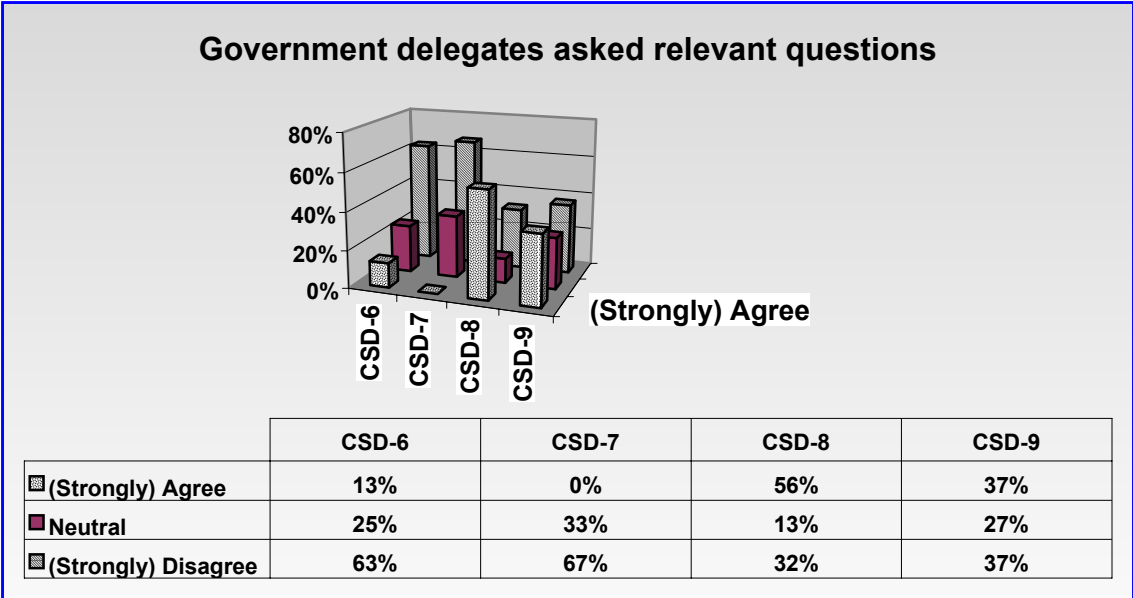
### Learning by Stakeholders

Beyond theoretical considerations of the advantages of democratic deliberation, the question remains whether the CSD dialogues have made a concrete difference in terms of knowledge dissemination. To gauge this, we posed a series of questions regarding attitudinal change. The results are summarized in the chart above. They show a significant level of learning triggered by the CSD dialogue experience.

Fifty-eight percent of respondents reported coming away from the dialogues with a greater understanding of the positions of other major groups. Forty-five percent made use of information they obtained through the dialogue process to elaborate their own policy analyses or enrich their perspectives. And – hardest of all to achieve – almost a third of all respondents found themselves reconsidering positions they previously held in light of observations made during the dialogues. Despite the distractions of darting from theme to theme, and from speaker to speaker, in relatively hurried succession, civil society participants, by their own accounting, listened and learned from each other.

Major group delegates were comparatively less inspired by their government counterparts. As shown in the chart below, few respondents showed appreciation for queries posed to them from the diplomats' seats, although such perceptions markedly improved in the latter two years, and direct observation of the opening multi-stakeholder dialogue session at PrepCom II of CSD-10 suggests a further enlivening of the give-and-take between state and non-state representatives. A consummate insider corroborates this impression:

**“ To have stakeholders be equal to [government] delegates was a big breakthrough for the UN. People used to come to see history in the making. They'd say ‘oh, look, a farmer,’ and then left. It is evident visually that there is a growing interest since CSD-6, especially from people coming from developing country capitals.”**



Nonetheless, these findings further corroborate the thesis that the most vexing weakness of the dialogues appears to be the disjuncture between these two universes – government and civil society. Some stakeholders feel unappreciated when the nuances that loom large in their disciplinary or professional communities are met with blank stares. Reported one past participant affiliated with the business group:

**“I was horrified at the general lack of knowledge about [my] industry. They don’t master the terminology of the trade and they won’t listen.”**

The Interface with Science

The interface between science and diplomacy is particularly problematic in this regard. While scientific research has provided the impetus behind the political mobilization around many global environmental problems (notably ozone depletion and climate change) its practitioners are steeped in a culture of caution and contingency that translate into actionable prescriptions only with the greatest of difficulty. Said a leader of the science team:

**“Given its past experience, the global scientific community is reluctant to get involved in international processes. There’s frustration in talking science with policy makers. They don’t want uncertainties or ratios of probabilities, and you’re constantly having to say ‘no, that’s stupid.’ ”**

The dialogue format, with its succession of succinct and not always related comments, at first exacerbated anxieties among the science delegation, which participated for the first time at CSD-9. But interestingly, with guidance from the organizing partner, they quickly found that they could play a useful part in the fray and were gratified by the positive reaction. By using

the details of their background paper as a starting point, the scientists managed to make the dialogues their own:

**“The first day was very difficult. The dialogue was all social and not scientific and so they were wondering what they were doing there. After the first day, I told them, ‘don’t worry, just respond to the latest remark.’ We presented ‘down-to-earth’ science and quality proposals. The value of the paper was in changing the dynamic of the discussion. It provided a substantive platform. We got good support from other groups; both the workers and the employers said ‘we agree with the science paper.’ A lot of our delegation members got excited. Over dinner the second night, a great deal of follow-up action was discussed.”**

### Different Speakers; Different Audiences

Many people, when faced with incomprehension, tend to repeat the same message in the same manner, only amplified several decibels. Sometimes, such as when cultural norms dictate a level of tameness that submerges important voices, that may indeed be the appropriate reaction. A Sri Lankan NGO representative at the Bonn Freshwater multistakeholder dialogue related that her caucus was organizing sessions where women could practice their presentation skills:

**“We are conditioned as Asian women not to say anything nasty. To be heard here we have to build in a little bit of aggression, which is totally alien to us.”**

More often, however, volume is not the recipe for effective communication. In fact, it may undermine cohesion within one’s own major group, alienate delegates from other major groups, and confirm some governments’ preconception that including non-state actors in their work is, as one CSD secretariat member summarizes the position, “like inviting someone into your home and getting insulted by your guest.”

More fruitful, if more daunting, is the attempt to translate specialized knowledge from one cosmos to the other, by repackaging it in a form fit for general consumption. This does not imply subverting one’s message or identity, but it does require the agility to adapt to very different audiences. These audiences, too, must strain to follow what is being said rather than sitting passively. And here cultural factors may also come into play. Said one former U.S. government official:

**“I get the sense that African delegates are slightly more comfortable. They do [this kind of oral deliberation] all the time, starting a debate with ‘in the beginning, God created the earth.’ And they listen, as a mark of pride and respect for others. ”**

In fact, which actors – major groups or government representatives -- more appropriately bear the burden of moving beyond their comfort zone is one of several subterranean arguments surrounding the management of the multistakeholder dialogues. The answer is probably that all must bend if successful communication is to take place.

## **Building Consensus Across Major Groups**

Fourteen percent of survey respondents identified “building consensus on policy issues across major groups,” as an important objective of the dialogue process. This is seen as a worthy goal in and of itself, as a basis for joint action, as well as a means of influencing governmental decision-making.

The key question that arises regards the feasibility of this objective. Consensus building can be a lengthy and tortuous process, which is all the more laborious when suspicions among stakeholders prevail and the subjects under discussion are controversial.

Relationship- and trust-building are long-term endeavors, and the CSD dialogue process, with its annual rallying of the troops in New York, does seem to have broken some ground in this regard. While there is a perceptible contest among the major groups, with each generally attributing more energy, eloquence and moral fiber to itself than to others, overt antagonism is now rare.

That arguably represents a change since the first dialogue encounter in 1998, when the question of trust found its way directly into the dialogue proceedings, prompting one participant to threaten to walk out. Following is a series of excerpts from the CSD-6 dialogue session (note that these statements were not uttered in immediate succession though they are here presented as such):

**Mr. Björn Stigson (World Business Council for Sustainable Development):** “I find to my enormous surprise that over lunch there was an article in *The Guardian* today by one of the participants here from Friends of the Earth, and it says that, ‘It seems that the transnational corporations regard regulation as fine to protect business, but if it protects the planet it is unnecessary and bureaucratic.’ Now, if the NGO community really believes this is why we are here, I think we can stop this discussion right here and now. This is ridiculous. I think all of us have to approach this in a spirit of trust and in a right way to find solutions. I must say that I feel somewhat outraged by this”.

**Chairman Cielito habito:** “...we would like to avoid really getting into an adversarial mode in working together for sustainable development. And again, that element of trust in fact, exerting the effort of trusting and working towards partnership is very important for all of us. In this spirit, I would like to suggest that in this discussion we try to address more the question of how. I think enough has been said about ‘whats’ and ‘whys’, and perhaps we should focus now on more concrete things that we should be doing going forward.”

**Mr. Kevin Dunion (Friends of the Earth International):** “Addressing Mr. Stigson directly, who I always thought had much thicker skin than he’s had here today. I think in light of the article he’s talking about, he should reflect upon the fact that it’s speaking specifically about the MAI. . . . I think trust is not the essence of this discussion. The whole point of this discussion is about how we can monitor, how we can track, how we can insure compliance. If it was based on trust, we wouldn’t even be discussing these things

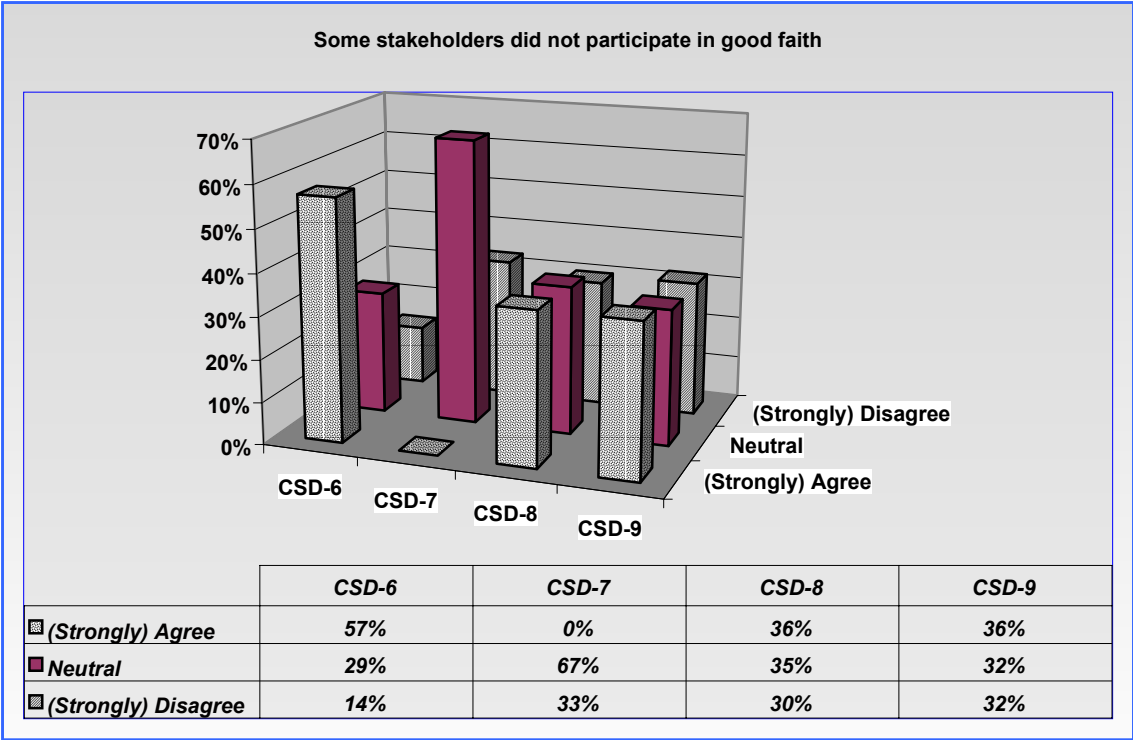
There have, of course, been heated exchanges in subsequent dialogue sessions, but these mostly focused on substantive disagreements rather than recriminations about alleged duplicity. A kind of unwritten code of conduct has emerged, which is enforced by the major group leaders in their own charges to preserve an image of seriousness and legitimacy.

At the beginning of one pre-dialogue strategy session at a recent CSD, the coordinator exhorted delegates to remember that equanimity is not tantamount to weakness. And at the December 2001 Bonn Freshwater Conference dialogue, where many of the participants were CSD veterans, a reprimand from his own major group rained down fast and hard on one speaker whose excoriation of a represented company's practices had crossed the line.

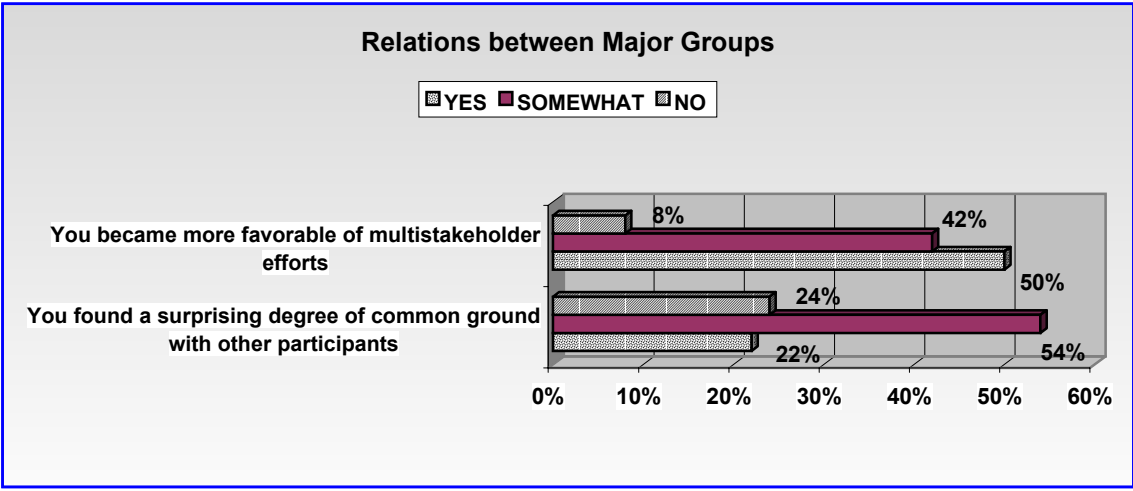
On that occasion, the facilitator faced the challenge of diffusing the tension by choosing to take government interventions exclusively for a significant period of time. This caused waves among civil society delegates, though he himself was satisfied that ultimately yet another little barrier to non-state participation had been broken:

**"The guy was playing football on a basketball court. I was concerned that it would degenerate into name-calling; then we would have lost the government people. I felt like I needed to impose a dry spell. Maybe in retrospect it's a good thing that it happened, that someone spoke from his heart with passion. People were acting like 'everybody survived – how much worse can it get?'"**

It is difficult to measure trust, which heavily depends on personal relationships and thus tends to wax and wane depending on the rate of turnover within delegations and the intensity of interaction that occurs among their members. Still, our survey results show a marked decrease in distrust from the earlier to the later years of the dialogues. As illustrated in the chart below, fifty-seven percent of respondents who participated in CSD-6 agreed or strongly agreed that "some stakeholders did not participate in good faith." Two years later, that percentage had dropped to thirty-six, while those who disagreed or strongly disagreed more than doubled from fourteen to thirty percent. Very similar percentages emerged from CSD-9 (the results for CSD-7 need to be taken with great caution due to the low response rate that year).



Trust helps a great deal; but it is not sufficient to obtain agreement on substance. While half of the respondents found themselves emerging from the CSD dialogues more favorably disposed to multi-stakeholder efforts generally, and forty-two percent become somewhat more favorable, the reason for this expression of interest may be more related to the richness of perspectives offered than to the harmony of views.



When asked whether they “found a surprising degree of common ground with other participants,” a quarter of those polled answered affirmatively, a quarter answered negatively, and half were moderately impressed with the similarity in outlook it was able to discern.

Subjective perceptions regarding the extent of potential agreement sometimes reflects true underlying differences. It can also, however, be colored by issue framing, quality, tone and formality of discussion, and other process variables. Indeed, the possibilities for achieving the

consensus objective depend in large part on the *choice of subject matter* to be discussed -- the novelty of the issue, the breadth and level of specificity at which it is treated and the emphasis on, as Chair Habito put it, the “whats,” the “whys” or the “hows.” It also depends on the *mechanics* of the consultation process, from the preparatory stage through to the packaging of the final outcome. It is to these design elements that we turn next.

## The Dialogue Process

### The Preparatory Phase

#### Major Group Coordination by the CSD

Formal preparations for the dialogues are guided through monthly telephone conference calls, starting in early autumn prior to the CSD session. They are facilitated by the Secretariat’s Major Groups Focal Point, who is largely responsible for the coordination of the dialogue process, and involve a core of coordinators (organizing partners) selected from each stakeholder group and positioned in organizations with contacts reaching into different branches of their respective sectors.

These telephone calls serve to clarify expectations and monitor progress towards the achievement of the two key tasks that present themselves to the major groups in this phase: (i) the drafting of a background paper, or “dialogue starter,” on the designated topic areas for the given year, and (ii) the recruitment of a delegation of approximately twenty members from among their respective constituencies who will actively participate in the dialogues (more can and do appear as observers). Both of these tasks are meant to be undertaken through broad consultations with associated memberships and networks, and with an eye towards obtaining regional and gender balance in the perspectives presented.

The teleconferences are dominantly process-oriented. Partners provide updates on their preparations and the Secretariat explains the dialogue format, including items such as seating arrangements, length of opening statements, and possibilities for interaction with the Chair prior to the event.

Difficulties inherent in all international work, such as synchronizing busy schedules and bridging time zones, inevitably affect the conference calls. Changes in the cast of characters sometimes force review of procedures that veterans could recite in their sleep. The tempo sometimes seems strangely off-beat for both the newcomers striving to pull alongside and for the old hands comfortable in their roles: too tempestuous for the former; too tardy for the latter. Said one person in the catch-up group:

**“I found the conference calls quite stressful. There were five male voices and it was hard to make out who’s who, who’s saying what to whom. You ask yourself what are they really saying and what are the things that are not said.”**

The Secretariat tries to compensate for the vagaries of intercontinental telecommunication through off-line conversations with individual stakeholders where necessary, the circulation of

discussion summaries, and other web-based communication. The Secretariat also serves as the conduit of communication between governments and the major group organizing partners. Suggestions made by the latter on dialogue structure and themes are forwarded for reaction to the government representatives that constitute the Bureau. Many participants have been quite appreciative of the support provided

Still, the perception remains that the preparatory process could be rendered more efficient if it went further in crystallizing the themes, consolidating possible areas of agreement, and capitalizing on the opportunity to make contributions to the official process through timely joint written inputs.

Sustained interest by the Chair has done much to galvanize participants, especially when it results in direct and personal exchanges. However, a lack of consistent implementation of agreed upon procedural rules has sometimes led to frustration during the actual dialogue when major groups found themselves suddenly scrambling to adjust to unforeseen demands.

On their own initiative, too, the major group coordinators have tried to forge some path towards convergence on some parts of the substantive agenda. One sector enlisted the help of a think-tank, the German Wuppertal Institute, to map overlaps and divergences among the concerns and positions of the major groups based on the papers produced. Contributions during the teleconferences show that coordinators read each other's drafts with care and sometimes identify common elements that could be used to focus the dialogue.

But in the absence both of sufficient time and concerted facilitation moving these groups toward common ground, consensus building efforts remain suspended in mid-air. As one the coordinator of one major group observed about CSD-9:

**"We had some consensus on energy efficiency. What we should have done is prepared a statement of agreement for submission to the governments and told the Chair that [issues identified therein] would be the primary subjects of the dialogues. We should also have had a coordination meeting right before the CSD, but not everybody was ready."**

### **Major Group Self-Organization**

The preparatory process is taxing for the organizing partners who bear significant organizational responsibilities in the lead-up to the dialogues. It might be gratifying for them to know that participants in their respective delegations almost universally praise their professionalism, performance and dedication. On the rare occasion that dissatisfaction is expressed, it usually pertains to issues of control.

As noted above, the key tasks to be executed in the short span of six months are drafting a background paper and putting together a delegation. Each major group has its own, more or less formalized, internal process for achieving these aims.

## The Dialogue Starter

Some rely on one or two people to produce the initial draft of the paper; others divide it into small portions and assign them, with meticulous attention to ensuring North-South balance.

Comments are solicited through web-postings and email list-serves, but also through direct distribution to executive or steering committee members, advisory councils, people at professional gatherings on related themes and others in the groups' networks. Extensive feedback is usually forthcoming from a small group, but that doesn't necessarily mean that there isn't a wider readership that reacts whenever it is provoked. As one major group coordinator said:

**"Most people tell you when you are wrong. It's the bumper car theory of adjustment."**

No major group moves monolithically. And it is typical to find caveats, along the lines of the following, in intra-group communications:

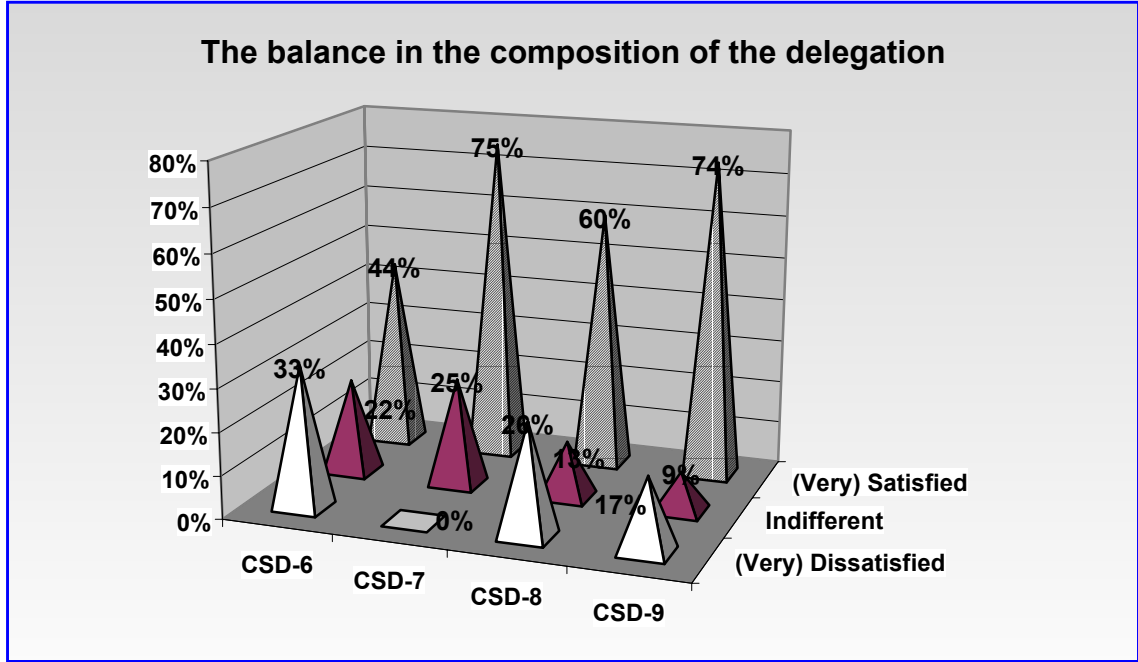
**"We wish to emphasize that the submission of the papers to the CSD Secretariat reflects our best efforts up to that historical point . . . [they] are just there to start the process off. Though we have tried to get out to as many organizations as possible, including mailing over 300 new tourism organizations, we realize that some may have been missed."**

Especially where groups have strongly contrasting views internally on a sensitive subject, objections are voiced forcefully. One strategy out of such impasses is for the coordinators to generate additional written materials, which more closely reflect the dissenters' views, for distribution at the CSD. Such materials, of course, are not published by the United Nations, translated into its six official languages, nor entered into the record as addenda of the Secretary-General's Note for the Multistakeholder Dialogue, as are the dialogue starter papers. But the opportunities afforded at the CSD for presenting perspectives beyond the dialogue space – whether through side events, hallway exhibitions, the publication of newsletters such as the NGO publication *Outreach* or the dissemination of position papers – can help mitigate the divisions internal to the major groups.

## Assembling a Delegation

Assembling a delegation is also no small job. Not surprisingly, few people in the field know about the CSD dialogues; roughly three out of four participants are either personally invited by their major group coordinator or is sent as a representative of an institution to whom the invitation was extended. Extensive outreach, and even committed lobbying on behalf of the process, is thus required to drive home the merit of the endeavor and lure candidates away from other obligations. Without that, candidates who might make good delegates may not find direct involvement sufficiently enticing. Wrote one survey respondent, who had been included on the list of participants provided by the Secretariat, and hence was apparently expected to partake in the dialogues:

“I have to admit that I did not participate directly in any of the various meetings—either because it was inconvenient for me to travel or because the impersonality of the internet format did not make the process attractive.”



Beyond willingness and availability to serve, limits that narrow the pool of candidate delegates, major group focal points also consider criteria such as perspicuity, leadership, and particularity of experience that allows participants to present interesting problems or solutions. While good-faith efforts seem to be made to recruit women, all groups do not always achieve gender balance, and sometimes female delegates are self-consciously placed in prominent positions. As the chart above shows, the evaluation given by survey respondents of their delegations’ composition is somewhat mixed (again, it is probably advisable to discount the data for CSD-7 because of the low response rate that year).

### Funding

A number of constraints can make it particularly difficult to comply with the regional balance requirement. Among these constraints, funding looms large. While the CSD Secretariat does raise funds from member countries to defray travel expenses for a number of developing country participants, the flows are unpredictable and in any event insufficient to meet the need. (It is important to note here that analogous problems exist in the official process; for example, the CSD-6 text calls for making available financial assistance to Bureau members from developing countries to enable their participation).

Organizing partners, who already absorb all the costs related to the coordination work, are called upon to raise additional resources in a competitive funding environment that does not necessarily prioritize UN-focused activities. A majority of civil society delegates are financed through the institution that they represent at CSD; notably, a sizable minority (fourteen percent

in our survey) is completely self-financed. While this shows a remarkable commitment on the part of certain individuals and institutions, it also implies the exclusion of actors without the financial and organizational means and/or who cannot find sponsorship from within their own ranks. This is problem across all the major groups, as underscored by the following comment:

**“Because no financing is available for business and industry representatives, there is a huge bias in the representation of that group towards “Western” multinational corporations and representatives of international business associations. This overlooks the majority of business people from small and medium-sized enterprises as well as developing country representatives. This discrimination should be addressed. There is a need for more transparency in the funding process.”**

The absence of key actors is acutely felt when their sector is perceived to be particularly pertinent to a discussion. Their very remoteness from the entire sustainability agenda can, in fact, become the trigger for discussions on the mobilization of unorganized interests. For example, during the CSD-6 dialogues on “Responsible Entrepreneurship,” the following intervention emphasized the importance in developing countries of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs):

**Dr. Mustafa Tolba, Government of Egypt: “In a country like Egypt, the small and medium size industry is a minuscule industry. It doesn’t have any shareholders, any stakeholders. It does not understand anything about eco-efficiency; it does not understand anything about the environment; it is not prepared to even listen to anything called environmental regulations. And these constitute probably fifty percent of the gross national product from industry in my country. How do the big bosses here from industry think that we can teach these people, how can we reach them? ”**

The self-selection process that is partly driven by the funding requirements can also leave some with the impression that the mood in the room is rosier than outside of it. An NGO representative urged against complacency during CSD-8 because:

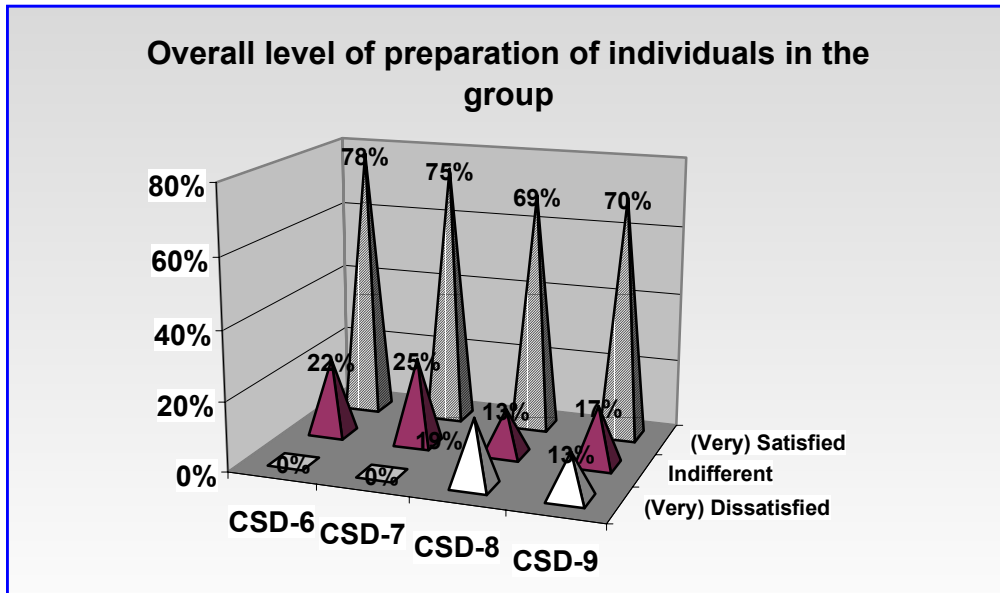
**Gordon Bispham, NGOs: “...On the surface, we have had a good debate; but we have to remember that sometimes countries and institutions have split personalities.”**

### Delegate Preparation

Still, those in attendance do take their responsibilities seriously. In particular, while the brunt of preparation no doubt falls on the focal points, the larger group of participants also reports dedicating substantial energies to preparing for the dialogues. Among survey respondents, three out of four engaged in one or more of the following activities:

- Consulting with colleagues who were NOT attending the CSD;
- Reading part of Agenda 21;
- Reading some or all of the papers prepared by the other major groups.
- Drafting suggestions for the background paper prepared by his/her major group;

By the participants' own account, these efforts pay off. As shown in the chart below, their peers judged the overall level of preparation of individuals within a major group favorably in all four years.



We now turn to the dynamics of the actual dialogue meetings. Here we cover a number of dimensions, from the formulation of themes guiding the discussion to questions of protocol and modes of interaction to outcomes. We again focus primarily on participant and organizer reactions, with more analysis of the process to follow in the next chapter.

### The Choice of Topics for Discussion

The framing and phrasing of the specific dialogue topics originate with the CSD Secretariat, which submits proposals to the Bureau for approval after reading relevant materials, such as the appropriate chapters of Agenda 21, and engaging in informal consultations with relevant major groups.

No dialogue is absolutely regimented –stream of consciousness is sometimes a necessary step towards generating shared understanding or agreement. Especially in the area of sustainable development, where the road is full of twists and turns and the final destination is still a hazy vision, it is often hard to maintain a sense of overall direction. To help the discussion along, therefore, signposts must serve to orient the participants and assure that people don't stray too far from the path.

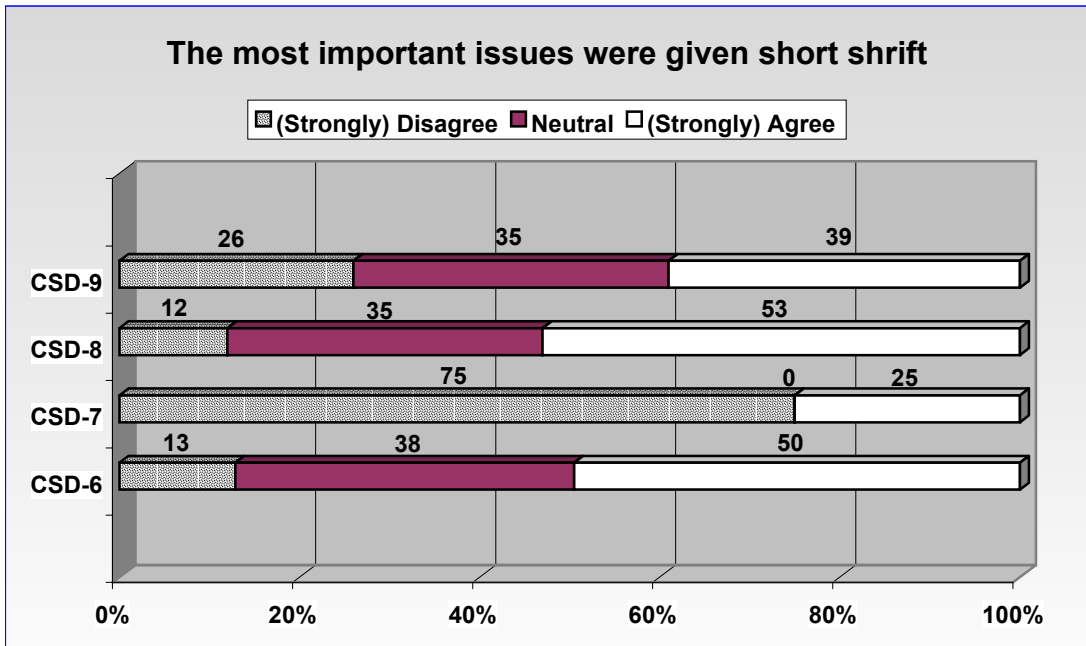
At the outset of the dialogue, the most important signposts are the topics themselves. They are meant to cut complex realities into tractable pieces, to allow for an ordered procession of thoughts and to introduce some coherence in the chaos of recommendations that ricochet from different corners of the conference room. For the CSD dialogues, the formulation of the dialogue topics, the organizers aim for a judicious middle ground between a narrow, technical tack and sweeping generalizations.

As if achieving coherence were not challenging enough, the political realities are such that the themes also need to be worded in a way that doesn't offend or alienate any constituencies from the outset. As one participant said:

**"It seems like [the Secretariat] tries to engineer in safety and engineer out contention"**

These multiple requirements and constraints render the task of topic framing tricky. The results can trigger a wide range of reactions among stakeholders. Some figure the important activity is the dialogue itself. For those who hold this view, the value lies in catalyzing conversations among different, and often traditionally antagonistic, interests. Talking is tantamount to triumph; the substance will sort itself out because all will speak to their most important concerns.

Other stakeholders care very much about the framing and criticize the themes as not sufficiently sharply defined. One major group almost abandoned the effort altogether because of frustrations relating to the perceived lack of precision in phraseology. In general, as evidenced in the chart reporting survey results below, roughly half of the participants in CSD-6 and CSD-8 were dissatisfied with the treatment in the dialogues of what they considered the most important issues. The corresponding figure is somewhat lower, but still sizable, for CSD-9 (the responses for CSD-7 should be disregarded due to the low response rate for that year).



### Meeting Management

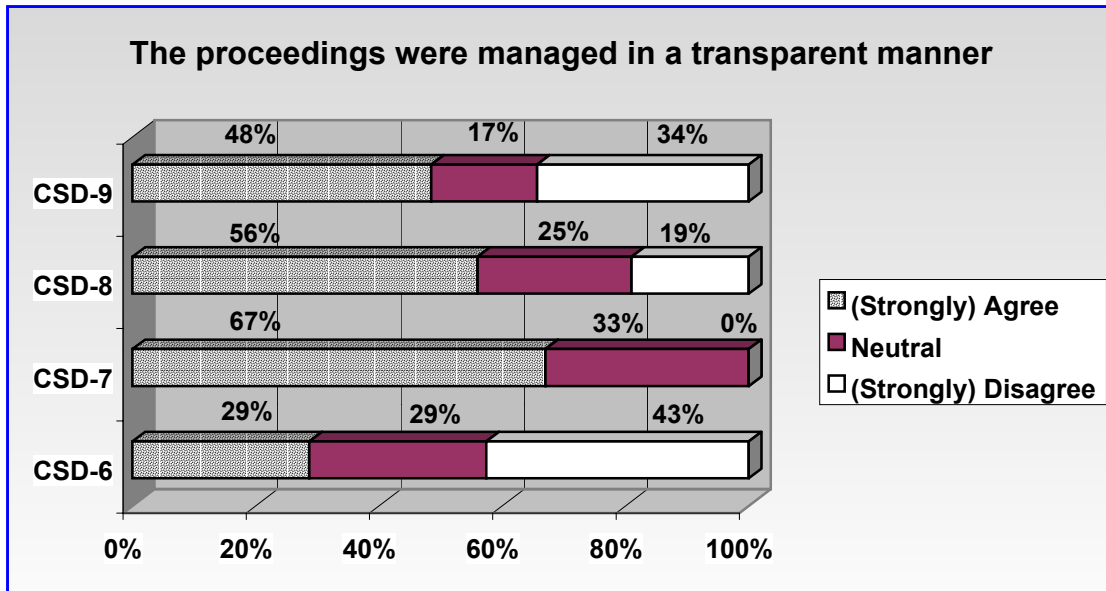
At each CSD between 1998 and 2001, four sessions, or the equivalent of two full days, were devoted to the multistakeholder dialogues that immediately preceded the "High-Level" or

ministerial segment. In a statement of great symbolic value, the dialogues are presided over by the Chair of the entire CSD session. The seating arrangement, too, subverts the natural order of things at the United Nations, placing major group delegates front and center in the chamber with government delegates arrayed around them.

Particularly at CSD-6, but in reduced form also later, the change in protocol caused some rumbling in the ranks of governments. That is not surprising in an atmosphere so cautious that even ministers converging from the capitals are sometimes felt to be potential trespassers on delicate turf. Wrote *ENB* in its review of CSD-6:<sup>16</sup>

**“Some believe that delegates were reluctant to allow Ministers to speak in Plenary because they feared such a discussion might not take into account the sensitivities and history involved in crafting certain decisions.”**

But despite the odd raised brow and pregnant pause, the comparative informality of the dialogue, pushed heavily by the Chairs who used terminology such as “fee-wheeling” and



“interactive” to describe the tone they were striving for, won enthusiast very quickly. At CSD-7, the experiment was even extended to the Ministerial session where “dialogue” officially became, for the first time, the aspired mode of expression. Here it was harder to break the mold of prepared speeches, but the Chair, Simon Upton, then Minister of Environment of New Zealand, was widely commended for trying:

**Mr. George Fuchs – Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for International Development, United Kingdom:**  
**“I must confess that it is with some trepidation that I came in yesterday afternoon to what was described as a multi-stakeholder interactive dialogue only to find to my delight that that meant a lively discussion among all those involved and I’m only sorry that we haven’t been able as Ministers to follow the example that you led.”**

<sup>16</sup> *ENB*, Vol.55, No.110 (4 May 1998), p. 12.

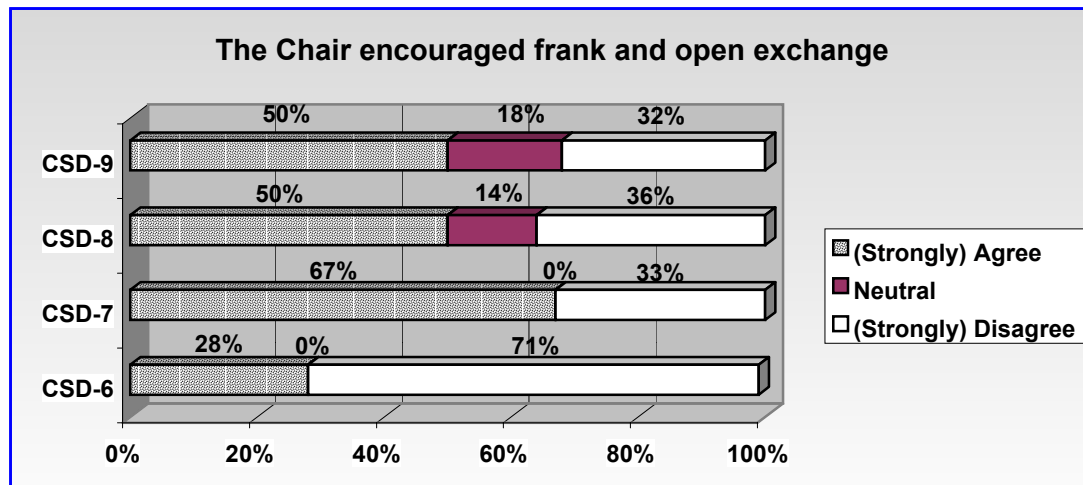
## Facilitation

Still, maintaining a lack of ceremony remained, as Simon Upton called it, “the tricky bit.” Prepared statements were meant to be confined to the beginning of the each session – when each major group delivers an overview of its concerns in five to seven minutes, followed by responses from a developed and a developing country – and at the end, when closing summaries are solicited to crystallize positions and progress made.

But focusing more than 100 participants on a particular issue in a spur-of-the-moment manner can require forceful intervention. The Chairs, especially during CSD-7 and CSD-8 often formulated questions to guide the conversation, and devised systems, such as having speakers send notes to the podium to classify interventions according to topic area, to help the group stay on track. When people strayed, they generally did not shy away from interruptions with reminders of what the subject at hand was meant to be at any given time.

Such reminders were necessary quite frequently and gave a stop-and-go quality to some of the discussion. Predictably, the most difficult session in this regard appears to have been the first, CSD-6.

For example, a suggestion for follow-up work had emerged during the first session and, the Chair felt, required additional consideration in the second session, taking time away from the



official agenda item. Though the Co-Chair Michael Odevall, temporarily taking over from Chair Habito, made clear that he wanted the group to address the NGO’s proposal of a review of voluntary initiatives, and explicitly encouraged speakers to therefore defer their corporate management tools-related comments, he needed to cut short four speakers in the course of nine interventions because they were off-point. Significantly in a diplomatic context, two of these interruptions were of representatives from large and powerful developing countries.

Eagerness to present a particular perspective, some lack of discipline, or even an attempt at filibustering may have been part of the problem. But the lack of emphasis on explicit ground rules, beyond entreaties to keep comments to two minutes, may also have created some confusion. We see from the survey results presented in the chart above that the year in which

the Chair stepped back repeatedly to explain procedural issues (CSD-7) was also the year that is remembered by major group participants to have been the most open and transparent.

Chair Upton not only spiced the sessions with verve and sense of humor; he also consistently clarified how he was operating. During the High-Level Segment, he reassured his ministerial colleagues that he was not calling on them through “some clairvoyant process,” or on a first-come- first-serve basis, but was working from written expressions of interest, submitted to him along the way, to make particular points.

During CSD-7, there were no queries from the floor about the procedure or other overt signs of dissatisfaction. By contrast, during CSD-8, there was a sense among some, like the coordinator of the trade unions, that the discussion was moving too fast to allow for meaningful input. His complaints to this effect fell on rather unsympathetic ears:

**Lucien Royer – Trade Unions:** “On the Trade Union side, we are having difficulties rules of participation right now and I would ask for clarity in terms of how our delegation might be involved in the discussion going on. Some of the questions come and go so rapidly, and we don’t know how to participate.”

**Chair Juan Mayr Maldonado:** “We are posing a series of questions and are seeking answers from all the parties. Raise your flag, as you have just done, so you can participate, as you have just participated.”

During CSD-6, another important issue related to facilitation arose, which gives rise to some considerations about ground rules, an issue we will return to in the final chapter on recommendations. Those dialogues, as we saw earlier, were focused on the role of industry in promoting sustainable development, and the industry delegation therefore came under particular pressure. Criticisms directed at industry from different sides sometimes appeared to require diametrically opposed remedies. In the words of one of the business representatives, addressed to Chair Habito:

**Mr. Ted Button – Industry:** “... what strikes me is the sheer number of questions that have been directed at Industry which are still left hanging outstanding – assertions made, not rebutted ...

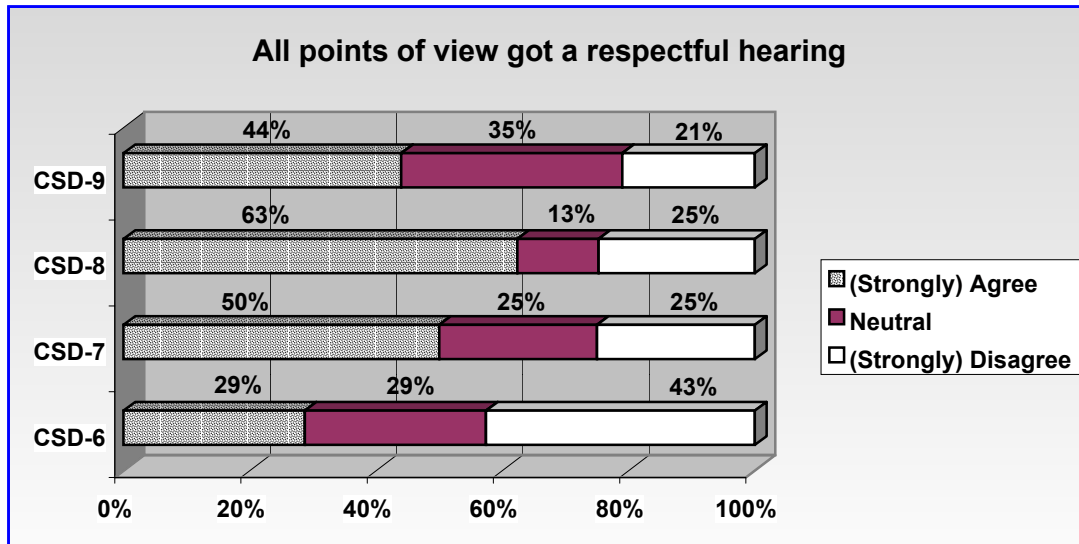
Mr. Button went on to suggest a way out of the dilemma he posed:

**Mr. Ted Button – Industry:** “It is evident that the Major Group, sector ... that is undergoing review, is going to be the recipient of most of the questions. I think it would therefore be worth considering whether the group, sector, or what have you, that is undergoing review should perhaps automatically therefore be given a rather greater proportion of time.”

The issue of time allocation typically raises two different concerns from stakeholders. These are:

- The length of opening statements, which typically consume one the three hours that are available for any given session; and

- The possible differential speaking space for groups of participants depending on the subject of the session and the relative importance of the group (this last issue is a particular difficult one that we will deal with under the rubric of representation in the next chapter).



If groups do not feel like their side got a respectful hearing (according to our survey only 29 percent of the respondents thought they did during CSD-6, as noted in the chart above, though subsequent years did significantly better on this dimension) they may not be open to accepting any statements summarizing the debate. But in a facilitation process such statements can be important tools for orienting and moving forward the discussion.

This was particularly evident again in CSD-6 where an attempt at synthesis of the first dialogue session by a professional moderator, brought in especially for the occasion though without consultation with the major groups regarding her role, was summarily rejected by the industry camp:

**Mr. Björn Stigson – Industry:** “... I don’t quite recognize some of the things that were said here. I think we have a question of reporting from this session and we have a question of facilitation. And I don’t know if this is facilitation or reporting or what it is. But I have a problem with this summary. If this was a kind of free wheeling capturing of themes that were mentioned by some people, fine, if this is kind of summary of conclusions, I have a real problem. I don’t understand what this is all about.”

In the face of industry’s protestations, the facilitator in this case was quickly back-benched. Shelved, too, apparently, was the whole idea of bringing in an independent facilitation for the dialogues in subsequent years. In the end, then, the process relied heavily on the resourcefulness and resilience of individual Chairs to deliver a solid and satisfying debate.

The fortunes of many endeavors ultimately depend on the charisma and determination of particular people, and the CSD dialogues are no exception. The question though remains

whether the clarification of certain process design features along with the reassignment of some responsibilities might not lighten the load on the Chairs and improve the overall experience for organizers, participants and observers alike.

In the next two chapters, we will address this question. In chapter three we will review the strengths of the CSD dialogues as well as point out areas for improvement. This analysis will be based on additional observations on key aspects of the process, such as major group representation and activities attributable as follow-up to the dialogues, as well as some detailed text and dialogue analysis. In chapter four, finally, we will make specific recommendations that organizers and major groups might entertain to strengthen a process that has made big strides already and can progress still further. Before we move on, however, we review participant reflections on the impacts of the CSD multistakeholder dialogues.

## Dialogue Impacts

The main complaint that many voice with respect to both the CSD as a whole, and the multi-stakeholder dialogues in particular, is that they fail to produce tangible results. Perhaps paradoxically, the overall positive energy of the dialogues themselves contributes to a sense of frustration about their perceived lack of concrete outcomes. Expectations are raised, only to be largely disappointed by a lack of consistent follow-up. As one survey respondent commented:

**“There was ... enormous enthusiasm, which in the end was dashed as there was no lasting sense of achievement...”**

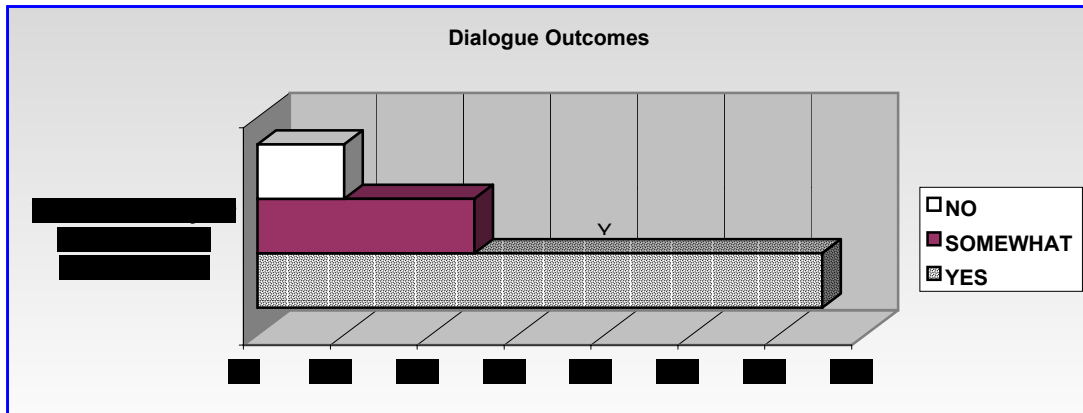
While it appears true that the record is mixed on this score, it also is richer than may be apparent at first sight. In this study, we assess the claim of inefficiency in goal attainment by reviewing two kinds of outcomes that the CSD dialogues have generated. These are: (i) the collateral benefits that various participants ascribe to the dialogues; and (ii) the concrete follow-up activities that have emerged from the dialogue process.

The first category of impacts is based on self-reporting by participants; they are experiences and impressions that they have related in interviews and through the survey instrument and are therefore presented here as part of our representation of participant and observer perspectives. The second category is more closely related to institutional change involving the CSD and the rest of the United Nations system. We will deal with these activities separately in our overall assessment chapter.

## Perceptual and Practical Changes

Some of the changes triggered by the CSD dialogues happened so incrementally that they may be imperceptible to the larger community of interest. A meeting of minds here, a

small breakthrough there, are neither necessarily widely broadcast nor systematically catalogued for easy consultation. Yet anecdotal evidence shows that these have direct and indirect impacts that should not be too easily dismissed.



These changes are both perceptual and concrete. They include above all a renewed commitment to sustainability by the major group members participating in the dialogue, as evidenced from the chart above.

The changes also include the familiarization with the other sectors that is the precondition for joint action. As one regular observer of the CSD reflected:

**“[The dialogues] give you an opportunity to be confronted by your prejudices...it often turns out that [other stakeholders] don’t get as much on your nerves as you thought they would.”**

Furthermore, the dialogues also serve an educative function with respect to participants’ potentialities in their own field of action. For example, the trade union coordinator pointed to specific instances of workers attending the CSD who negotiated green clauses on access to environmental information upon their return home. Some with analogous leadership function in other major group echo his words:

**“The CSD dialogues can be eye-opening, and ideological transformation ... people understand that there is a larger structure within which they work that allows them act as agents of change.”**

For some participants networking opportunities abound in alternative settings, but others find the dialogues useful to build credentials and capacity. Said one NGO coordinator:

**“The CSD is a nice practice arena. That is one of the lasting benefits of this exercise. Managerial capacities among NGOs, especially in the South, are not as developed [as elsewhere]. NGOs that didn’t have higher than local level experience got to come to this.”**

The collateral benefits of the CSD dialogues therefore include:

- Information sharing efforts, including the creation of new global or regional advocacy networks that take on a permanent life of their own;
- The honing of negotiating skills; and
- The leveraging of CSD-related institutional affiliations (e.g. with one of the caucuses that constituted, until its recent effective undoing, the NGO Steering Committee) and experience to gain legitimacy in other international fora.

# Assessing the Dialogue Processes and Outcomes

## Strengths and Areas for Improvement

### Efficiency and Evenhandedness as Guiding Principles

Multistakeholder dialogues can serve a number of possible functions and produce a number of possible outcomes. Not all of the components of the process can – or even should – be subject to deliberate engineering. Nonetheless, experience tells us that how inputs are channeled, and outputs put to use, can make a vast difference in terms of the two fundamental guiding principles driving dialogue design: *efficiency* and *evenhandedness*. Since these principles are the prisms through which we view the various components of the CSD multistakeholder dialogues, we briefly specify our use of the terminology:

#### Efficiency

Efficiency in this context has a twofold meaning:

1. Firstly, we follow the conventional reading that emphasizes the achievement of a particular goal with the least possible amount of resources. As we saw in the previous chapter, organizers, government delegates and major group representatives alike cite time and money as serious constraints on CSD dialogue-related activities. In the medium term, if people are not satisfied that their objectives can be efficiently met through those activities, they will fail to appear or retreat to alternative arenas, such as the Conferences of the Parties of the various sustainability-related treaties (e.g. UNFCCC) or the national-level playing field. Indeed, as we are writing this, a movement is afoot among the major groups to lobby for the modification of key aspects of the dialogues that do not currently meet their expectations.

Some of the large sustainability-related debates (e.g. transport) are dominated by other institutions such as the World Bank. But the United Nations continues to hold tremendous symbolic and practical value as a forum for engagement. It is therefore seen as a desirable venue for many non-state actors. More specifically, the CSD, while subject to its share of criticism, is appreciated for providing a space to deal with issues in a crosscutting fashion aimed at integrating the economic, environmental and social dimensions of

sustainable development. As one long-time CSD observer with a penchant for paradox put it:

**“The CSD is a regrettable failure that must be kept alive at all cost.”**

But in a policy universe with many different entry points and acute competing pressures, the CSD is not alone in staking a claim on participants’ attention and assets. Nor are dialogues necessarily an avenue of influence that all participants support. Much depends on realizing the full potential of the dialogues – a feat that in turn could help strengthen the institution pioneering them within the cautious world of international diplomacy.

2. Secondly, efficiency is a measure of the extent to which the outcome captures all possible joint gain. Here the key question is whether all plausible options were explored and all possible opportunities exploited. If potential “joint gains” are left “on the table” (or, more accurately, on the conference room floor) – that is, if information valuable to some stakeholders is left unstated by others, if partnerships that could have been fail to form, or if consensus eludes the group despite the compatibility of different interests – then benefits were not fully captured (in an efficient manner). Unlike the first type of efficiency, this has less to do with participants’ subjective strategic calculus or level of satisfaction than with a process design that discourages ritualistic restatements of positions and encourages trust-building and creative problem solving.

### **Evenhandedness**

Evenhandedness is analogous to the concept of “due process” in judicial proceedings. It refers to transparency and predictability of the proceedings and the preparatory stages that lead to them. It requires that all participants be given equal access to key information and opportunity to air their views. Inherent power and capacity differentials between groups will never be eradicated but well-specified rules of the game can minimize their impact on dialogue flow and outcomes.

As we proceed through the assessment, we will continue to make reference to the concepts of efficiency and evenhandedness as benchmark for performance. This chapter is divided into three broad sections: the first section covers structure and content of the written documents that are produced as inputs for, or outputs of, the CSD multistakeholder dialogues. The second section deals with the structure, facilitation and flow of the actual dialogues. The third is a review of the outcomes generated through the dialogue process.

## Tracing the Textual Trails

In an interview, a former high-level CSD official issued a stern warning against using the written outputs as a measure of effectiveness of the CSD process:

**“Never assess the CSD by its written outcome. What is important are the preparations: people undertake a lot of activity because of the meeting and there is a moment in the year when everything has to converge. If you did a careful analysis of the text you would see progress in terms of ideas. But the text of the decision is all coded language. The hope is that people involved understand that action-oriented initiatives are the potential outcomes.”**

The point speaks to our previous discussions of dialogue outcomes, where we took an all-encompassing approach to impact assessment. Still, at least within the confines of actual CSD meetings, the focus of government and civil society delegates remains very much on the text.

We, therefore, conducted an analysis of the intersections between the various documents produced by the different participants for and during the CSD sessions. The main objective of this analysis was to determine the degree of cross-fertilization and to highlight some of the shortcomings in process design that may currently stand in the way of a fuller integration between the intergovernmental and the civil society components of the CSD.

### **The Background Papers: Guidelines and Process**

As mentioned earlier, each major group prepares a background paper in consultation with other organizations in the same sector. The written product of this consultation – a 16-page paper that outlines the stakeholders’ concerns or thoughts on pre-selected topics – is available for review by others prior to the start of the CSD. While the CSD explicitly states that these papers are not position papers, stakeholders necessarily prioritize and focus on the themes most important to them.

Immediately after the dialogue, a Chair’s Summary is drafted. The Chair’s Summary gives an overview of areas of apparent agreement and priorities for action, highlights various points proffered by stakeholders and points to areas and possible mechanisms for further discussion. In some years, the stakeholders were actively encouraged to join forces and draft portions of this text; other times, their role was limited to a hurried review. The Chair’s Summary presumably draws to varying degrees on the background papers, and is entered into the official report of the CSD proceedings. Together with the Chair’s Summary of the High Level Segment, it is meant to serve as reference material for government delegates negotiating the final decisions.

Though characterized as “dialogue starters,” the background papers can and do serve different needs in different parts of the process: Prior to the dialogue, the drafting process can catalyze discussion within stakeholder organizations to help them identify, define, and clarify their own positions. Participants can go into the dialogues with a point of orientation for themselves and

a point of departure for others. In fact, just as some major group refer to U.N. documents prepared in connection with each CSD session, endorsing and denouncing specific paragraphs, so too, on occasion, do governments use the major groups' papers as the springboard for pointed questions:

**DR. MOSTAFA TOLBA, GOVERNMENT OF EGYPT (CSD-6): "I'm basing my intervention on the four background documents which were supposed to be the subject of our discussion this afternoon. They're very well written, I must admit, and I am just picking from these reports issues which I would like to see discussed and debated . . . I am looking at the paper by the NGOs, which the previous speaker eloquently introduced. One particular point that he raised was the principle that where there is a threat of significant reduction or loss of biological diversity, lack of full scientific evidence should not be used as a reason for postponing measures to avoid or minimize such a threat.**

**My question is posed to industry. Do you really believe in this principle all over the issue of the governance of the environment, apart from whether is it for biodiversity or not? And, if this principle is accepted, which I hope it is, why then was there this effort, prior to Kyoto, to establish a fund in order to avert any understanding that there is no scientific difference among the majority of scientists over the issue of climate change?**

At their best, then, participants do their homework and come prepared to present and answer challenges. Similarly, since the papers are available well in advance of the meeting, the Chair can use the information contained in these papers to structure the discussion. But, experience shows that such preparation should not be relied upon to happen automatically or to uncover fully all the important aspects of the debate. Specifically, more thorough analysis and clearer guidance provided by the organizers or independent facilitators agreed upon by all parties, could help focus the process and ensure that, by the end of the dialogues: (i) areas of potential consensus are captured; (ii) clarity exists on how to proceed on areas where there is disagreement; and (iii) clarity exists with respect to priorities for continued discussion or action.

### **Mapping the Textual Evolution**

The background papers are a wellspring of valuable information. The question is whether they could be structured to make more readily apparent the foundations that are common to several, or all. This would help crystallize the state of a debate on a particular topic, fashion the agenda for the dialogues, and highlight opportunities for moving together towards the concrete outcomes that participants are demanding.

We investigated two aspects related to the use of the written documentation as either inputs into, or products of, the CSD dialogues. These aspects are: (1) the type of information contained in the dialogue papers that could help shape the agenda of the dialogue discussions; and (2) the way that information, as well as interventions from the dialogues, are assimilated into the Chair's Summary, which is the main vehicle through which the major group discussions are communicated to governmental representatives.

As an experiment in textual examination, we analyzed two sets of CSD documents -- CSD-7 and CSD-9 -- to trace the evolution of key ideas from the stakeholders' dialogue

starters through to the final decisions arrived at by the Commission. We selected these two years based on anecdotal evidence indicating differences in:

- The degree of controversy surrounding the dialogue theme areas; and
- The degree of active involvement by the Chair in shepherding the stakeholders through the process, from the beginning (e.g. through personal meetings during the preparatory period) to the end (e.g. through insistent reminders during the intergovernmental drafting process of major group input and the recommendations).

CSD-7 had a very assertive Chairman dealing with a relatively new theme (sustainable tourism) around which battle lines had not yet formed. At CSD-9 a comparatively mild-mannered Chairman presided over a highly contentious debate on energy.

### **Building Consensus versus Building on Consensus: Identifying or Expanding on Strategies for Action**

#### An Analytical Framework for the Dialogue Process

Not every conversation can cover the same distance in the same amount of time. More or less energy may have to be expended depending on the starting point and the intended destination. We argue here that the starting point varies from CSD dialogue to CSD dialogue: in some the zone of possible agreement is much greater than in others.

If the overlap is great, the road towards actionable recommendations is shorter and less perilous. If parties are far apart, they will first need to agree on a destination, and an appropriate route before the common journey can begin. The art of process design in consensus building efforts is to tailor the available tools to the challenge faced. The first step is to “map” the concerns and outlook of the different parties to obtain a systematic overview of the situation. Such an analysis can be performed, in large part, based on the background papers provided by the major groups.

For this purpose, it is helpful to reclassify the points made in those papers according to the steps that constitute the logical progression of policy development. These steps are:

- (i) Problem Definition: What are we talking about?
- (ii) Policy Goals: What do we want to accomplish with respect to the problem we have identified?
- (iii) Situation Analysis: What are the impediments and elements of progress towards reaching these goals?
- (iv) Strategies and Recommendations: How do we make further progress, either by overcoming such impediments or through new avenues?
- (v) Implementation: Who needs to do what by when and how to ensure that such progress is made?

## The Framework Applied to the CSD Dialogues

In conducting this analysis, we mapped out the broad problem definition, situation analysis, policy goals, strategies and recommendations for action presented in each stakeholder's background paper, and compared these with each other, with the Chair's Summary of the Multistakeholder Dialogue and with the relevant final decisions.

We found that stakeholders' understanding of the nature of the problem and the current situation varies from topic to topic, depending on the complexity, definitions and availability of empirical data on the issue in question. For example, as we will detail below, stakeholders who attended CSD-7 arrived in New York with a much greater shared understanding of the definition of the problems of sustainable tourism than those who participated in the CSD-9 dialogue on sustainable energy.

In comparison to CSD-7, there was less initial overlap among the background papers prepared for CSD-9. Although ample evidence was presented about the type, degree and severity of the problems, stakeholders did not identify the same problems or prioritize the same topic for inclusion in their background papers. Stakeholders also manifested less initial agreement on recommended strategies for action and on which actors should undertake various strategies or actions. When offered, stakeholders' recommendations tended to be less specific.

In the paper written for CSD-9, the stakeholders' analysis of the problem also covers a broader range of themes than in the CSD-7 materials. Most stakeholders presented a longer list of problems and the problems spanned a wider array of social, economic, scientific, and organizational issues. The assorted definitions and descriptions of the problem suggest that, at the onset of CSD-9, stakeholders were not "on the same page" and that, to engage in productive discussion, a facilitator might have played a valuable role in establishing a focus for the dialogue beforehand.

### CSD-7: Starting from the Same Page

Beyond some basic guidelines provided by the CSD, stakeholders have a lot of leeway in devising their papers. Nonetheless, for CSD-7, stakeholders' papers generally followed a common format. They tend to start with a general definition of the problem and its causes. For each of the four themes, writers describe current approaches – at varying degrees of specificity, from broad policy instruments (e.g. "voluntary initiatives") to specific initiatives (e.g. the "Green Cities" program of the Local Authorities) – assessments of the effectiveness of those approaches, key demands (e.g. the Trade Union's "Just Transition") and recommendations of actions to be taken by different stakeholders.

The dialogue themes for CSD-7 were:

- **Industry Initiatives for Sustainable Tourism;**
- **Influencing Consumer Behavior to Promote Sustainable Tourism;**

- **Promoting Broad-based Sustainable Development through Tourism while Safeguarding the Integrity of Local Cultures and Protecting the Environment;**
- **Coastal Impacts of Tourism.**

Judging by the background papers, major groups expressed broad agreement in a whole range of areas, even before the start of the CSD:

1. The *general definition* of the problem to be solved: e.g. NGOs, Trade Union, and Local Authorities explicitly identified the resource intensive nature of tourism as a high priority.
2. *Policy objectives (goals)* to be pursued: e.g. NGOs argued that “all international tourism should be based in cultural respect” and Unions proffered the view that “soft tourism includes compatibility with all aspects of nature, human and animal health, social and traditional norms, economic patterns and goals, physical features of cultural and natural environment.” Industry outlined “the priority for future action should be to raise awareness among travelers of the issues associated with tourism and the impact their activities can have on local destinations and cultures.”
3. The *strategies* to reach those policy objectives: e.g. stakeholders offered common suggestions including:
  - **Education** – Various stakeholders described actual or potential initiatives to educate consumers such as workplace education, distribution of information at appropriate outlets (sales, entertainment, intercultural exchanges), and the use of in-flight videos; Stakeholders felt that educational activities through special groups such as workplace education, involvement of young people, communities, and consumer organizations would be effective in implementing selected strategies
  - **Certification and codes of conduct** – NGOS and Industry identified codes of conduct to influence consumer behavior and guide industry efforts (global code of ethics by WTO). Industry provides specific examples of codes from US, Pacific Asia, Africa, etc
  - **Eco-labeling and awards** – Industry and NGOs mentioned the use of monetary or non-monetary efforts to recognize and encourage consumers to reward good practices.
4. Some *tools* to implement those strategies: e.g.: stakeholders identified LA21 as an important and useful mechanisms for planning in their background papers.
5. Which *actors* would be most appropriate to implement these strategies: e.g. various stakeholders, including Local Authorities, emphasized the role of local government in assessing local carrying capacity and facilitating planning to support sustainable tourism. NGOs and Industry both highlighted the role of NGOs in carrying out communication and education activities.

The high degree of concurrence on these several dimensions suggests that sustainable tourism was a theme on which the focus of discussion could have shifted very quickly to implementation. Indeed, that was the area in which differences surfaced among the major groups.

For example, some groups did have concerns about how Local Agenda 21 was being implemented. Unions emphasized that LA21 depended on working conditions in industry, and without improvement in conditions, the process would be threatened. Local authorities were concerned that NGOs, Industry and local government organizations needed to act as a catalyst for dialogue where the LA21 forums were weak.

#### CSD-9: The Leap to the Chairman's Summary

An analysis of the multi-stakeholder dialogue for CSD-9 using the stakeholder discussion papers and their relation to the Chairman's Summary presents a more complex picture.

The dialogue themes for CSD-9 were:

- **Achieving Equitable Access to Sustainable Energy;**
- **Sustainable Choices for Producing, Distributing and Consuming Energy;**
- **Public-Private Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Energy for Transport;**
- **Sustainable Transport Planning: Choices and Models for Human Settlements Designs and Vehicle Alternatives.**

Though positions were far more divergent than at CSD-7, the background papers do provide some common elements and share agreement on several policy recommendations. These include removal of unsustainable energy subsidies, incorporation of land-use planning in transportation infrastructure decisions, capacity building at the local levels worldwide, and changing the modal composition of the transportation sector.<sup>17</sup>

As noted in Chapter 2, however, such potential areas of agreement were not further fleshed out in a way that could have provided a basis for agenda setting at CSD-9. Had the organizers and/or the major groups engaged in such an effort, they could have made a more conscious choice of whether, in the relatively short face-to-face time available, they wanted to focus on producing agreement on actionable recommendations or air contrasting perspectives on issues of great controversy, such as nuclear energy. Both are valid and valuable exercises, but they serve different ends and bring with them different outcomes.

The analysis here goes a step further, focusing on the content of the Chairman's Summary of the Multistakeholder Dialogue, which is the main immediate outcome of the sessions and is meant to be used as reference material during the intergovernmental negotiations. First, we are concerned with whether the Chairman's summary is fair and

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<sup>17</sup> A detailed comparison of the stakeholder discussion papers is not done here. Such an analysis was done by the Wuppertal Institute (Wolters et al, 2001). The interested reader is referred to their work.

equitable in representing the stakeholders' positions. This is followed by a discussion of the structure of the Chairman's Summary with reference to the analytical framework we have provided above.

***Fairness***

The number of times a reference is made to a major groups' assertion or recommendation in the Chairman's Summary is quantified below. A comparison of this number provides us with a simple measure of fairness, and answers the question:

- *Did the Chairman give equal voice to the different stakeholder groups?*

The numbers of citations per stakeholder group in Chairman's Summary, CSD-9 (excluding recommendation/proposal sections) are reflected in the table below:

<b>Stakeholder group</b>	<b>Theme I</b>	<b>Theme II</b>	<b>Theme III</b>	<b>Theme IV</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>Business/ Industry</b>	7	7	6	4	24
<b>Scientists</b>	4	8	6	8	26
<b>Workers/ Unions</b>	5	2	6	8	21
<b>Local authorities</b>	3	5	4	4	16
<b>NGOs</b>	7	8	6	8	29

The table indicates that the Chairman was successful in giving equitable coverage to the views and recommendations presented by the different major groups. It should also be noted that there is a wide distribution in the frequency of citations, with unions and local governments referenced less than other major groups. One plausible explanation for this trend is that the most cited major groups (business/industry, scientists, NGOs) tend to have a more diverse constituency and hence may need to present a larger range of perspectives.

***The Analytical Framework Applied***

Additionally, we categorized each attribution to a major group in the Chairman's Summary along the lines of the staged policy process framework outlined above (problem identification and analysis of the situation → policy goals → strategies and recommendations). Such a classification helps in determining how each major group framed the Theme and which aspects it chose to emphasize.

Finally, we performed a content analysis of each occurrence of a reference to a stakeholder's assertion or recommendation in the Chairman's Summary (for details, see Appendix 2). We determined whether such statements were already explicitly present in the relevant major group's discussion paper. Absence of a statement from the discussion paper indicates that the particular attribution resulted from the dialogue itself, i.e. that it arose during the discussion. This provides a rough measure of whether, ultimately, the

dialogues primarily reflect the previously elaborated perspectives or whether they give rise to new ideas and in effect build on the papers.

The results of these two analyses are reported in the table below:

<b>Stakeholder Group</b>	<b>Policy goals</b>	<b>Problem identification &amp; analysis of situation</b>	<b>Strategies &amp; recommendations</b>	<b>Directly attributable to discussion paper</b>	<b>Other origins (Dialogue)</b>
<u>Business Industry</u>	6	12	19	21	16
<b>Scientists</b>	7	17	14	27	21
<b>Workers/ Unions</b>	6	13	16	17	18
<b>Local authorities</b>	4	9	17	18	12
<b>NGOs</b>	8	16	19	25	18

The analysis yields a number of conclusions:

First, all stakeholders (except, not coincidentally, the scientists) focused more on strategies and recommendations than on earlier pieces of the policy puzzle. Since the bulk of the final decisions are also typically framed as recommendations, this emphasis is appropriate given the aspiration of many non-state participants to obtain a reference in the final intergovernmental text. On the other hand, it may indicate a drop in the quality of the actual dialogue discussion if participants tend to take a “positional bargaining” stance, harping on their prescriptions without elaborating on the concerns and interests behind those prescriptions (i.e. the assumptions, interpretations and goals that shape the recommendations put forth).

Second, about half to a third of the points included in the Chairman’s Summary were not explicitly covered in the discussion papers submitted by the stakeholders. (This is not to say that these new points are inconsistent with the papers). While one might argue that the discussion therefore was a lively one, bringing participants into territory they had not entered before, some evidence could point in a different direction.

In many cases, controversial views and recommendations not contained in the background papers found their way into the Chairman’s Summary. From this we deduce that these points were introduced during the dialogue itself. One striking example is the NGO call for a moratorium on oil exploration. Another example is industry’s claim that nuclear energy is a low-impact and reliable source of energy. A third is the local authorities’ assertion that it is technologically and economically feasible to increase efficiency and meet all needs without increasing energy production.

The sudden emergence of such claims during the dialogue may obviate the chance for fellow participants, who may disagree with them, to develop a measured response. The danger is not only that the debate may become more antagonistic but also that it may slip into a kind of “he said-she said” exchanges of blanket praise or condemnation for a certain strategy (e.g. nuclear), with each side asserting, rather than explaining and substantiating, their positions.

Overall, the Chairman’s Summary is evenhanded in contrasting positions of stakeholder groups on different issues. Almost every numbered paragraph in the summary provides either a synopsis of a stakeholder view on the discussion themes of the four sessions or a comparative listing of contrasting views on a sub-theme or point of discussion.

Still, the recommendations appear to ignore certain categories of issues such as workplace concerns or issues of “just transition” brought to the table by the workers and trade unions. Furthermore, with respect to the transport portion of CSD-9, the one element identified by the NGO coordinator as a consensus position among major groups – the phase out of lead fuels – finds no mention in the Chairman’s Summary. Thus the process of selecting recommendations for inclusion in the Chairman’s Summary is not entirely clear.

While the comparisons laid out in the Chairman’s Summary are useful in getting some sense of the agreements and disagreements among the stakeholders, it is not apparent which of the listed issues are considered by the major groups to be the more important ones. The final result, therefore, is a long list of observations, akin to a map with all the place names, and only a few marked roads or highways – comprehensive but difficult to use. Breaking down the points in terms of high priority, medium priority and low priority might increase the utility of the document and hence the efficiency of the overall process.

One final issue to be noted relates back to topic formulation, an issue that we will return to again below in the context of CSD-6 and CSD-7. We find substantial drift and intermingling between the topic areas in the Chairman’s Summary of the Multistakeholder Dialogue at CSD-9. For example, points made by the NGOs in Theme I, and reflected in the Chairman’s Summary, refer to the unsustainable nature of fossil fuels, nuclear waste and hydropower. The same issues are then repeated in his Summary under Theme II.

Theme III (public-private partnerships) covered a host of issue areas (transportation modes, fuel needs and options, technological solutions to mobility, etc.). Assumed in the topic framing is the specific relevance of public-private partnerships as a strategy to achieve progress in these areas, as distinct from alternative requirements for promoting sustainable transport, such as regulations and market mechanisms. The latter did not go unmentioned but were, by implication, subalternate to the public-private partnership approach.

It is necessary for practical purposes to set boundaries around the themes of the dialogue sessions; boundaries focus the discussion as well as limiting it. And an emphasis on

mechanisms for implementation, such as private-public partnerships, seems entirely appropriate for a forum such as the CSD that strives to catalyze action.

The question though is how far one can proceed down the chain of the policy process (problem identification and analysis of the situation → policy goals → strategies and recommendations → implementation) without prejudgments that will polarize or scatter the debate. It is important to point out that this tension is not unique to the CSD multistakeholder dialogues; it infuses the whole of the sustainable development discussion, which often appears to compensate for the lack of vision by offering the broadest of generalities or focusing on narrow fields of expertise.

### CSD-9: The Leap to the Final Decision

In the end, the multistakeholder dialogues are geared towards informing the intergovernmental negotiations of the CSD. To try to assess how far they succeed in this area, we overlaid the Chairman's Summary of the Multistakeholder Dialogue and the text of Decision 9/1 on Energy and Sustainable Development (both reported in E/2001/29; E/CN.17/2001/19).

Several observations emerged from this analysis (for details, see Appendix 3):

First, the governmental text identified poverty eradication as the number one goal. In the Chairman's Summary the only direct reference related to that goal is an expression by industry of the "need to overcome energy poverty," and only one strategy is offered by the stakeholders to achieve that goal, namely decentralization. Similarly – and logically derived from the identification of poverty eradication as a priority – the Decision contains an elaborate sub-section on rural energy whereas the major group commentary on this aspect is sparse (essentially limited to the scientists' stressing biomass as the primary source of energy for rural populations). Conversely, an area that garnered some attention by the major groups – the issue of large-scale hydropower – finds no corresponding mention in the Decision. We thus find some differences in overall focus of the two groups.

Perhaps even more striking is that a series of assertions or recommendations that the major groups appeared to have put forth with a certain measure of emphasis (as indicated by repeat-mentions in the Chairman's Summary or by apparent agreement among most or all of the stakeholders) and that fit within theme areas central to the governments' considerations, were not reflected in the decision. Among these are:

- The importance of the public sector in ensuring equitable access to energy;
- The promotion of energy efficiency through national standards and regulations to stimulate sustainable energy use; and
- The shift of subsidies from fossil fuels to renewables.

By contrast, areas of overlap can be observed with respect to the following:

- Support for decentralization to help the poor;
- The phasing out of harmful subsidies;
- Access to economically and environmentally viable technologies;
- The need for measures to promote the development, utilization, and dissemination of technologies;
- The notion that fossil fuels will remain dominant in the fuel mix in the foreseeable future; and
- The concerns for high levels of safety in the use of nuclear technology and the development of technological solutions for waste.

It appears, therefore, that the commonalities between major groups and governments as reflected in the respective texts were to be found particularly around technology-related questions. Recommendations pertaining to more sensitive areas were not carried over at all, or not in their original form, despite apparent endorsement from all civil society groups.

The reasons for this pattern could be at least two-fold: on the one hand, political realities inevitably limit the acceptability of certain ideas or specific formulations; on the other hand, the organization and presentation of the information to government representatives may not be sufficiently succinct and clear to permit easy transmission of major group suggestions.

The former is a challenge that no process design changes can meet. Episodes of political maneuvering, such as the alleged refusal by one Bureau member charged with distributing the Chairman's Summary to do so in a timely manner, will always occur. Indeed, while a study such as this one presupposes that "process matters" – that is, that outcomes are not solely a function of fixed political dynamics and power relations, but that they are shaped by the consultation mechanisms through which they are produced<sup>18</sup> -- it is also necessary to acknowledge the limits of its reach.

The second challenge may be more manageable; for example, reconfiguring the structure of the Chairman's Summary may go some way towards alleviating obstacles to incorporation in government deliberations and decisions of recommendations emerging from the multistakeholder dialogues.

### Summary

In summary, the analysis of a selected series of texts relating to CSD proceedings yields the following conclusions:

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<sup>18</sup> To use the language of public choice theory, which theorizes the political process as a complex, competitive game, the external environment has an important role in determining both preference functions and choice sets, but they are not wholly determinative. Most simply put, in Robert Putnam's words, "*changing formal institutions can change political practice*" (emphasis in the original), in Putnam, Robert D. *et. al. Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. (1993), p. 184.

- The dialogue starter papers written by the major groups in preparation for the CSD session contain a wealth of information about the stakeholders' concerns and recommendations. As we have seen in the previous chapter, major group coordinators and their colleagues expend a tremendous amount of effort in producing these papers. What is currently missing from the process is a systematic analysis that could help shape and focus the agenda of the actual dialogues by identifying areas of agreement and disagreement and by prioritizing issue areas and concerns. Such an analysis could help make the process more efficient by capitalizing on pre-existing concurrence on certain problem definitions, strategies and courses of action. Where such concurrence is absent, the dialogue could help create the basis for agreement by elaborating on the motives, rationales or interests that lie behind the contrasting views.
- The Chairman's Summary, as measured by CSD-9, is by and large an accurate and fair reflection of the discussion points proffered by the stakeholders (during CSD-9 the challenge of being evenhanded in the representation of major group views was particularly difficult because of the controversial nature of the subject and the opposing views of the parties). However, the Chairman's Summary also suffers from a lack of structure and prioritization, which may reduce the receptivity of government representatives to feedback from the major groups.
- The final governmental text, again as measured by CSD-9, reflects the recommendations of the stakeholders only to a limited degree (though the Decisions are written in generalities that may be considered to subsume some of the more specific suggestions from the stakeholders). The limited uptake appears to reflect the difficulties major groups face in permeating the intergovernmental deliberations. These difficulties are likely to partly derive from political obstacles, both substantive (i.e. a difference in general focus or in opinion on a particular issue) and procedural (i.e. the emphasis on the output of the dialogues that government delegates place in their deliberations heavily depends on how much the Chair promotes the civil society component of the CSD session).
- Finally, it appears that during the multi-stakeholder dialogues, issues that were not covered in the background papers often arise. Where it indicates that major groups are moving the discussion above and beyond their prior frames of reference or lines of demarcation, such a trend shows a very efficient use of the dialogue space. Where, on the other hand, it indicates that participants are taken by surprise, such a trend can lead to a retreat to the restatement of well-worn positions. This reaction is typical when participants cannot respond to challenges adequately either because of lack of prior internal consultation within their stakeholder groups on a subject or because of the absence of representatives able to address the point. In the next section, we find examples

of both of these: of the former with respect to CSD-7, where stakeholders advanced the discussion in a fruitful way; and of the latter with respect to CSD-6, where small and medium enterprises in developing countries became one central focus of the debate whereas the industry delegation was dominated by major transnational corporations and industry associations.

## The Call for “Real” Dialogue

### Beyond The Established Routine

Multi-stakeholder dialogues are a relatively recent innovation in the CSD. Yet many agree with a statement by a Secretariat member to the effect that:

“They have too quickly solidified into a routine.”

The dialogues, almost all agree, aren’t alive enough. A range of factors contributes to this assessment, including:

- The geography of the meeting rooms, where delegates are divided by stakeholder group in debating-society fashion;
- The timing of the dialogues, which are often concurrent with other meetings, many informal consultations among government delegates focusing on the “real” negotiation;
- The facilitation style, which can be cumbersome and lacking in focus;
- The unwieldiness of a large group getting ever-larger as more of the nine major groups officially designated in Agenda 21 take a place at the table (at CSD-6, three of the major groups were represented; and CSD-10, the Preparatory Committee for WSSD, all nine major groups participate in the dialogue activities).

None of these factors appear to be the result of lack of awareness on the part of the organizers. Choices are made to satisfy legitimate demands (such as full representation) and institutional imperatives (such as respecting lines of authority and negotiating complex matters under tight deadlines). Some of these requirements are inherently contradictory and stand in the way of producing dialogues with the level of creativity and dynamism that many would like to see.

Some trade-offs, therefore, will no doubt remain a necessary part of the dialogue exercises. One aspect that could benefit from improvement without encountering much opposition, though, might be what is currently a lack of clear definition of the dialogue themes. Participants, as we will see below, often speak in shifting categories without a coherent structure to guide them. It is to these elements, Theme definition and dialogue flow, that we turn next.

## **Establishing a Baseline**

Investing more up-front could potentially produce better returns from the dialogues. For example, some groundwork creating “minimum common language,” as the Chair of CSD-8, Juan Mayr Maldonado, described it, might obviate the need for clarifications during the sessions about differences in the groups’ perceptions of the theme under discussion.

That is not to say that the process should impose a uniformity of views on the stakeholders, nor that every angle should be classified before the fact. However, license to interpret terminology as each group wishes, creates unnecessary confusion unless key assumptions underlying each group’s usage are made explicit.

Repeatedly, during the dialogues, basic definitional questions surface that should have been fleshed out during the preparatory stage. Sometimes, these are presented with a provocative undertone as was the following statement addressed from the NGOs to Business and Industry during CSD-8, and sometimes they are less rhetorical in nature:

**“It seems to us that everything that you put forward in a business-as-usual approach to agriculture you are also putting forward, with no modification, for the best practices under “sustainable agriculture” – to us the terms mean different things; we do not understand your usage, so we ask you for a definition.”**

Words are sometimes weapons; they are always instruments of cognition and compromise. It is, therefore, not surprising that negotiators stumble over the definitional dimensions of the sustainability challenge. When the major groups have done their homework and are ahead of the curve, it is useful to highlight what they have already worked out both because: (1) it helps advance the discussion among major groups and among governments beyond what might otherwise be achieved; and (2) it can help overcome impasses faced by national representatives in their deliberations.

Dynamics surrounding the CSD-7 discussions on tourism, the first such assembly that tackled this subject within the UN system, illustrates this point.

During the preparatory meeting held by the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group on Consumption and Production Patterns and on Tourism in February 1999, government delegates struggled over the meaning and implications of “sustainable tourism.” The Co-Chairmen’s Summary reflects the convoluted nature of that debate:

**“There was an attempt by many delegations to define sustainable tourism. One delegation suggested that sustainable tourism is, inter alia, development which ‘ ... meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunity for the future.’ Other delegations suggested that ‘sustainable tourism must seek a balance between (a) economic benefit and investment; (b) social participation, including local communities, with direct earnings and seeking preservation and consolidation of its cultural values and traditions; (c) conservation and protection of environment and biological diversity, taking into account regulations that allow an appropriate management of habitats and the introduction of education and dissemination of information to promote an environmental consciousness among the local population and visitors.’ ”**

The impossibility of converging on a commonly accepted definition of “sustainable tourism” led to a request by the G77/China to delete from the text a reference to the development of indicators. The final decision does mention indicators but only in the most general of terms (i.e. inviting governments, major groups and the UN system “to develop core indicators for sustainable tourism development . . .”). The related notion of “carrying capacity” does not appear in the final decision.

The governments therefore did not move beyond the identification of a need. By contrast, already in their background papers, NGOs and industry – the two traditionally most divergent groups – explicitly call for the elaboration of indicators; similarly, NGOs, industry and trade unions make repeated reference to “carrying capacity” as a key element of participatory planning. The Chair was able to use these commonalities in the written documents as a departure point for the discussion on what he called “unfinished business and the division of labor” – a discussion that was several degrees removed from the mere acknowledgement of a gap:

**CHAIRMAN SIMON UPTON:** “One of the things only money can buy is baseline information against which we can link progress...This seems to be one of the issues for developing countries, to know what the carrying capacity is. It's hard to know in advance; it's a costly technical business. The link in my mind is this: one of the themes from the papers is the idea of benchmarking . . . information must be generated and used by all players. We should tease out what needs to be done by business and other stakeholders to improve the quality of information on indicators. I am interested in things that are NOT happening, where the CSD needs your guidance on. What further cooperation is needed? What might be a workable set of indicators and who should be doing what?”

In response, a spirited dialogue ensued that showcased existing efforts at measuring environmental performance, cited concrete concerns (e.g. disposal on Small Island States of tourism-related packaging materials with toxic content), highlighted the need for regional and local contextualization, emphasized non-economic parameters such as social justice and community values, and questioned dominant economic growth paradigms. This nuanced treatment was made possible through a careful reading of the background papers. Without such preparation on the part of the Chair, opportunities may be missed because the dialogues are pitched at an inappropriate level.

The fact that none of the richness of the major groups’ discussion on indicators and carrying capacity carried over to the governmental debate may signal transmission failures in the system. While many issues are on the table in any given year, and obviously not all can be treated with sustained attention, it would be important to ensure that elaborations on points of interest to government delegates do not get lost in the shuffle.

### **Complementarity and Coherence**

The dialogues are meant to act as a vehicle for increasing the menu of policy options and introducing innovative ideas. By design, then, the dialogues are destined to enter either hot or uncharted waters. The key question that arises with regards to such a scenario is that of complementarity:

- *Do the dialogues amplify the intergovernmental debate and illuminate particular aspects of it?*

Even if a piece fits into a puzzle, it must be sufficiently well polished to leave its mark on the overall picture. The key question that arises in this regard is that of coherence:

- *Are the dialogue exchanges adequately structured to permit coherent messages to emerge?*

### **The Dialogues as a Microcosm of the Larger CSD**

In a diplomatic variation on the Russian doll motif – wrapping a smaller sample of a specimen into a bigger one – the multi-stakeholder dialogue is, with respect to complementarity, to the CSD as the CSD is to the larger landscape of international negotiations.

There are ongoing questions about how comfortably one fits into the other and about the value added (to the whole) by trying to fit the parts together. Some would argue about the CSD just what the Secretariat argues about multistakeholder dialogues: that it should help break existing logjams and open new vistas. See, for example, the following commentary excerpted from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*<sup>19</sup> reporting on the Inter-sessional Working Group Meeting on the finance and trade clusters at CSD-8:

“The challenge for participants . . . was a familiar one for the CSD: how to make a valuable contribution to an important debate for which the centers of gravity lie elsewhere . . . The important question for some members of the G-77/CHINA is . . . the opportunity the CSD presents to raise issues that other forums have failed to resolve. According to a senior delegate from Nigeria: ‘If the issue comes up here it reflects a lack of progress elsewhere. Our role is to sensitize these other organizations and let them know what is expected.’”

If the roles are analogous, so perhaps is the metric by which they should be assessed. Continued *ENB*:

“From this perspective, it is important not to judge the Inter-sessional outputs too harshly; rather, one should take a longer, more nuanced look at the gradual shifts in the consensus language that frames discussions on long standing issues within the U.N..”

Of course, this interpretation is only part of the story, since member countries do not shy away from pointing out limitations on the CSD’s purview when it is convenient for them to do so. Furthermore, issues relating to the lack of legal power wielded by the CSD compared to other international fora, and to the typical absence at CSD of ministers of trade and finance, render problematical the melding of economic, environmental and

<sup>19</sup> *ENB*, Vol.5, No. 137 (28 February 2000), p. 6.

social interests into a coherent, integrated international policy framework for sustainable development. Still, for our purposes, the pertinent questions are whether the multistakeholder dialogues do indeed fill in, and round out, the interstices in the CSD proceedings and whether, over time, concepts or language originating with stakeholders join the mainstream.

The latter is difficult to measure in this context, since incremental change in an institution that, as one CSD Secretariat member said, “grows like oak trees, not like mushrooms,” materializes over time horizons longer than the four-year period under examination. Arguably, we are still establishing the procedural preconditions for real substantive input on the part of major groups. In fact, the increased acceptance of major groups as legitimate actors in the U.N. system is in itself an outcome of the CSD dialogues, and while it may not on the face of it appear revolutionary to some -- and indeed a few stakeholders are showing signs of incomprehension if not outright impatience for the slow pace – it nonetheless is significant when one considers the real legal obstacles and political resistance to non-state actor involvement.

The question of whether the dialogues touch on novel and thorny themes can be assessed by a comparison of the agendas of the governmental and non-governmental discussion. We recall that the central queries are:

- Whether these two sets of discussions overlap in terms of the breadth and depth of the themes treated. We call this the *complementarity* question.
- Whether the actual flow of the dialogue follows the predetermined thematic categories. We call this the *coherence* question.

With respect to the first, we will focus on CSD-8, where the theme was agriculture and the field was wide open to original and radical opinions. With respect to the second, we will focus on CSD-6, the only year in which the themes were more highly specified (through sub-headings) and hence the expectation for a focused dialogue might have been highest. (CSD-7 and CSD-9 were dealt with in significant detail above under the rubric of textual analysis).

### **Comparison between Governmental and Major Groups Agendas: Complementarities at CSD-8**

CSD-8 dealt with the acrimonious agenda of trade and investment, integrated planning and management of land resources and sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD). It, therefore, was particularly ripe for multistakeholder contributions to help build new bridges across old chasms. And, indeed, the themes, though dressed up in neutral colors, brought the major groups square into the heart of some of the toughest debates. These themes were:

- **Choices in agricultural production techniques, consumption patterns and safety regulations:** potentials and threats to sustainable agriculture.

- **Best practices in land resources management to achieve sustainable food systems/cycles.**
- **Knowledge for a sustainable food system:** identifying and providing for education, training, knowledge-sharing and information needs.
- **Globalization, trade liberalization and investment patterns:** economic incentives and framework conditions to promote sustainable agriculture.

To appraise the extent of overlap among the topics dealt with in the intergovernmental negotiating sessions and the multistakeholder dialogue, we constructed the table below, which indicates the relative prominence allocated to the different topics in the respective policy arenas.

The number of check marks – ranging from none to three – indicates the degree of emphasis placed on the issue (none does not necessarily represent a complete absence of discussion; it also includes comparatively few or muted references). The capitalized issues signal a high level of controversy among government representatives (as indicated by the need, during the discussions, to break off into contact groups and hold other types of informal consultations). The issues in italics signal a high level of controversy among major groups. The double-underlining signals both.

This is not meant to be a comprehensive or mathematically precise rendering of these two debates. On the major group side, it is based on content analysis of the three dialogue sessions that were available on videotape for 2000 and on a review of the background papers; on the intergovernmental side it is based on reports of the negotiation progress and dynamics by the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* as well as reports that emerged from the work of the *Ad Hoc* Inter-sessional Working Group on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources & Agriculture and the CSD’s Decision 8/4 on Agriculture.

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Intergovernmental sessions</b>	<b>MSH dialogues</b>
<b>MULTIFUNCTIONAL CHARACTER OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND</b>	√√√	√√
<b>EQUAL ACCESS TO LAND AND SECURITY OF TENURE</b>	√√	√√√
<b><u>BIOTECHNOLOGY AND GENETIC RESOURCES</u></b>	√√√	√√√
“Food safety”	√√√	—
<i>Models of Agri. Dev.: productivity, distributional, and environmental effects of different farming practices</i>	—	√√√
<b>Desertification</b>	√√	—
<b>Role and rigor of scientific research, including shifts in funding priorities</b>	—	√√√
<b>Financing for SARD: domestic vs. international sources</b>	√√	—

Issue	Intergovernmental sessions	MSH dialogues
TRADE LIBERALIZATION AND SUBSIDIES	√√√	√√√
Social dimensions of sustainable agriculture and rural development	—	√√
Farmers and Indigenous People's rights, including seed ownership and "prior informed consent"	—	√√√

We can generate several general findings from this table.

Topics of Contention in the Intergovernmental Negotiations:

The dialogues during CSD-8 focused to a significant degree on issues that were already contentious in the intergovernmental arena. While in general there is not a one-to-one correlation between the two conversations – with governments devoting substantial energies to issues such as desertification, that were not on the stakeholders’ radar screen – the hot-button areas, from subsidies to security of tenure, drew attention from all sides. In fact, with regard to the multifunctionality debate, one could argue that the dialogues became yet another platform for governments to air their differences.

During the fourth session, when the multifunctionality of agriculture was discussed, government representatives made thirty percent of all interventions.<sup>20</sup> While there are indications of government colonization of civil society space on this issue, some disturbances emanated from the stakeholder camp apparently threatening to rock the intergovernmental boat. A close observer of the CSD-8 process tells the story of a major group’s reference to a troubled conference that took place in the Netherlands several months before the CSD:

“The [major group’s background] paper was ready earlier than the Secretary-General’s, it could have been confused with it. They were supporting their multifunctionality argument in outrageously misleading language and quoting conference proceedings that they claimed had been adopted. That was not true; it was in the draft but was in the end not endorsed. If some governments thought this was [the CSD’s], they would have ripped it up. In the end it wasn’t a problem because governments didn’t read the documents. They just get too many reports to read them all.”

Some information vetting procedure may need to be considered when dealing with subjects of great controversy. The line between caution and censorship can be a fine one, and CSD leadership and staff would need to use a great deal of circumspection in the design and implementation of groundrules governing such a procedure. We will pick up this discussion in Chapter 4.

<sup>20</sup> This data is taken from Howell, Megan, forthcoming PhD thesis, Working Title: "Talking Our Way into Sustainable Development: An Analysis of the UN CSD Multi-Stakeholder Dialogues"; University of Auckland, New Zealand.

### Topics of Contention Among Major Groups

To return to our table above, the second observation that can be made is that major groups bring into the discussion frictions as well as friendly advice. These may well enrich the debate, but they also complicate it. During CSD-8, stakeholders spent time mulling over fundamentals, spelling out elements of starkly contrasting visions of future agricultural development. This conversation brought to the surface the rifts underlying this debate. It also starkly revealed that if parties start from opposing first principles in the sustainability debate, they are likely to arrive at very different recommendations.

Interestingly enough, the governmental text became softer rather than more nuanced or comprehensive on the subject of alternative models of agricultural practice. While the inter-sessional document affirmed that “organic farming also contributes to SARD and should be promoted, when appropriate,” (Report of the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources; and on Agriculture, E/CN.17/2000/11, para.71), the final decision is devoid of any reference to organic farming. Indeed, it is not mentioned in the corresponding final paragraph despite the fact that it features prominently, with three separate references, in the Chairman’s Summary of the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue on Agriculture.

Of course, the multistakeholder dialogue is only one of several streams that conjoin to inform intergovernmental negotiations (in fact, some would say that it is akin to a rivulet competing with more potent tributaries). A connection between the dynamics in the dialogues and the toning down of the CSD’s decisions could only be conclusively established through a reconstruction of the formal and informal governmental talks surrounding this issue, something that is practically impossible to achieve. Nonetheless, if there was some carry-over along the lines hypothesized here, controversy among major groups could actually push governments toward a greater, rather than lesser, level of generality of language, at least in some instances.

### Additions from Major Groups

The third observation that can be derived from the table above is that major groups do provide perspectives that expand the intergovernmental debate. With respect to biotechnology, for example, the stakeholders frequently invoked “science” as the arbiter between proponents and opponents. A significant portion of the dialogues, thus, became a tug of war over, as one industry participant termed them in what was probably the understatement of that year’s CSD session, “a few simple facts.”

This emphasis on science was carried over into the governmental decision in a way that picked up on the language used by industry. The draft intergovernmental text was modified from “governments are encouraged to cautiously explore the potential of appropriate and safe biotechnology for enhancing food security ...based on the precautionary principle...” (Report of the Inter-sessional Ad Hoc Working Group on Integrated Planning and Management of Land Resources; and on Agriculture, E/CN.17/2000/11, para.88) to “governments are encouraged to explore, using *transparent*

*science-based risk assessment procedures ...applying the precautionary principle ... the potential of appropriate and safe biotechnology...*” (Decision 8/4, para.24). Similarly, the demand from NGOs for more research on sustainable agricultural approaches found a (somewhat muted) echo in paragraph 38, which encouraged FAO to “...develop a cross-sectoral programme on organic agriculture as part of its contribution to SARD.” Another example is the separate mention of “agricultural workers” in paragraph 10, as strongly urged by the labor unions.<sup>21</sup>

By and large, then, the dialogue themes have given rise to the kinds of discussions that the Secretariat sought to engender. Importantly, the most productive, in terms of incorporation into the governmental negotiations, appear to be suggestions that fall into the category of new ideas.

This subsection addressed the question of whether the dialogues themes trigger the “right” kind of exchange. At least as evidenced by the patterns of CSD-8, the answer appears to be affirmative. The next sections will deal with the question of whether those exchanges proceed in an efficient manner.

### **Coherence and Flow of the Dialogue at CSD-6**

In the previous chapter, we saw that, according to our survey, a large majority of civil society delegates did not think that the Chairman of CSD-6 encouraged frank and open exchange during the dialogues. To try to uncover the reasons for this apparent dissatisfaction, we took a closer look at the dynamics of the CSD-6 dialogues. That year (1998) was the only one where subheadings were provided as additional guides. On the other hand, it was also the first time the dialogues were held in their current form, so that our analysis may be tracking the novelty of the exercise more than a general finding.

During CSD-6, the first three sessions, which were those dealing with cross-cutting issues, were titled as follows:

- **Responsible Entrepreneurship** (subheadings include voluntary initiatives/codes, partnerships, regulatory framework and reporting)
- **Corporate Management Tools** (subheadings include workplace conditions, environmental management systems/ISO 14000, training, social assessment)
- **Technology Cooperation and Assessment** (subheadings include impact of new technologies, technology choices, capacity building)

Our analysis of a transcription of these sessions reveals that these headings did not particularly help direct or discipline the discussions. A series of topics emerged as dominant, permeating every one of the sessions, and subverting the predetermined categories. Among these recurring themes were the following, presented in approximate order of emphasis as measured by the number and extensiveness of interventions:

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<sup>21</sup> We thank Megan Howell for sharing her analysis on the impacts on the final documents of the CSD-8 multistakeholder dialogue. The examples here provided largely draw on her work.

- The relative role and merits of voluntary approaches, especially questions relating to appropriate oversight, legal enforcement mechanisms and relation to regulatory approaches;
- ISO 14001 and EMS (Environmental Management System);
- The special difficulties faced by Small and Medium Enterprises, especially in the South, in terms of awareness, capacity, access to financing and clean technologies;
- Core labor standards and the right of workers and other stakeholders to meaningful participation in decision-making;
- Progress shown by industry’s record in incorporating environmental and social goals into its strategies and operations, including issues relating to measurement in these areas;
- The role of ODA and FDI and the potential implications of Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) being negotiated at the time for transparency, global standard-setting, etc.;
- Education and training;
- Precautionary Principle.

It is apparent from a comparison of these two lists that the pre-established themes did not mirror the conceptual frames or priority concerns of the participants. In fact, from the outset of the discussion wide divergences existed between different stakeholders’ notions of “responsible entrepreneurship.” While an industry representative opened the first session with an affirmation that responsible entrepreneurship “[embodies] a more flexible, market-driven and innovative response by the private sector...” an NGO delegate following closely on his heels showed that he was working from a very different worldview: “what do you have to say about the fact that [the MAI] negotiations are going on in secret?” he challenged business. “...How do you help indigenous people to become your equal?”

The blurring of the lines, and the lack of specification and focus has a number of implications for the quality of the dialogue:

For one thing, it introduces *discontinuities* that make it difficult to follow – and contribute to – the three, four or more conversational threads that are being carried on at once. For example, the flow of comments in session 1 immediately following the introductory statements was as outlined below:

<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>THEMES ADDRESSED</b>	<b>TYPE OF STATEMENT</b>
Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ SMEs and eco-efficiency</li> <li>▪ FDI and eco-efficiency</li> <li>▪ Education of labor force</li> </ul>	Question (with some problem descriptions) (all)

<b>SPEAKER</b>	<b>THEMES ADDRESSED</b>	<b>TYPE OF STATEMENT</b>
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Balance between regulation, legislation and voluntary initiatives</li> <li>▪ Supply Chain and ISO 140001 as way to address <b>SMEs'</b> problems</li> <li>▪ Codification of voluntary initiatives</li> </ul>	Prescriptive (1 and 3); suggested solution (2)
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ eco-efficiency means combining financial and environmental performance</li> <li>▪ link FDI with ODA to build capacity for <b>SMEs</b></li> </ul>	Descriptive (1) and suggested solution (2)
NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ holistic communities</li> <li>▪ lack of capital and credit</li> <li>▪ MAI</li> </ul>	Question (with strong prescriptive assumptions built into them) (all)
Trade Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Voluntary Initiatives as complements to regulation</li> <li>▪ Certification system on forestry in Sweden</li> </ul>	Prescriptive (1); Case study example (2)
IGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety</li> </ul>	Case study example
Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>SMEs</b> and mentoring</li> </ul>	Case Study example
NGO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Voluntary Codes</li> <li>▪ ISO 14001</li> </ul>	Question (1); Problem description (2)
Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Voluntary Agreements</li> <li>▪ Aluminum cans program in CH</li> <li>▪ Social performance</li> </ul>	Prescriptive (1); Case study example (2); Prescriptive (3)
Trade Unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Workplace relations</li> <li>▪ Voluntary Initiatives</li> </ul>	Problem Description (1); Prescriptive (2)
South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>SMEs</b>: industry best practice dissemination projects in South Africa (through supply chain and subcontracting)</li> </ul>	Case Study example (1)

The table also makes manifest the reason behind the *high level of generality* at which many of the statements are pitched. Because several themes are being juggled at once, speakers tend to keep prefacing comments with a restatement of the issue and a reaffirmation of its importance. Many also feel compelled to hit numerous targets in rapid succession. The time and thought devoted to each issue decreases correspondingly, and

so does the depth and detail with which each issue is treated. At worst, people present long lists of troubles or demands. But even where participants listen and respond to each other, it appears that the experience brought to bear could be better leveraged to produce action-oriented outcomes.

For example, with respect to the issue of small and medium enterprises (SMEs), we see from the table above that participants offered: a problem description, two different suggestions for solutions or strategies and two sets of case studies, touted as examples of successful measures and hence containing implied strategies. The raw material for an exchange that could lead to concrete policy proposals and programmatic work appears to be available; but, in the absence of a coherent conversational structure that leads participants from a useful problem definition to conclusions, the valuable expression of concerns, ideas, and practical experience are raised when the opportunity arises and then left unaddressed.

Participants eager to get to work are usually uneasy about what they see as diversions from the main course. Witness the following outburst of a trade union representative during the session on Corporate Management Tools:

**LUCIEN ROYER – TRADE UNIONS:** “Well, to tell you the truth, we don’t give a hoot about which tools. We’ll take any tools, as long as we agree on the targets, and as long as we agree on the direction we take. If we can be involved, we’ll work with ISO, We’ll work with EMS. We’ll work with anything! That’s the point here ...agreeing on the targets, agreeing on the tools, and agreeing on the methods of application of these tools in concrete workplaces – concrete sectors of the world.”

Precious time is also wasted during the sessions as participants grope for an organizing logic. Indeed, during CSD-6, several participants independently tried to impose a structure on the dialogue flow. One saw the first session as devoted to goal definition and subsequent sessions as refining a strategy to reach those goals:

**WINSTON GERELUK – TRADE UNIONS:** “My understanding is that the Theme of this session is the nature of responsible entrepreneurship, and that in the other sessions we’ll talk about how we get there. We have to clarify what it is, and a major concept that’s emerging is the concept of voluntary initiatives.”

Others saw one theme as a subset of the other (these comments were not made sequentially during the dialogues, and are merely placed side by side to illustrate the point):

**HOLGER BARTELS – TRADE UNIONS:** “Technology transfer is a substantial part of responsible entrepreneurship....”

**JACQUELINE ALOISIE DE LARDEREL -- UNEP:** “Technology assessment is a tool aiming at evaluating the global environmental impact of a new technology.”

Others tried to locate the debate within the context of prior or parallel conversations on the same subject and push ahead beyond where those left off by zeroing in on specific questions left unanswered:

**CHEE YOKE LING – NGO:** “I would like to speak on a number of statements that were made this morning and link them to the discussions the CSD has been having on the issue of technology transfer over the last few years, because there already have been a number of recommendations, touching on some of the issues raised ... [On] the issue of [technology] screening . . . we need to look at follow up because it was recognized, again, by the earlier CSD session that there are many cases where there is no independent ... assessment. So where should we get information from to be able to make the right decisions?”

More than a few participants used, or abused, the lack of structure to make their points regardless of their relevance to the thematic focus at the moment of intervention, although some did so with more self-consciousness than others:

**NGO SPEAKER (INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIC COMMITTEE)** “...there is a need for definition of technology transfer, and I'll make use of that loophole... to interpret it in the broadest possible sense to include generalization on the world scale of environmentally friendly policies and measures. In that field, I think, the sport movement can bring an important contribution.”

Finally, several expressed regret toward the end of the CSD-6 dialogue segment that certain issues had not received sufficient coverage, indicating that perhaps a shift in emphasis might not have left some important gaps unfilled.

### Summary

In summary, a key step forward for the whole dialogue process would be to clarify the expectations that different parties hold with respect to the dialogues. Generally speaking we can conclude that, if the dialogues are to serve as a means of portraying a range of impressions and inputs, from which participants can pick and choose at their discretion, then it is sufficient to exert little control over the structure of the discussions. Conceptualized that way, the dialogues may serve as a complement to other inputs provided to the Secretariat during the preparatory process. These include:

- Comments on the Secretary-General's reports written each year in advance of the CSD session, where major groups are invited to provide specific experiences in implementation or monitoring, lessons learned or trends observed in the course of such activities, and ideas on possible policy directions for the CSD to consider.
- Contributions to a collection of success stories compiled by the Secretariat whose objective is “to demonstrate the sense of ‘ownership’ for sustainable development and to provide examples of solutions that can be duplicated around the world.”

If, on the other hand, the dialogues are to be forward-looking and action-oriented – in other words if the “how's” should be the focus of the exercise – then the advance teams need to cover the “what's” and “why's” more thoroughly to be able to focus the dialogues to achieve

those solution-oriented debates. This would, require an even greater organizational effort than the Secretariat and the major group coordinators are already engaged in.

In the end, meaningful change will hinge as much on the infusion of fresh political resolve as on the industriousness of the major groups. As the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* described the conundrum in 1999<sup>22</sup>:

**“Any assessment of the CSD’s performance must begin with an acknowledgment that there are absolute limits to its capacity both to set and sustain an agenda. Its work does not take place in a vacuum but is framed by a number of factors that lie beyond its immediate influence . . . The stalling of the ‘global compact’ at the heart of the UNCED agreements produced a fault line which has forced many proposals to stumble at the CSD.”**

In any event, broad-based consensus could not be the aim for the multistakeholder dialogues, for that would require a Herculean effort far exceeding the limitations on time and representational authority that the major group coordinators can muster. But, the face-to-face interactions could potentially start off from a “common agreement on the importance of addressing [certain] questions,” as an NGO speaker formulated the first challenge in an opening statement at CSD-6, and give more weight to the successive step of “point[ing] out a direction and perhaps methods for us to answer them.”

## **Representation**

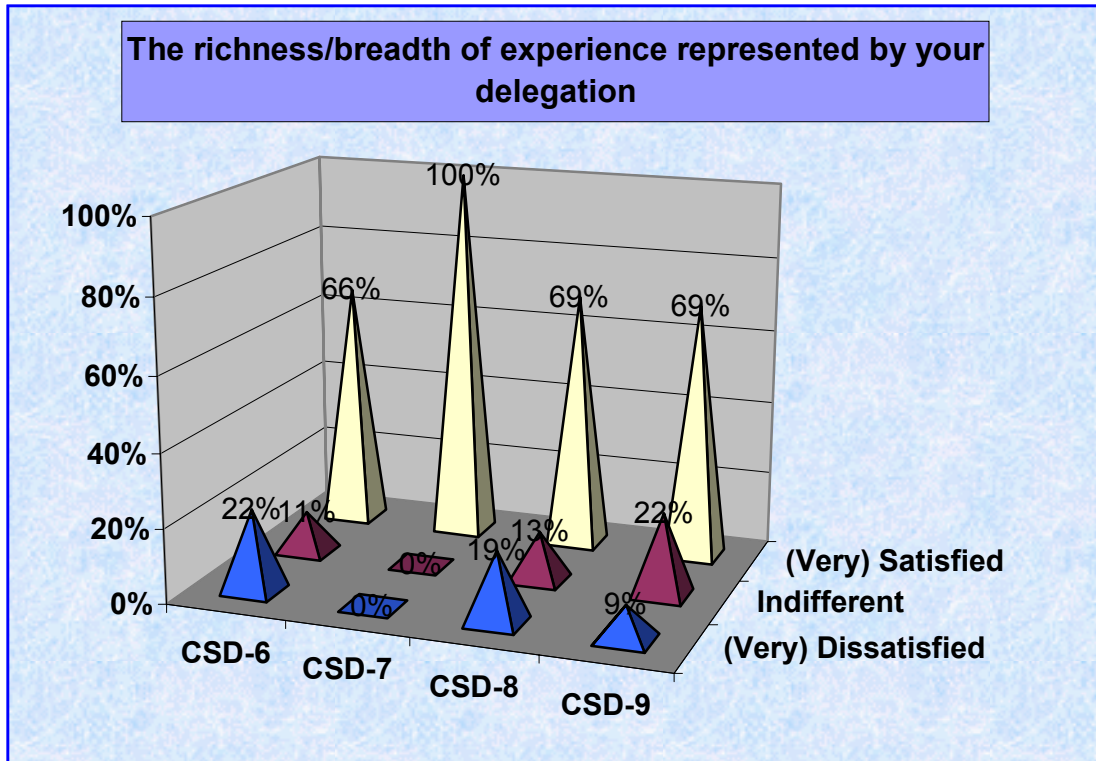
So far, we have repeatedly stressed how resource-intensive the dialogue process is for the major groups. And yet much more time would need to be allocated to achieve anything approaching full representation of the sectors involved in the dialogues. We deal with this issue at this juncture because the question of representation is intimately linked to the level of spontaneity and action outcomes that a dialogue can achieve. How widely afield delegations can roam in an exchange, and how confidently they can commit to follow-up activities, depends very much on how broadly representative they are of their respective sectors and what accountability mechanisms they follow internally.

The stakeholder world of sustainable development is infinitely variegated and complex. It is a kaleidoscope of interests -- some action-based, some advocacy-oriented; some theory-driven, some grassroots-focused; some organized, some not. It breaks down into regional, national, sectoral-, age- and gender-specific groupings that are themselves aggregations of divergent forces. Within it, alliances are wobbly, coalitions shifting, and fortunes determined by a mixture of structural conditions (especially, resources and geographic proximity to centers of power) and individual initiative.

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<sup>22</sup> *ENB*, Vol. 5, No.121 (8 March 1999), p. 12.

Organizing this jumble along the major group categories specified in Agenda 21 is therefore bound to be a hazardous undertaking. One cannot but agree with Emil Salim, Chair of CSD-10, who recently commended the multistakeholder dialogue organizers and coordinators for their “courage



to attempt the impossible.”

Indeed, given the complexity of the undertaking, participants in our survey showed a remarkable degree of satisfaction with the richness and breadth of experience represented in their delegations. As shown in the chart above, more than two thirds of all respondents declared themselves satisfied or very satisfied in this regard.

The organizing partners on the civil society end tend to be large organizations with vast memberships and associated networks, such as the International Chamber of Commerce, the International Federation of Agricultural Producers, the International Conference of Free Trade Unions, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives and the International Council for Scientific Unions.<sup>23</sup> For their part, the NGOs active at the CSD were for several years self-organized in a Steering Committee with a Northern and Southern component embracing different issue caucuses (the Steering Committee is still in existence but has had internal rifts that led to changes in its original structure).

The coordinators within these organizations and networks together have managed to bring Novartis and illiterate farmers from India under one roof to have an equal-level

<sup>23</sup> For a more comprehensive list please visit the Links to Major Groups website of the CSD at <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/mlinks.htm>.

exchange. While they often speak very different languages – both literally and figuratively – their presence brings moments of real-world expertise and drama into the CSD. Said the farmer during CSD-8:

**“Two years ago because of the use of transgenic seeds more than 500 cotton farmers committed suicide in India. That’s what I know.”**

Still, to think even for a moment that civil society is, or can be, comprehensively represented is to be misguided. Barriers, aside from the sheer enormity of such a task, include:

- Sharp internal divisions *within* major groups that are not, and cannot conceivably be, reconciled before the CSD, as manifested by the fact that delegates from the same major groups sometimes make contradictory claims in their dialogue interventions. This is particularly jarring to members of other major groups when they have engaged in discussion with one faction only to find that another faction is taking a more adversarial stance.
- Overlapping identities and roles *across* major groups, as manifested during CSD-8, when two industry delegates identified themselves as “NGOs,” creating consternation not only among the “official” NGOs, but also by the Chair, who asked for clarification. Conversely, one major group coordinator reported having to join forces with an organization that he did not consider to be a rightful component of his stakeholder designation.

These phenomena occur between delegates who have chosen to participate in the CSD process. (Some of these tend to come back multiple times, bringing with them the dangers and advantages of what one participant called the “professionalization” of multi-stakeholder dialogues. These dangers include rendering the process an “insider’s game” where those most familiar with the unwritten rules and hierarchies can exploit the process to their advantage. The advantage is the other side of that, where participants learn to contribute to the debate constructively without trampling institutional norms.)

The CSD participants comprise already self-selected groups that often are ahead of their colleagues with respect to their commitment to sustainable development. Said one observer who has followed the debate since the 1972 Stockholm Conference:

**“Multi-stakeholder dialogues are like dialogues between caterpillars. The Heads are much closer than the tails. Over time, some become shorter while others become longer. Different pieces of the caterpillars have different roles: some pull, some push. So sometimes you feel that you’re holding multistakeholder dialogues in a vacuum because even if the top people are all on the same frequency that doesn’t necessarily mean that they bring their constituencies along”**

Less poetically, but more directly to the point was this comment from a Secretariat member about CSD-9:

**“All [the stakeholders] support ‘sustainable development’ as if they were pre-screened. I hear a union representative advocate non-use of fossil fuels and I’m thinking to myself: is this for real? I don’t think the Teamsters would support that position...”**

Key actors on many sides appear to be missing at the CSD, leading to some questions about whether the type of expertise presented is appropriately targeted to the themes developed. The large environmental organizations have engaged only peripherally at the dialogues; the auto industry, which apparently is at odds with the oil industry, was not in attendance at CSD-9. Wrote one survey respondent:

**“[The high point of the CSD for me] would have been to join the world competence and expertise in each specific subject. With the subtitle ‘Sustainable Energy and Transport,’ I would have expected more delegates from the transport sector, i.e. manufacturers or operators of road vehicles, vessels, trains, aircraft and the like. I was the only one representing this segment, which I found extremely strange.”**

In the end, major groups base their claim to a voice in international policymaking on normative and practical values. They should be heard, that claim is, because they defend global public goods or because they are instrumental parts of the solution to sustainable development. Depending on which of these motivating factors they emphasize, they advocate equality of standing across major groups (something the CSD Secretariat has promoted) or demand a special place for themselves in the name of the greater importance of their role. Even with respect to this issue, there are divisions within major groups. Said one industry participant:

**“It seems socially acceptable for governments to talk to NGOs, but when they talk to business and industry it is considered ‘capture.’ The multi-stakeholder dialogues help even that out.”**

Said another industry participant:

**“The Red Cross and the ICC have the same standing as the blueberry farmers from Maine. Everyone gets to talk and no one gets to be heard.”**

Underlying the former comment is a demand for equitable treatment; the latter comment, by contrast, is framed in terms of effectiveness. Our measures of effectiveness of the process can therefore point in very different directions. And while the problems with representation are easy to identify, remedies remain elusive because they are tied to larger issues of global political economy and international governance. In fact, they lie at the heart of the dilemma of moving major groups into full-fledged decision-making roles. Said one government representative who is sympathetic to stakeholder engagement:

**“There is no legally defensible solution of equality at the table.”**

The validity of this view is being vehemently debated in many quarters, from the highest levels of the United Nations to the streets of Seattle, Genoa, and perhaps even Johannesburg. Our immediate challenge is how to deal with the representation issue in the context of the CSD multistakeholder dialogues. It is one that must be addressed if the dialogues are to catalyze programs and partnerships. Before we offer some recommendations on how the problem may be managed in the next chapter, we briefly review what actual outcomes the dialogues have so far produced.

## **Dialogue Outcomes**

An almost universal call among participants in the CSD multistakeholder dialogues is one for a more results-oriented approach. What many people imagine are concrete initiatives, preferably with associated targets and timetables. In part, this reaction may in and of itself show that the dialogue process has matured. Where in the early years it may have seemed satisfactory to, in Chairman Habito’s ginger words, “come out . . . with a firm sense of optimism that a certain momentum toward greater convergence had been set,”<sup>24</sup> a sense of restiveness is now spreading.

The reappraisal of the dialogues that is currently ongoing in several quarters arguably is a natural part of any institutional evolution. If channeled productively, the result of such questioning could help make a quantum leap towards the much vaunted partnership model that has become one of the aspirations for the WSSD.

Before looking ahead it is worth reviewing the accomplishments to date. And while the record may not be perfect, it also is not, upon closer examination, as bleak as may appear to some when the sustainability agenda seems to progress in slow motion. On this front as on others, we see parallels between the advancement of the dialogues and the CSD as a whole. Said one government representative who has long followed international negotiations on environment and development-related issues:

**“The time scale of the whole process of sustainable development is misinterpreted. We’re working with a very short time horizon. If you look back you see that messages do permeate. Issues are now on the agenda that we didn’t talk about five years ago. But the physical progress is not yet there.”**

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<sup>24</sup> Cielito F. Habito, “Multi-stakeholdership at the U.N.CSD: A Coming of Age,” in (Strauss, M. ed.) *The Dialogue Records: Year One*, New York: Northern Clearinghouse, p.9.

## **Spreading and Stretching the Multi-stakeholder Dialogue Model**

In the previous chapter, we reviewed those impacts of the dialogues that have to do with stakeholder skill and capacity development. An entirely different class of outputs from the CSD dialogues is the propagation of the mechanism itself into other institutional settings. Here, the very idea of multi-stakeholder dialogues as a tool for civil society participation is carried over from the CSD to its cousins within the UN system.

Within the past year, two major efforts that directly built on the CSD procedure have been launched:

1. During the Second Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF-2, March 4-15, 2002), five major groups engaged in a multi-stakeholder dialogue on Sustainable Forest Management. The ECOSOC resolution establishing the UNFF explicitly stated that the multi-stakeholder debate should be modeled on practices established by the CSD and the CSD Secretariat's Major Groups Focal Point was invited to give a briefing to UNFF-1 last June to elucidate various procedural aspects. It should be noted that among the delicate issues during that session the role of major groups featured prominently, and that precedent set in the CSD was invoked to establish the parameters for access in UNFF. As described by a report by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on UNFF-1:

**"For the first time in 10 years, the participation of NGOs and other major groups in an international forum on forests was challenged. There were challenges even to NGOs being present in the room as silent observers during negotiations. This was eventually resolved by reference to the CSD ... where we have had good access."**

2. In December 2001, a multi-stakeholder dialogue was held as part of the International Freshwater Conference, hosted by the German government in Bonn as part of the preparatory activities for WSSD. The organizers of the dialogues, the London-based "Stakeholder Forum," whose staff has long-standing experience at the CSD, enlisted the services of a facilitator, a former high-level official at the United States Agency of International Development (USAID) and hence a familiar figure to many of the governmental representatives present. The facilitator broke new procedural ground, moving about with microphone in hand rather than positioning himself on the dais next to the Chair. The proximity to the delegates helped him get a sense of the group dynamics and engendered an immediacy appreciated by most participants, including government representatives, who remained engaged throughout. (In fact, some stakeholders felt they were so engaged that they were encroaching on their space). Another interesting aspect of the dialogue in Bonn was that the delicate theme of corruption was covered at significant length, apparently without creating undue apprehension. The Bonn dialogues, therefore, represent a fruitful experiment in how the multi-stakeholder dialogue process can be enriched by pushing the boundaries further.

Just how far the model will spread within the U.N. system is still to be seen. For example, the Financing for Development (FFD) process culminating in the summit-level meeting in Monterrey, Mexico, March 18-22, 2002 did not adopt the dialogue mechanism as part of its efforts to involve civil society. In part, the level of uptake has to do more with the structure of this vast institution than with the validity of the model. Each agency, commission or working group creates its own rules and culture, and ideas don't permeate boundaries easily. Said one official:

**"This is a bit of a syndrome inside the U.N: if someone else has done something, especially if successful, then [others] will NOT try it.."**

### **Formal Follow-Up Initiatives**

#### CSD-6: Multi-stakeholder Working Group to Review the Effectiveness of Voluntary Initiatives

Some resistance was also encountered – but eventually overcome – to several initiatives proposed by the stakeholders during the CSD multistakeholder dialogues. Very early in during CSD-6, the NGOs put forth the idea of constituting a multi-stakeholder working group to review the effectiveness of voluntary initiatives, one of the central themes of the industry segment. The suggestion, though agreed to in principle by all three stakeholders present (industry, trade unions and NGOs), was not an easy one to push through the diplomatic process. Recounted Chairman Habito later in a brief article on the first dialogues:<sup>25</sup>

**"Moving the idea forward .... Proved a more formidable challenge than I imagined. My own proposal for a small meeting of multistakeholder representatives including government to begin informally exchanging ideas on what form such a mechanism should take met with strong resistance from some governments, particularly within G-77, ironically the group to which my own delegation belonged.**

**It was, in part, more of a bureaucratic resistance by delegations who could not feel secure about agreeing to any important idea without first 'consulting with capital.' But after facing the G-77 members in a tense caucus on the second day, which at one point appeared to border on some members withdrawing confidence in my chairmanship, I could not help feeling that certain delegations were paying lip service to stronger civil society participation, and yet feeling great discomfort at supporting any idea if it was the NGOs who proposed it."**

Eventually, the final governmental decision endorsed an exploratory process involving the stakeholders only. The Decision held that "...as a first step, representatives of industry, trade unions and non-governmental organizations should examine voluntary initiatives and agreements to identify those elements that can be considered for this review. The Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat could provide assistance in this process... (E/CN.17/1998/L.10, Section D, Paragraph 18).

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* p. 8.

In response to this decision, DESA invited a Steering Group in 1998 comprising representatives of the three major groups and UNEP's Technology, Industry and Environment Office. The following year a Consultative Meeting was held in Toronto, hosted by the Canadian government.

Though the Chairman's Summary described that meeting as "a first truly multi-stakeholder process from design to deliver..." most participants do not have good memories of the event. Lack of groundwork ahead of the meeting led to confrontations between the parties, with all sides entrenched in their opposing views. The business coordinator later temporarily withdrew from the Steering Committee, and some inter-agency jostling between UNEP and DESA appears to have contributed to the effective demise of the initiative. Still, a Report of the Secretary-General on voluntary initiatives and agreements was prepared on the basis of the Toronto gathering and presented to CSD-7 (E/CN.17/1999/12). The report outlines nine necessary elements in a review process in the form of questions to be raised for further consideration.

#### CSD-7: Multistakeholder Working Group on Tourism

In 1999, a second multistakeholder working group, this time with government participation, was set up under the auspices of the World Tourism Organization (WTO). The CSD directed the U.N. Secretariat and the WTO to "...jointly facilitate the establishment of an ad-hoc informal open-ended working group on tourism to assess financial leakages and determine how to maximize benefits for indigenous and local communities, and to prepare a joint initiative to improve information availability and capacity-building for participation and address other matters relevant to the implementation of the international work programme on sustainable tourism development." (E/CN.17/1999/1, Section C, Paragraph 10).

An organizational meeting focusing on the nature and composition of the working group was held in January 2000 in Costa Rica, though trade unions and, significantly, given the terms of reference, local authorities did not send representatives. The report of the meeting stated that "it was noted that CSD-7 had decided on a long list of tasks but had made no funding provisions to undertake them." The Working Group is still officially standing but no progress is evident.

#### CSD-8: Multistakeholder Working Group on SARD

Contrary to these two aborted efforts, CSD-8 spawned a follow-up process that is widely seen as successful. The idea of establishing a working group on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD) first emerged during the intergovernmental inter-sessional meeting for CSD-8. At the CSD-8 regular session, the stakeholders "welcome[d] the proposal" and strongly encouraged CSD to "...provide a catalytic role to implement SARD by establishing multistakeholder processes to foster new and stronger alliances between diverse stakeholders." In a joint statement subscribed to by farmers, trade unions, industry, NGOs and Indigenous

People, they recommended language specifically calling for "...the identification of action-oriented best practices..."<sup>26</sup> This language was not incorporated into the final Decision.

But here too, some governments were wary of creating a structure they might lose restraint over. As *ENB* reported on the text negotiations during the CSD session:<sup>27</sup>

**"Discussing participation, developing countries proposed the deletion of language on continuation of a multi-stakeholder dialogue on SARD. Agreement was reached after amendments were introduced to clarify that the dialogue would proceed ... within existing resources and would not amount to the creation of a new institution."**

As the Task Manager for Chapters 10 and 14 of Agenda 21, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) along with the CSD Secretariat, was given the mandate to facilitate the multi-stakeholder working group. A flurry of activities ensued. (Funding was made available partly through extra-budgetary support from the governments of the United States and the Netherlands).

Virtual debates on agriculture and land, co-chaired by a major group representative, solicited input from civil society and government agencies to the reports drafted by FAO for CSD-10. It also served as a basis for a multi-stakeholder dialogue held within FAO known as the SARD Forum. The "Forum on Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development" was organized as a Special Event concurrent to the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) in March 2001, and among other things, helped introduce a new culture of stakeholder engagement to an agency that hasn't generally been known for great transparency.

The Forum involved five major groups and discussions were again co-chaired by a member of the CSD NGO Caucus on SARD. The themes – (i) mobilization of financial and human resources for achieving sustainability, and (ii) the creation of effective partnerships amongst government, civil society and the private sector -- built on interim consultations that helped focus the dialogues. As one briefing sheet explained it:

**"After agreeing on "what" is important since CSD-8, the Major Groups representatives took advantage of the opportunity of the attendance of COAG to discuss "how" to achieve their goals."**

Following the Forum, the focal points created a "major group steering committee" and established a work plan advanced through weekly major group conference calls. In the spirit of burden sharing, a different stakeholder representative facilitates each call on a rotating basis. While substantive differences persist among the major groups, progress appears to have been made in the clarification of interests and the identification of work areas for collaboration, with an eye towards specific commitments that can be undertaken. Participants credit the CSD not only for providing the official mandate that gave this process its impetus,

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<sup>26</sup> Joint Statement of Farmers, Trade Unions, Industry, NGOs and Indigenous People, *Proposal for an Informal Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group to Assess SARD Progress by CSD-10*, May 1, 2000.

<sup>27</sup> *ENB*, Vol. 5, No.157 (8 May 2000), p. 5.

but also for permitting the trust building that set the foundation for a remarkably collegial relationship.

### Summary

Attempts to continue the multi-stakeholder dialogue in a more focused and continuous form have been made at dialogues at three of the four years under examination. Problems encountered once such efforts met with the endorsement of the CSD have included funding constraints, inadequate facilitation, and the transfer of responsibility onto institutions not able or willing to play the part assigned to them.

By contrast, elements that contributed to the success of such an effort are strong commitment of the stakeholders combined with the ability to autonomously set a coherent, manageable agenda and push it forward. Major groups concerned with SARD were galvanized into action by the CSD and now use FAO as the center of an orbit in which they move largely on their own accord. The question for the CSD is what should be its role with respect to follow-up and follow-through when, as is the norm, more facilitation is required to achieve the concrete outcomes that most participants are setting almost as a condition for continued serious involvement in the CSD multi-stakeholder dialogues.

## Recommendations to CSD and Major Groups

### Overall Assessment

As we have seen in great detail in the previous sections of this report, a tremendous amount of resources are mustered every year to carry out the CSD dialogues. The astonishing level of investment alone demonstrates a serious commitment by the major groups to continue to partake in and contribute to CSD deliberations.

At the same time, though, it appears clear that some modifications to the current process would help maximize the benefit to the participants and generate substantive outcomes. The space, guidance, flexibility and incentives must be such that major groups and government delegates are able to develop and implement new commitments to sustainable development.

The challenges faced in designing a dialogue structure that meets these objectives are both substantive and logistic in nature. In summary, these include:

- **Representation and participation** – the number and range of stakeholders highlights the need to provide ample opportunity to allow as many participants as possible to contribute meaningfully.
- **Time-constraints** – the dialogues within the official meetings are necessarily comparatively short and therefore insufficient for a common understanding to evolve on broad thematic issues among participants or to explore options for joint action.
- **Agenda Setting** – The sub-themes around which the dialogues are structured must be carefully framed at a sufficient level of detail for participants to focus in a problem-solving way.
- **Facilitation** – A clear and efficient process for participants to work within is necessary to manage the discussion and ensure a fair hearing for all participants.
- **Link to decision-making** – the scheduling of dialogues just prior to official discussion of the same issues is useful in terms of generating momentum in the meetings and a sense of equivalent importance; however it limits the degree to which governments may avail themselves of the perspectives offered by the major groups.
- **Follow through** – providing mechanisms for implementing agreements and continued trust and relationship building assures ongoing commitment to action beyond the dialogue sessions.

The key is to see all stages of the process as a whole. These stages are (i) the preparation phase, (ii) the CSD Session, and (iii) the follow-up or implementation phase. To produce and deliver on actionable outcomes, the official proceedings must be preceded and followed by more intensive and ongoing cooperation among the major groups, as well as interaction between governments and stakeholders.

Given the reality of severe resource constraints, this is of course easier said than done. But, just as parties to a lawsuit often find it is ultimately more efficient to settle their dispute through mediation rather than through endless costly appeals, so too could a more concerted and focused effort at guiding the dialogues towards a concrete goal ultimately yield more satisfactory results.

The organizers of the CSD dialogues deal with a series of demands that often point in contradictory directions. They do not operate in an organization vacuum that affords them the luxury of building a process from scratch; instead, they must insert new forms of interaction into an institutional setting with strong pre-existing norms that tend to discourage rather than encourage change. At the same time, though, the potential to create direct linkages between civil society and government deliberations is precisely what makes the CSD multistakeholder dialogues so unique and valuable.

Keeping these constraints in mind as we proceed through this chapter, we offer a series of suggestions that participants and organizers may want to consider. Which of those are appropriate in the CSD context may ultimately have to be determined through a “dialogue on dialogues.” We hope that this study offers some useful starting points for such reflection. Implementation has become the most problematic aspect of sustainable development policy generally. Complicated political dynamics and logistical barriers stand in the way. But in the end, the problem may also be about taking heart and taking risks. As one interviewee said:

**“Most people are afraid to dream and hesitate to implement even the simplest things.”**

As we saw in this report, many people involved in the CSD do strive for creative leaps towards the goals they are seeking. And the CSD has ventured to meet this demand in innovative ways. With additional risk-taking, the CSD may find that it can overcome some of the obstacles that continue to stymie progress in realizing its mission.

## **1. Clarify Objectives**

One motivation that is often proffered for broadening participation, especially in the context of sustainable development where so many sectors of society are expected to do their share, is that it tends to enhance “ownership” of policy decisions and hence increases the likelihood of implementation.

A strong impression formed through conversations with dozens of people coming at the CSD multistakeholder dialogues from different institutional perspectives is that there is some confusion over who “owns” the process. Ambiguities surround a series of factors that are

fundamental to an understanding of the rights and responsibilities that different actors hold: Stakeholders are expected to shift from “a complaining to a proposing mode,” yet by and large they don’t feel that they have much control over the thematic content or direction of the conversation. Governments are urged to participate yet are quietly resented when they are too active. The CSD endorses follow-up activities, such as the establishment of multi-stakeholder working groups, and yet can provide little effective support to ensure their success. These dynamics lead to a sense of missed opportunities that can, with time, dampen the enthusiasm and reduce the quality of participation.

At the root of these ambiguities lies a structural problem: On the one hand, the dialogues are squeezed into the confines of diplomatic protocol, which constrains the unfettered exploration by the parties of new options for resolving differences and inhibits the search for acceptable solutions; On the other hand, the stakeholders are, *de jure* and *de facto*, not full-fledged members of the club. The result is a hybrid process that neither harnesses the full creative potential of the major groups nor satisfies their ambition to make a serious contribution to decisions that are the product of the negotiations.

It would therefore be useful for organizers and participants to clarify and prioritize objectives. The structure of the process ought to follow these objectives. A couple of concrete examples might help to illustrate:

- If the **negotiated text** were the focus (as it apparently currently is even for the stakeholders) then the overlap between the two tracks would need to be increased:
  1. The themes would need to be tied more directly to those aspects of the intergovernmental debate where the major groups realistically can have an influence (as we saw, those are more likely to fall in the category of new areas opening up in the sustainable development debate than resolutions to existing areas of controversy);
  2. Governments, through the Bureau or otherwise, would need to be more extensively brought into the stakeholder process from the very preliminary stages to assure complementarity;
  3. The space would need to be created for major group representatives to engage more fully at the Inter-sessional meeting where a first draft of the intergovernmental text is discussed.
- If the generation of **commitments and joint actions** were the focus:
  1. The themes would need to be defined based on an assessment of interest and feasibility with respect to specific areas of concern common to the stakeholders primarily;
  2. Governments might need to be involved intensively but on a more selective basis depending on the precise contours (sectoral relevance, geographic reach, etc.) of the commitments and actions to be considered by stakeholders;

3. The dialogues could serve more specifically as a platform for sharing experiences and endorsing commitments elaborated by the stakeholders in a parallel process than a generalized policy debate.

It is unrealistic to think that the two-day dialogue segment can meet both of the above goals even partially. The first scenario is closer to how participants have conceptualized the dialogue process thus far. The second scenario is more reflective of how many participants say they would like the process to evolve.

## 2. Sharpen the Thematic Focus

Either way, the thematic focus of the dialogue process should be sharpened. The themes as currently framed are too broad and ambitious to address in a three-hour session. They also don't always capture the main concerns that parties bring to the table. Suggestions for narrowing the thematic focus include:

- Make the topics less wide-ranging and overarching; make the formulation precise enough to allow the discussion to move beyond general pronouncements.
- Allow much more extensive input from the participants (governmental and non-governmental) in topic selection.
- Provide the stakeholders with a unifying conceptual blueprint for the dialogue starter papers. If all major groups followed the same basic structure in their writing, areas of agreement and disagreement would be much more readily apparent. It would also help the Chairman to produce a summary that would go beyond the reproduction of a wish list. Such a blueprint could be a variation of the framework used in chapter 3 to analyze the papers and the Chairman's Summary:
  - (i) **Problem Definition:** What are we talking about?
  - (ii) **Policy Goals:** What do we want to accomplish with respect to the problem we have identified?
  - (iii) **Situation Analysis:** What are the impediments and elements of progress towards reaching these goals?
  - (iv) **Strategies and Recommendations:** How do we make further progress, either by overcoming such impediments or through new avenues?
  - (v) **Implementation:** Who needs to do what by when and how to ensure that such progress is made?
- Organize the participants into smaller working groups for all but the beginning and final sessions (along the lines of the dialogue structure during PrepCom II of CSD-10). Make the topic description for these working groups a subset of one larger theme instead of having several broad discussions happening at once with only a tenuous connection between them. Consider having parallel working groups, perhaps operating on the regional basis, operating ahead, and alongside, of the process coordinated at the global level.

### 3. Conduct a Situation Assessment

To sharpen the thematic focus and assure the widest representation possible, the preparatory phase should be extended and intensified. In addition to the logistics currently covered by the conference calls, a substantive component would help:

- To identify and involve as many relevant stakeholders as possible, including some that may not be motivated to participate on their own accord;
- To determine an agenda for discussion and set priority areas for action;
- To orient stakeholders on what the process is trying to accomplish and on the larger institutional context and constraints that govern certain aspects of the process;
- To build a shared understanding among the stakeholders of the interest of all parties to allow them to evaluate their parameters, interests, and options in light of the new information that emerges;
- To identify ways in which scientific, technical and other forms of knowledge might be usefully brought to bear in the discussion;
- To determine the areas, if any, on which some consensus might be achieved.

Facilitators routinely conduct such “situation assessments” before proceeding to face-to-face meetings.<sup>28</sup> Such assessments are usually based on confidential interviews with a significant number of stakeholders. Using the information gathered, an analysis is done that determines feasible objectives for a process, given the time and funding resources available. In the case of the CSD dialogue process, the dialogue starters could be very helpful inputs into a situation assessment, though they should not necessarily be an exclusive resource of information.

Who should conduct such an analysis in the case of the CSD remains open to question. The Secretariat may be able to play such a role or a team of independent facilitators agreed upon by the major groups ahead of time (the importance of this last point is evidenced by the unhappiness of some major groups about the use of an analysis conducted before CSD-8 by the Wuppertal Institute. While the type of analysis was along the lines suggested here, though significantly less extensive, it was produced by researchers who belonged to the delegation of a particular major group).

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<sup>28</sup> See e.g. Susskind, Lawrence and Larmer-Thomas, Jennifer, “Conducting a Conflict Assessment,” Chapter 2 in Susskind, L., McKearnan, S. and Thomas-Larmer, J (Eds.), *The Consensus Building Handbook*, Sage Publications (1999), pp.99-136.

This process is meant to supplement, not replace, the consultation mechanisms internal to the major groups. It is also meant to identify gaps in representation and/or capacity and expertise that could be mitigated in a variety of ways.

#### **4. Devise Ground Rules for Interaction**

The workings of the United Nations in general and of the CSD in particular are confusing to many. Some major groups compensate for this by providing orientations for their delegations when they arrive in New York. More remarkably, stakeholders often help each other in this regard, even where interests might be presumed to be antagonistic.

Still, basic information is often elusive. Only provisional major group delegate lists are available, if at all, and these lack any biographical or contact information beyond organizational affiliation. Not only does this complicate follow-up for those inclined to continue networking on an informal basis; it also makes it difficult to establish whom one is listening or speaking to during the dialogues.

Not only are the identities of the participants often not known, but also the rules of engagement are not well elaborated. Some standardization or codification regarding the following might help generate a commonality of purpose and increase the perceived legitimacy of the process:

- The minimum level of engagement by the Chair and other Bureau members;
- The right of review of the Chairman's Summary by the major groups;
- The minimum requirements for consultations inside a major group;
- The use of scientific and other data in the presentation of one's position;
- The tone and style of interventions during the dialogues;
- The allocation of available funding support.

#### **5. Provide Additional Facilitation**

The responsibility for facilitating the multistakeholder dialogues sessions is borne by the Chair of the CSD, who is assisted by the Secretariat. In the lead-up to the sessions, the Chairs typically meet at least once and at most three times with the major group coordinators. Those discussions, like the telephone conference calls conducted by the Secretariat, tend to focus on form, not content.

As mentioned above, facilitation should ideally be a continuous process, from the preparation through the implementation phase. Neither the Bureau nor the Secretariat is likely to have the time to devote to such ongoing activities. The CSD may therefore consider engaging professional facilitators to manage parts of the process with their guidance and supervision.

Given the intensity of the research, analytic and communication tasks, facilitators usually work in teams. Although they are obligated to remain non-partisan, they are often

expected to have considerable background on the issues under discussion. Sometimes they work closely with a balanced group of advisors and experts (subject to agreement by the stakeholders) to provide the process with easy access to relevant information and to enhance transparency and trust in the process.

One aspect of facilitation is meeting management. During a dialogue, a facilitator enforces ground rules, guides the flow of the discussion, and summarizes its outcomes at key moments. A facilitator may also be asked to produce draft documents that are then circulated, without attributing specific comments to any individual, to all the participants for review. We have seen that these tasks have not always been handled to the satisfaction of the participants during the CSD multistakeholder dialogues. People often speak in shifting categories (a problem relating to topic definition) or lapse into prepared statements. Introductory speeches are lengthy, stretching into the better part of the second hour during CSD-10, where all nine major groups are participating.

An able moderator could tighten the reins, pick up the speed and bring greater cohesion to the discussion. Charisma, familiarity with development and environment-related issues, and a feel for the sensitivities that surround intergovernmental negotiations would be important characteristics for someone chosen to assist the Chair in moderating the dialogues. A facilitator was enlisted during CSD-6, but quickly sidelined. This abortive experience should not discourage further experimentation. Facilitators must be chosen with care and with the agreement of all parties.

## **6. Help Follow through on Outcomes Achieved**

The CSD is not an implementing body. It monitors progress and mandates other agencies to act where such progress falls short or when new concerns develop. It is therefore conceived as a catalyst of action rather than as a protagonist. As we have seen in great detail, in the area of civil society participation, the CSD has featured as a pioneer. Yet when its procedural innovations yield fruit, the CSD has found itself handing over the bulk of the responsibility for follow-up to an entirely different institution.

Every year except the last (CSD-9) a concrete proposal to set up a multistakeholder working group with a well-specified mission emerged directly from the dialogue. All three of these efforts were policy- not program-oriented. They were about establishing principles and mechanisms to handle difficult problems, such as the effectiveness of voluntary initiatives and financial leakages in the tourism industry. Ongoing facilitated interaction between the parties would hence have been required to progress beyond the earliest stages of consensus building. One of these efforts, regarding SARD, has made great strides because of the commitment of a few key stakeholders who have taken on the facilitation function themselves; the other two could not be sustained because, among other things, relations between the major groups were more brittle.

Funding is an obvious constraint in this context. But resource issues aside, it would be advisable to make more room in the CSD work plan for providing consistent support to budding partnerships.

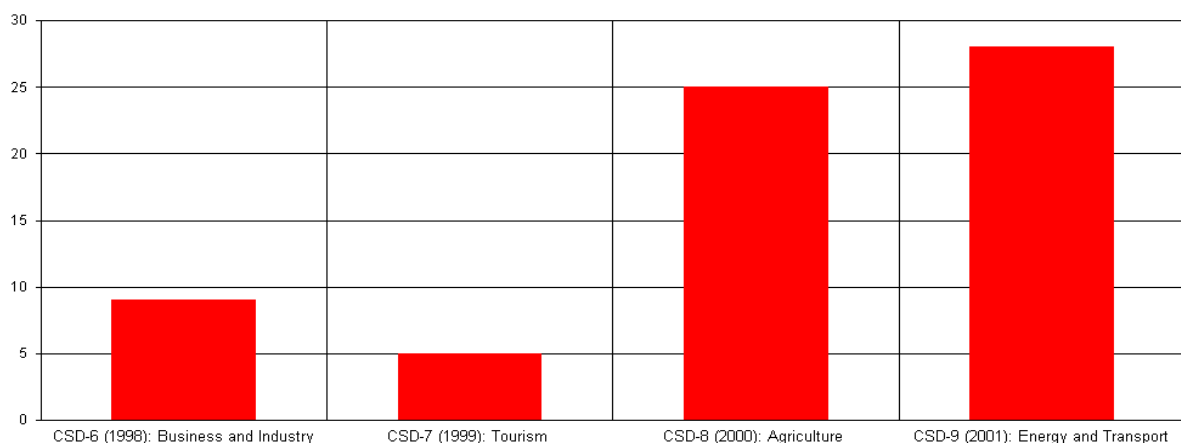
## APPENDIX 1: DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY PROCESS AND RESPONSE

In evaluating the CSD multi-stakeholder dialogues, we conducted a survey of major group participants. Chapter 2 on Dialogue Objectives, Design and Impacts is partly based on data gathered in this fashion. The survey instrument itself is available for review in Appendix 2. Here, we briefly comment on survey process and results.

We compiled a list of as many participants as possible in the CSD multi-stakeholder dialogues held in the four sessions from 1998-2001. Names for CSD-7 were unavailable. Therefore, the only respondents reached from that year were people who had also participated in one or more of the other sessions. The survey instrument was distributed via the Internet to 429 people. These did not include the major group coordinators who were either extensively interviewed, several of them multiple times, or were contacted personally in an attempt to obtain an interview. Past participants were invited via email to answer the survey by visiting a dedicated website. A unique password was distributed to each person to avoid multiple responses. It also guaranteed confidentiality. Neither the CBI researchers nor the CSD Secretariat have access to the identity of the respondents.

**Chart 1: From 1998-2001, which of the following CSD Multistakeholder Dialogue segments did you attend?  
(check all that apply)**

**Note: If you attended multiple sessions, you will be prompted to answer a few questions more than once to allow for responses that reflect differences in your experience from year to year.**



12 of the survey solicitations were returned to us undelivered. 50 participants responded to the survey – a 12 % response rate. Such a response rate is not atypical for surveys of this sort, but is too small to make firm inferential conclusions about the body of participants. We therefore conducted no formal statistical analysis of the results of the survey. Instead we presented the data in the form of charts, along with commentary, in Chapter 2. We also received extensive commentary to the open-ended questions included in the survey. Some of these comments were incorporated in the report in the form of verbatim quotes. The

chart below reflects the distribution across the CSD dialogue sessions of our respondents. We note that the largest pool comes from CSD-9, followed by CSD-8.

We further note that, among the major groups, business and industry (22 respondents) and NGOS (20 respondents) were almost equally represented, followed by trade unions (17 respondents). On the lower end of the distribution were scientists (4), farmers (2) and local authorities (the numbers add up to 65 because of attendance in multiple years by some of the participants who answered the survey).

Finally, the regional balance reflected in the pool is reported below (slightly modified because not all 50 answered this question):

What is the home country of the institution for which you worked when you attended the CSD multistakeholder dialogue as a Major Group delegate?

“North”	“South”	International
33	9	4

Notes:

1. “North” includes USA, UK, France, Russia, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland, Netherlands, Canada, and Japan
2. “South” includes Brazil, Ecuador, Malaysia, Senegal, Zimbabwe, and Bolivia
3. International covers respondents who said they worked for international agencies
4. Counts are number of CSD session participant summed over the four years so that if someone participated in more than one year they are counted each time

## APPENDIX 2: SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR UNCSD MULTISTAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE EVALUATION

Q.1 From 1998-2001, which of the following CSD Multistakeholder Dialogue segments did you attend?

*(check all that apply)*

Note: If you attended multiple sessions, you will be prompted to answer a few questions more than once to allow for responses that reflect differences in your experience from year to year.

(6-9)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 CSD-6 (1998): Business and Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 CSD-8 (2000): Agriculture          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 CSD-7 (1999): Tourism               | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 CSD-9 (2001): Energy and Transport |

Q.2 When you participated in the CSD Multistakeholder Dialogue at **insert YEAR AND THEME** which Major Group did you represent?

*(select one response only)*

(10)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Business and Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Trade Unions      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 NGOs                  | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Local Authorities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Farmers               | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Scientists        |

Q.3 Please check one of the following, if the category describes your affiliation more fully or more accurately:

(14)

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Indigenous People | <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Youth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Women             |                                  |

Q.4 Briefly describe what you understand to be the main purpose of the UN Commission of Sustainable Development.

\_\_\_\_ (15-314)

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Q.5 Which of the following objectives were the most important in motivating you to participate in the CSD Multistakeholder dialogue(s)?

*(Choose two among the options below)*

(315-316)

- 1 Advocating to include your positions in the final negotiated text
- 2 Informing debate by providing specialized knowledge
- 3 Networking within your Major Group
- 4 Initiating project cooperation across Major Groups
- 5 Building consensus on policy across Major Groups
- 6 Monitoring your government's negotiating positions
- 7 Learning about sustainable development
- 8 Learning of policy successes for replication
- 9 Expressing perspectives and values in an important forum

0 Increasing your institution's visibility

Q.6 Aside from your participation in the CSD Multistakeholder Dialogue(s), how often have you been dealing with each of the following in the course of your work assignments over the past few years?

	Never or Almost Never	Some of the Time	About Half of the Time	Most of the Time	Always or Almost Always
The United Nations	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (317)
Intergovernmental Negotiations	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (318)
The UNCED Process since the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (319)
Policy dialogues in domestic or international fora	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (320)
Participatory Development Planning or Management	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (321)

[A - IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 1 IS NOT 1, THEN SKIP TO QUESTION 18]

Q.7 Overall, how would you rate your experience at the Multistakeholder Dialogue of **insert YEAR AND THEME:**

(322)

- 1 Excellent
- 2 Good
- 3 Indifferent

- 4 Fair
- 5 Poor
- 6 Unsure

**Q.8** On a scale where 5 represents "Strongly Agree," and 1 represents "Strongly Disagree," how would you rate each of the following statements about the CSD multistakeholder dialogue segment you attended **insert YEAR AND THEME:**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral or Indifferent	Agree	Strongly Agree
The topics for discussion were aptly chosen	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (323)
The most important issues were given short shrift	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (324)
Most participants were well-informed and articulate	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (325)
The quality of presentations/comments was highly variable	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (326)
Data offered by participants were for the most part credible	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (327)
Some stakeholders did not participate in good faith	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (328)
All points of view got a respectful hearing	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (329)
Key non-state actors were absent from the discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (330)
Government delegates asked relevant questions	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (331)
The more powerful Major Groups dominated the discussion	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (332)
The Chair encouraged frank and open exchanges	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (333)
The UN style and setting are somewhat intimidating	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (334)
The proceedings were managed in a transparent manner	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (335)
Most people merely reenacted the same debates we have had many times in other settings	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (336)
We accomplished a lot in the time allotted	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (337)
The dialogue was futile because it produced no concrete results	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (338)

**Q.9** On a scale where 5 represents "Very Satisfied," and 1 represents "Very Unsatisfied," how would you rate the performance of the "major group"—following the categorization of non-state actors outlined in Agenda 21—of which you were a delegate at **insert YEAR AND THEME** in terms of:

	Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Indifferent	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
Overall level of preparation of individuals in the group	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (339)
Overall level of communication among group members in the lead-up to the CSD	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (340)
Overall level of coordination among group members at the CSD session	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (341)
The balance in the composition of the delegation members	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (342)
The richness/breadth of experience and skills represented within your group	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (343)
The quality of contributions made during the dialogue	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (344)
Overall level of energy and initiative of members in your group	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (345)
Leadership of person(s) acting as focal point(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> 4	<input type="checkbox"/> 5 (346)

**Q.10** Approximately how much time (in hours or days) did you spend preparing for the multistakeholder dialogue of **insert YEAR AND THEME?**

Hours ..\_\_\_\_\_ (347-349)

Days ...\_\_\_\_\_ (350-352)

**Q.11** As part of these preparations, which of the following activities did you engage in?

*(Check all that apply)*

(353-360)

- 1 Reading parts of Agenda 21
- 2 Consulting with colleagues who were NOT attending the CSD session
- 3 Participating in on-line discussions centered around the CSD dialogue themes
- 4 Drafting suggestions for the Background Paper prepared by YOUR Major Group
- 5 Reading some or all of the Background Papers prepared by the OTHER Major Groups
- 6 Providing written comments on the thematic papers prepared by the CSD Secretariat
- 7 Discussing (on-line, by telephone or in person) CSD-related substantive issues with...
- 8 Other: PLEASE SPECIFY

**Q.12** During your stay in New York for the **insert YEAR** proceedings, approximately how often did you engage in the following activities?

	Never (0 times)	Occasionally (1-3 times)	(4 or more times)
Attend the "high-level" sessions (devoted to discussion among Ministers)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (411)

Attend inter-governmental sessions - PLENARIES & WORKING GROUPS	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (412)
Attend intergovernmental sessions- SMALL INFORMAL MEETINGS BETWEEN A SMALL NUMBER OF...	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (413)
Attend government briefings for NGOs and other Major Groups	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (414)
Informally discuss policy issues with government delegates	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (415)
Read successive drafts of the negotiation text	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (416)
Prepare statements or position papers during the CSD sessions	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (417)
Attend side-events organized by other Major Group representatives	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (418)
Informally discuss policy issues with other Major Group representatives	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (419)
Attend planning or strategy meetings organized exclusively by and for members of your...	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (420)

**Q.13** With regard to your personal experience in the Dialogue(s), which of the following statements are applicable?

	Yes	Somewhat	No
You re-thought some position(s) based on others' comments	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (421)
You better understood the positions of other Major Groups	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (422)
You integrated new data into your policy analyses or views	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (423)
You found a surprising degree of common ground with other participants	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (424)
You built more trust in participants you still disagree with	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (425)
You accord greater legitimacy to the decisions of the CSD	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (426)
You became more favorable of multistakeholder efforts	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (427)
You reinforced your commitment to action on sustainability	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (428)
You were frustrated with the irrelevance of much of the discussion to the problems you...	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (429)
You questioned whether other participants really represented legitimate interests	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (430)
You felt that there was insufficient time to accurately convey your perspective	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (431)
You would have preferred small group discussions	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3 (432)

- You missed a clear sense of what were the intended goals of the dialogues  1  2  3  
(433)
- You objected to the control exerted by the coordinator of your Major Group  1  2  3  
(434)
- You decided the United Nations is not a forum in which you would like to continue to...  1  2  3  
(435)

**Q.14** Which of the follow-up activities to the CSD Multistakeholder Dialogue(s) listed below have you conducted?

*(Check all that apply)*

(778-787)

- 1 Reported to colleagues in your office/your network on CSD session(s)
- 2 Attended related multistakeholder dialogue working group(s)
- 3 Participated in self-started partnerships with other Major Group representatives
- 4 Formed new issue network(s) on basis of interactions at CSD
- 5 Developed new policy proposals based on outcome of CSD
- 6 Launched new project initiatives based on outcome of CSD
- 7 Engaged in domestic lobbying related to outcome of CSD
- 8 Maintained informal contact with fellow dialogue participants
- 9 Debriefed with your Major Group focal point person
- 0 Other: PLEASE DESCRIBE

[A - IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 42 IS NOT 10, THEN SKIP TO QUESTION 44]

**Q.15** What did you consider to be the high point of the Multistakeholder Dialogue Segment(s) you attended?

*(Briefly explain your answers)*

— (828-1327)

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**Q.16** What did you consider to be the most problematic aspect of the Multistakeholder Dialogue Segment(s) you attended?

*(Briefly explain your answer)*

— (1328-1827)

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**Q.17** If you received an invitation to participate in a CSD Multistakeholder Dialogue in the future, would you accept?

(1828)

- 1 Yes  3 Unsure
- 2 No

Q.18 Briefly explain your answer:

– (1829–2128) \_\_\_\_\_

Q.19 What specific recommendations would you offer to the organizers for improving the Multistakeholder Dialogue Process?

– (2129–2628) \_\_\_\_\_

–

**The next series of questions ask about your professional background and affiliation.**

Q.20 What is the home country of the institution for which you worked when you attended the CSD-6 multistakeholder dialogue as a Major Group delegate?  
*(If multiple branches, please indication location of headquarters)*

– (2629–2668) \_\_\_\_\_

Q.21 If you did not work at the institutions' main offices, in which country were you based?

– (2669–2708) \_\_\_\_\_

Q.22 Briefly describe the position and key areas of responsibilities that you held in that institution at the time of the **insert YEAR dialogue:**

**Position:**

– (2709–2758) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q.23 Responsibilities:**

– (2759–2958) \_\_\_\_\_

–

–

Q.24 Approximately, what is the size of the annual budget of that institution?

US Dollars .. \_\_\_\_\_ (2959–2967)

Q.25 Which of the following best characterizes the principal or primary activity of

that institution?

**(Please select one response)**

(2968)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 Production of Goods/Services | <input type="checkbox"/> 4 Policy-Related Research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Public Administration        | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Advocacy                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3 Project Implementation       | <input type="checkbox"/> 6 Other: PLEASE SPECIFY   |

[A - IF THE ANSWER TO QUESTION 55 IS NOT 6, THEN SKIP TO QUESTION 57]

**Q.26** Which of the following best characterizes the geographic scope of the institution?

(3069)

- 1 Community Level
- 2 National Level
- 3 Region Level (multiple countries in same geographic area)
- 4 Global Level

**Q.27** How did you finance your travels to United Nations Headquarters in New York and related expenses to attend the **insert YEAR** session?

(3070)

- 1 Self-financed
- 2 Through the institution you represented at CSD
- 3 With support provided by the CSD through your focal point
- 4 With support from other United Nations agencies or programs
- 5 With support from your own government
- 6 With direct donor support (e.g., foreign country aid programs)
- 7 Other: PLEASE SPECIFY

**Q.28** How were you selected to participate at the **insert YEAR** session?

(3121)

- 1 You knew about the CSD dialogues and volunteered
- 2 You were personally invited by the coordinator of your Major Group
- 3 Your institution was asked to send a representative and you were chosen
- 4 You were an official country representative on your national delegation
- 5 Other: PLEASE SPECIFY

**Q.29 Please use the space below for any additional observations and comments:**

— (4801-5300)

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## APPENDIX 3: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY, CSD-9

We analyzed how well the chairman's summary of the multi-stakeholder dialogue reflects the main themes of the stakeholders' discussion papers. We did this in the following manner: We began by distilling each stakeholder group's position (on each of the four CSD9 topics) into three main ideas/themes. For each group and topic area we analyzed the extent to which the Chair's Summary makes references to any (or all) of these themes. In this way, we could highlight any implicit biases in the Chair's Summary.

The distillation of key stakeholder ideas for each of the four topic areas is shown below. Note that this is not a definitive list – since for reasons of parsimony only three themes/ideas that seem to emerge most often in the discussion papers were chosen. Since this was done in a qualitative manner, some amount of subjectivity in the resulting choice of the themes was unavoidable.

### **Key themes in individual stakeholder positions in CSD9:**

#### Topic 1: Achieving equitable access to sustainable energy

*Business and Industry:* Energy prices should reflect all costs; Decentralization is key to providing; Investments must be made in all energy options, and governments must encourage private investments.

*Science and Technology Community:* Modification of existing technologies; Decentralization and renewable/biomass for rural areas; Governments role in R&D, assessment, and investment climate

*Labor Unions and Workers:* Workers concerns included in discussion; Public ownership and regulation needed / Liberalization and market “reforms” have the opposite effect. Transition should not have negative consequences for workers.

*Local Government:* Decentralization is key for rural access; Public ownership and regulation needed; Renewable/biomass technologies are important.

#### Topic 2: Sustainable choices for producing, distributing, and consuming energy

*Business and Industry:* Renewables; Obstacles to renewables; Energy efficiency

*Science and Technology Community:* Cover technologies and all fuel sources; Focus on eliminating price distortions and regulatory impediments, and internalizing costs; Increase R&D

*Labor Unions and Workers:* Workplace education and local efforts; Voluntary agreements; Design, implementation, monitoring and verifying issues

*Local Government:* Prioritize demand-side investments; Focus on local implementation; Develop national standards

*NGOs:* Conservation; Strategies and investments; Dissemination of renewable technologies for rural and decentralized applications

### Topic 3: Public-private partnerships

*Business and Industry:* Coping with continued growth in transport energy needs; Partnerships between stakeholders for sustainable mobility; Planning for sustainable transportation based on economic incentives.

*Science and Technology Community:* Emissions from motor vehicle use; technological solutions to air pollution (incl. CO<sub>2</sub>); Public-private technology development partnerships

*Labor Unions and Workers:* Public urban transport; Worker travel health and safety; Role for local and regional government

*Local Government:* Reduce local air pollution by improving vehicle efficiency; Private-public technology partnerships; Strong leadership role for government (set standards, R&D, show leadership)

*NGOs:* Emissions reductions and clean technologies; Reducing motor use; Partnerships between stakeholders for enabling change

### Topic 4: Sustainable transport planning: Choices and models for human settlements designs and vehicle alternatives

*Business:* Policies based on economic, social, and environmental realities; effective instruments; technology and management complementarity

*Science and Technology Community:* Focus on public transport; Land-use patterns and lifestyles; Use of policies and technologies

*Labor Unions and Workers:* Workplace education and training; Regulations and inspections; Producer responsibility and “user pay” principle

*Local Government:* Decentralization; Integrated approach and land-use planning; Internalize costs

*NGOs:* Infrastructure investment decision-making; Land-use issues; Public and non-motorized transport;

The relevant portions in the Chairman’s Summary were compared to the key themes for each stakeholder, and for each topic. Each instance where a key idea/theme was reflected in the chairman’s summary was noted. The results are shown in the table below:

Stakeholder Group	Topic I	Topic II	Topic III	Topic IV	TOTAL
Business/Industry	9	6	8	2	25
Scientists	8	6	6	3	23
Workers/Unions	6	3	2	1	12
Local authorities	5	4	2	1	12
NGOs	8	7	8	5	28

**APPENDIX 4: COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY OF THE MULTISTAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE AT CSD-9 ON SUSTAINABLE ENERGY AND TRANSPORT AND DECISION 9/1 (ON ENERGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT) AND DECISION 9/3 (TRANSPORT) (E/CN.17/2001/19)**

<b>Topic</b>	<i>Chairman's summary (CS)</i>  <u>Underlined text indicates points in CS that are not found in FT.</u>  <i>Text in italics indicates points in common with FT</i>	<i>Final negotiating text (FT)</i>  <b>Bolded text indicates points present in FT but not in CS</b>  <i>Text in italics indicates points in common with FT</i>
<b>Eradication of poverty</b>	<u>Business: need to overcome energy poverty</u>	<b>-number one goal</b> <b>-energy policies should support this goal</b> <i>-int'l community should support with capacity bldg, tech transfer, investments and financial resources (all)</i>
<b>Accessibility</b>	<p><u>scientists:</u> <i>-large rural populations dependant on biomass;</i> <u>-services approach could address access without compromising lifestyles</u> <i>-need to decentralize, reduce costs and increase R&amp;D and modernize technologies</i></p> <p><u>labor:</u> <u>-impact of energy access policies on employment</u> <u>-privatization makes access more difficult,</u> <u>increases costs, displaces jobs</u> <u>-continued public role in energy access</u></p> <p><u>-Overall suggestions:</u> <u>-public sector imp for equitable access</u> <u>-Many stakeholders: shift subsidies from fossil fuels to renewables and decentralization to help poor</u></p> <p><u>-Local: -role in decentralization; work with national govt. in efficiency/design initiatives; -decentralization more affordable in remote areas, stimulate SMEs</u></p>	<p><i>-improve access to biomass (scientists)</i> <i>-Renewables in rural areas</i> <i>-Support decentralization (all)</i> <i>-Equal access for women</i> <i>-Access to economically and environmentally viable technologies (all)</i> <b>-Promote energy cooperatives</b> <b>-develop local sources to improve diversity</b> <i>-Transition to liquid or gas fossil fuels (scientists)</i> <b>-Support grid extension</b> <i>-strengthen national/regional R&amp;D (all)</i> <i>-Strengthen national/regional cooperation (all)</i></p>
<b>Efficiency</b>	<p><u>-Local: technologically and economically feasible to increase and meet all needs without increased production</u></p> <p><u>-NGOs: conservation and efficiency at all levels; supply-side measure and renewables</u></p> <p><u>-Scientists: need early investment in new technologies to decrease price and improve performance</u></p>	<p><i>-Barriers are:</i> <i>-lack of access</i> <i>-capacity bldg</i> <i>-resources</i> <b>-market/institutional issues</b> <i>-Need awareness, R&amp;D</i> <i>-Need incentives for conservation</i> <i>-Accelerate development/deployment of new technologies (scientists)</i> <b>-Integrate into energy intensive infrastructure</b> <b>-Equipment mfg. Support programs</b></p>

	<p><u>-fuel cells, clean combustion need to be competitive to be effective</u></p> <p><u>Business: transparent fuel standards in partnership with govt. should include public participation</u></p> <p><u>Overall suggestions:</u></p> <p><u>-Efficiency through national standards, regulations to stimulate sustainable energy use</u>  <u>-increase RD&amp;D for carbon sequestration, fuel cells and nuclear waste disposal</u></p>	<p><b>-Tech transfer to developing countries on - favorable terms</b></p> <p><i>-Measure to make technologies more affordable (scientists-partial))</i></p> <p><b>-Strengthen existing institutions with efficiency programs or that compile and disseminate information</b></p> <p><b>-improve domestic energy efficiency</b>  <i>-efficient use of fossil fuels (scientists)</i></p>
<p><b>Fossil fuel and coal</b></p>	<p><i>-all stakeholders: "fossil fuels will persist as energy source"</i></p> <p><u>-scientists:</u>  <u>-developed country fossil fuel use affects developing country prices</u></p> <p><i>- noted technology development for cleaner fuels</i>  <u>-new fuels should be developed in tandem with consistent land use planning</u>  <i>-research and deploy DME, methanol, hydrogen and other clean fuels from fossil fuel energy sources</i></p> <p><u>-NGOs: fossil fuels unsustainable</u>  <u>-moratorium on fossil fuel exploration</u></p> <p><u>-Overall suggestions:</u>  <u>-Efficiency through national standards, regulations to stimulate sustainable energy use</u></p> <p><u>Business:</u>  <u>-public-private partnerships have positive impacts for oil recycling and recovery</u>  <u>--natural gas and liquid petroleum are transition fuels until hydrogen phase</u>  <u>-hydrogen will need more changes before competitive</u></p> <p><u>-natural gas reliable and clean, especially in developing countries due to improved production and transport</u></p> <p><b>Coal:</b>  <u>-NGOs: unsustainable and threat to health and environment</u></p> <p><u>-Business: home use should stop but till alternative sources found, all sources needed</u></p>	<p><i>-Fossil fuels will remain dominant in fuel mix for decades more</i></p> <p><i>-Need cleaner technologies</i>  <i>-Need technologies to transform solid fuels to liquid or gas (scientists)</i>  <i>-Need clean fossil fuel use (scientists)</i>  <i>-R&amp;D and transfer of advanced technologies (scientists)</i></p> <p><b>-Need more efficient fossil fuel power plants, building, appliances and transportation (new)</b></p> <p><i>-Need more efficient coal and oil technologies (business)</i>  <i>-Carbon capture and storage (overall from CS)</i></p> <p><b>-Voluntary industrial programs (new)</b></p>
<p><b>Renewable energy</b></p>	<p><u>-Many stakeholders: shift subsidies from fossil fuels to renewables and decentralization to help poor</u></p>	<p><b>-develop on sufficient scale</b>  <b>-numerous barriers, including costs, capacity building, financial resources, market and</b></p>

	<p><u>-scientists:</u></p> <p>-need to decentralize, reduce costs and increase R&amp;D and modernize technologies</p> <p>-noted technology development for cleaner fuels</p> <p>- <u>fuel cells, clean combustion need to be competitive to be effective</u></p> <p><u>-local:</u></p> <p>-more investment in clean and renewables</p> <p>-role in decentralization; <u>work with national govt. in efficiency/design initiatives</u></p> <p>-<u>decentralization more affordable in remote areas, stimulate SMEs</u></p> <p>-<u>demand for renewables has lessened demand for fossil fuels</u></p> <p><u>-NGOs: support subsidies for renewables; renewables for rural areas</u></p> <p><u>-Labor: renewable subsidies could shift jobs (“just transition”)</u></p> <p><u>Overall suggestions:</u></p> <p>-increase R&amp;D for Carbon sequestration, <u>fuel cells and nuclear waste disposal</u></p>	<p><i>institutional issues</i></p> <p>-Measures to promote development, utilization, dissemination of technologies (all)</p> <p><b>-Increase domestic contribution of renewables to total consumption</b></p> <p>-Private sector with incentives &amp; <b>regulations</b> (all)</p> <p><b>-incentives for conservation</b></p> <p><b>-Measures to make renewables more affordable</b></p> <p>-Renewables to meet part of needs (local?)</p> <p>-R&amp;D, institutional capacities, tech transfer, public awareness (all)</p> <p>-ensure public participation (all)</p> <p><b>-Financial support to developing countries</b></p> <p>-support renewables with <b>grid-connected and decentralized systems</b> (all)</p> <p><b>-Rural services, particularly renewables</b></p> <p>-Renewables in rural areas (NGOs)</p>
<p><b>Rural energy</b></p>	<p><u>-scientists: large rural populations dependant on biomass</u></p> <p><u>-NGOs: renewables for rural areas</u></p> <p><u>--local democracy enables decentralization</u></p> <p><u>-little research or integration of community needs</u></p> <p><u>-support locally developed technologies</u></p>	<p>-Renewables in rural areas (NGOs)</p> <p><b>-Critical to dealing with poverty</b></p> <p><b>-Start moving from biomass to liquid or gas fuels for cooking, heating or electricity</b></p> <p><b>-Sustainable use of biomass – manage resources, efficient use of fuel wood, new technologies</b></p> <p><b>- sustainable use of traditional sources</b></p> <p>-Promote/deliver new clean technologies (scientist)-<b>including solar cooker</b></p> <p><b>-Establish rural policies, including regulation</b> (regulation suggested by all)</p> <p><b>-Develop service structures adapted to rural needs</b></p> <p><b>-Promote employment opportunities by developing local equipment dealers</b></p> <p>-Health &amp; safety of women/children in programs (NGOs)</p> <p><b>-Promote affordability to poor (financial arrangements)</b></p> <p><b>-Indigenous sources and infrastructure for local use</b></p> <p>-Promote community participation to find simple &amp; local solutions (NGOs)</p> <p>-Local capacity building (NGOs)</p> <p><b>-Address burdens on women</b></p> <p><b>-Regional cooperation: rural electrification projects, including renewables</b></p>
<p><b>Nuclear technologies</b></p>	<p><u>-NGOs: nuclear waste most long lasting toxic; presented petition that nuclear power against</u></p>	<p>-Concerns with safety, spent fuel, waste management, transboundary consequences and</p>

<p><b>technologies</b></p>	<p><u>Agenda 21</u>  -NGOs, <u>labor and local</u>: <u>opposed nuclear power and encouraged policies to support other sources</u>  -Scientists: <u>no air pollution; need lower costs in developing countries; need public acceptance and research on safe waste disposal</u>  -<u>Business</u>: <u>despite waste disposal concerns, has low impacts, reliable supply; need public acceptance and research on safe waste disposal</u>  -Overall suggestions: <u>increase RD&amp;D for nuclear waste disposal</u></p>	<p><i>decommissioning (all)</i>  -<b>Support national/intl. efforts to address concerns</b>  -<b>Strengthen independent national regulatory agencies</b>  -<i>Promote high level safety (all)</i>  -<i>Transparency and public participation (business)</i>  -<b>Public education and capacity bldg</b>  -<i>Develop technological solutions for waste (all)</i>  -<b>Address plant safety with consideration of closing or phasing out</b></p>
<p><b>Large scale hydro</b></p>	<p><u>NGOs</u>: <u>has unsustainable social impacts; stop all construction</u>  -Overall suggestions: <u>moratorium on large-scale dam construction</u>  -<u>Agreement: unsustainable due to environmental and social impacts</u>  -Scientists: <u>supported existing dams and “run of the river” hydro</u></p>	
<p><b>Energy policy options</b></p>	<p>-<u>scientists</u>:  -<u>energy services(-), contrast energy use in N and S (+)</u>  - <u>support lifestyle changes to reduce consumption</u>  -<u>services approach could address access without compromising lifestyles</u>  - don't have to choose between energy, education, health, employment: policies can be complementary  -<u>labor</u>:  -<u>health and safety reporting mechanisms</u>  - <u>impact of energy access policies on employment</u>  - <u>privatization makes access more difficult, increases costs, displaces jobs</u>  -<u>political and economic confusion in integrating deregulation in overall economy</u>  -Local:  -<u>highlighted role of community leaders and need for national level support</u>  -<u>public-private partnerships and standards</u>  -<u>support local initiatives for efficient cities</u>  -<u>Business</u>: transparent fuel <b>standards</b> in partnership with govt. should include public participation  -NGOs: <u>need standards on sustainable energy</u>  -Overall suggestions:  -<u>decentralization, capacity bldg and rational pricing</u>  -<u>efficiency through national standards, regulations to stimulate sustainable energy use</u></p>	<p>-<i>increase advanced technologies</i>  -<i>sustainable use of traditional sources</i>  -<i>integration with socio-economic programs – public sector transport, industry, agriculture, urban planning and construction</i>  -<i>developed countries should provide example of sustainable consumption</i>  -<b>developing countries should use sustainable practices in development process</b></p>
<p><b>Decision-making/</b></p>	<p><i>Many stakeholders: participatory decision-making and capacity bldg needed; vital role for capacity bldg</i></p>	<p>-<i>need contribution by all stakeholders</i>  -<b>policy responsibility rests with govt.</b></p>

<p><b>Public particip. /cooperation /technology transfer/ capacity building</b></p>	<p><i>bldg</i>  <i>Agreement: stakeholder inclusion, cooperation and education essential</i></p> <p>-<u>business: range of options needed; need inter-disciplinary approaches: stressed their role as primary developers of technology</u>  -<u>transparent fuel standards in partnership with govt. should include public participation</u>  -<i>innovation, incentives, infrastructure maintenance and investment and integration of all stakeholders</i></p> <p>-<u>labor: security and participation; especially by women</u>  -<u>NGOs: empowerment of women and indigenous in decision-making</u>  -<u>role of govt. in involving stakeholders, setting targets and timetables, funding small-scale investments</u>  -<u>Scientists:</u>  -<u>national govt. should strengthen cooperation across all sectors; need interdisciplinary approaches</u>  -<i>don't have to choose between energy, education, health, employment: policies can be complementary</i>  -<u>use experts in decision-making</u></p> <p>-<u>Local: highlighted role of community leaders and need for national level support</u>  -<u>public-private partnerships and standards</u>  -<u>Overall suggestions: increase participation in decision making</u></p>	<p>-<i>Range of options required (business)</i>  -<i>ensure public participation (all)</i>  -<i>public-private partnerships (all)</i>  -<b>disseminate technology information</b>  -<i>increase awareness of options and public participation (where appropriate) – (all)</i></p> <p>-<i>strengthen role of major groups, including women (labor, NGOs)</i>  -<i>strengthen existing national institutions</i>  -<i>improve international cooperation</i></p>
<p><b>Mobilization of financial resources</b></p>	<p>-<u>NGOs: role of govt. in funding small-scale investments</u></p> <p>-<u>Scientists: need early investment in new technologies to decrease price and improve performance</u></p> <p>-<u>Overall suggestions:</u></p> <p>-<u>prioritize investments</u>  - <u>fund sustainable infrastructure</u></p>	<p>For energy and transport:  -<b>ODA important</b>  -<b>financial commitments of Agenda 21 (esp. chapter 33) needs to be urgently fulfilled</b>  -<b>improve regulatory institutional structures to attract private funding</b>  -<i>sustainable technologies often have lower operating costs and higher initial investments</i></p>
<p><b>Effective markets (including subsidies)</b></p>	<p>-<u>Many stakeholders: shift subsidies from fossil fuels to renewables and decentralization to help poor</u>  -<u>Business:</u>  -<u>for access, avoid subsidies to suppliers and those able to pay</u>  -<u>subsidies: positive social externalities of modern energy</u>  -<i>market mechanisms and use of all energy options (highlighted progress in social/environmental assessments)</i>  -<i>integrate various options</i>  -<u>for access, avoid subsidies to suppliers and those able to pay</u></p>	<p>For energy and transport:  -<i>reduce distortions (all?)</i>  -<i>improve market signals (all?)</i>  -<i>restructure taxation (NGOs)</i>  -<i>phase out harmful subsidies (all)</i>  -<b>minimize adverse impacts of development</b>  -<b>improve functioning and stability of markets</b>  -<b>enable investment environment</b></p>

	<p>-<u>scientists</u>:</p> <p>-<u>developed country fossil fuel use affects developing country prices</u></p> <p>-<u>good decision-making key to real pricing and valuing life-cycle costs</u></p> <p>-<u>including externalities will increase prices for poor; not including will be subsidizing and will hurt poor even more.</u></p> <p>-NGOs:</p> <p>-<u>criticize govt. expenditures on subsidies, tax exemptions and reductions; preferential loans and tariffs</u></p> <p>-<u>restrict new subsidies; support subsidies for renewables</u></p> <p>-<u>Labor</u>:</p> <p>-<u>renewable subsidies could shift jobs (“just transition”)</u></p> <p>-<u>support strategies for market economies, opposed market societies</u></p> <p>-<u>privatization makes access more difficult, increases costs, displaces jobs</u></p> <p>-<u>Local: decentralization more affordable in remote areas, stimulate SMEs</u></p> <p>-<u>Overall suggestions</u>:</p> <p>-<u>decentralization, capacity bldg and rational pricing</u></p> <p>-<u>market reforms; keep all options open</u></p> <p>-<u>reduce political risk of investments and ensure payments, promote efficiency</u></p>	
<p><b>Energy and Transport: Challenges</b></p>	<p><u>Business</u> :</p> <p>-<u>problems with security and CO2 emissions</u></p> <p>-<u>change will take time</u></p> <p><u>Scientists</u>:</p> <p>-<u>slow process</u></p> <p>-<u>mobility necessary but requires large natural resources and has impact on health and environment</u></p> <p>-<u>lifestyle changes needed with tech innovation</u></p> <p>-<u>must recognize changing demography esp. aging population</u></p> <p>-<u>urbanization increases transport demand</u></p> <p><u>Labor</u>:</p> <p>-<u>transport is huge service industry focused on low cost and not community needs</u></p> <p>-<u>global systems with multiple owners (diffuse responsibility)</u></p> <p>-<u>competition undermines effective management</u></p>	<p>-<u>Challenge: highest rate of projected consumption growth</u></p> <p>-<u>demand significant and likely to rise</u></p> <p>-<u>accidents, noise, air pollution, emissions, health and environment</u></p>
<p><b>Manage transport demand -R&amp;D/ Capacity</b></p>	<p><u>Business</u> :</p> <p>-<u>efficient transport essential for economic growth</u></p> <p>-<u>highlighted partnerships</u></p> <p><u>Scientists</u>:</p>	<p>-<u>public private cooperation (all)</u></p> <p>-<u>focus on development cooperation</u></p> <p>-<u>promote technology cooperation-joint efforts</u></p> <p>-<u>continue systematic training and capacity building (probably all)</u></p> <p>-<u>support participatory approaches and facilitation capacity (all)</u></p>

<p><b>building/ technology transfer</b></p>	<p><u>-examine different modes in context of social impacts</u>  <u>--new fuels should be developed in tandem with consistent land use planning</u>  <i>-research and deploy DME, methanol, hydrogen and other clean fuels from fossil fuel energy sources</i>  <u>-including externalities will increase prices for poor; not including will be subsidizing and will hurt poor even more.</u>  <u>-poor policies and pricing are barriers</u></p> <p>Local:</p> <p><u>-need to change consumption patterns</u>  <u>-local leverage may help: noted local programs</u></p> <p>NGOs  <u>-local democracy enables decentralization</u>  <u>-little research or integration of community needs</u>  <i>-support locally developed technologies</i>  <i>--technology improvement necessary for better fuel economy</i>  <i>-local needs important</i>  <i>-strengthen cooperation across all sectors</i></p> <p>Labor:  <u>-reduce transport by making trade and shipping markets more efficient</u>  <u>-produce at local levels</u></p> <p><i>All stakeholders: public private cooperation</i>  <i>Overall suggestions: increase tech transfer, replicate local projects on large-scale</i></p> <p><i>-NGOs and Labor: women are key; involve them in decision-making; promote equal access and opportunities for them</i></p>	<p><i>facilitation capacity (all)</i>  <b>-replenished GEF would help</b></p> <p><i>-Implement better practices – public transport (scientists), rail (labor) and water based freight (all)</i></p> <p><b>-increased fuel efficiency</b>  <i>-cleaner fuels (scientists) and transport equipment-phase out lead gas</i>  <i>-integrate policy with other policies</i>  <b>- governments should act as catalyst to foster private investment</b></p> <p><b><u>Regional cooperation:</u></b></p> <p><b>-support national/regional institutions in domestic efforts to: conduct in-depth studies, promote training and exchange of experience, strengthen regional networks of centers of excellence; establish information and dissemination capabilities</b></p> <p><b>-rural electrification projects, including renewables for cross border energy trade</b>  <b>-improve development and production of hydro-carbon fields through integrated cost reduction, enhanced operational efficiency and application of clean technologies</b>  <i>-cooperation in RD&amp;D and capacity bldg (all)</i></p> <p><b><u>International cooperation:</u></b>  <i>-continue dialogue (all)</i>  <i>-international public-private partnerships (all)</i>  <b>-networking between centers of excellence</b>  <b>-share cost of energy infrastructure</b>  <b>-identify risks and manage transparently</b>  <i>-equal access and opportunities for women (credit facilities, involvement in decision-making) (NGOs and labor)</i></p>
<p><b>Information sharing and dissemin.</b></p>	<p>Business: <i>need collective action through dialogue</i></p>	<p><b>-internet based</b>  <b>-requires assistance of developed countries</b>  Regional cooperation: <i>facilitate dialogue forums (all)</i></p>
<p><b>Transport: Financial resources</b></p>		<p><b>-from country's own public and private sector</b>  <b>-ODA important to developing countries</b>  <b>-financial commitments of Agenda 21- particularly Chapter 33 need to be urgently fulfilled</b></p> <p><b>-regional cooperation to finance regional projects</b></p> <p><b>International cooperation:</b></p> <p><b>-increase financial resources for:</b></p> <p><b>-debt relief and/or cancellation</b>  <b>-facilitate foreign investment</b>  <b>-reverse downward ODA trend</b></p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-fulfill ODA commitments –0.7% of GDP</li> <li>-bilateral and multilateral development cooperation programs</li> <li>-address energy in national poverty eradication policies</li> <li>-use ODA to leverage private funds</li> <li>-international financial institutions should support through lending policies and identify local needs (NGOs)</li> <li>-grants and loans to developing countries</li> <li>-equitable partnerships between investors and host countries</li> </ul>
<p><b>Technology transfer/ cooperation -alternative local transport. -Regulation</b></p>	<p>All: <u>increasing demand for cars is primary cause of unsafe traffic levels, political conflict, macroeconomic instability, poor envtl. and health, climate change and social fragmentation</u></p> <p>-Scientists: <u>promote public transit</u> -<u>increasing auto use and unsustainable land use promoting urban sprawl</u> - (advocate telecommuting and remote education – INTERNET) -support non-motorized vehicles -zoning and education to discourage car use -integrate technologies: use decentralized energy production for transport; rural poor are market for sustainable development alternatives</p> <p>NGOs: <u>increasing use of cars</u> -encourage use of other modes like walking/cycling -research sustainable modes and promote non-motorized transport</p> <p>-bicycle routes encourage use -growing highway projects and privatization of transport systems (cars) -withdrawal of state from housing and development sectors promoted unsustainable travel -little research or integration of community needs</p> <p>-support locally developed technologies -UN-norms and regulations, technical assistance and international standards (International) -UNDP: city planning; do not use outdated plans in developing countries.</p> <p>Business: -large scale public transport requires large amounts of energy, more than renewables can supply -Cars seen as problems in developed countries and solutions in developing countries</p> <p>Local: -local efforts hindered by national policies and private auto investment -solutions include regional planning</p> <p>Labor on alternative <u>local transportation and other transportation</u>: -transport to work is major energy sink -poor policies to support walking/cycling</p>	<p>-transfer of necessary know-how</p> <p>-int'l cooperation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-transfer clean technologies</li> <li>-encourage cleaner fuels (scientists)</li> <li>-promote energy efficiency (scientists)</li> <li>-improve mass transit (scientists)</li> <li>-endogenous capacity to develop and use clean technologies (NGOs)</li> <li>-<b>phase out lead in gas and consider reducing sulphur and benzene, and particulate levels in exhaust</b></li> <li>-use all financial resources</li> <li>-assist capacity bldg</li> <li>-support public-private partnerships</li> <li>-enhance complementarity and minimize duplication</li> <li>-improve compilation, assessment and analysis</li> <li>-raise public awareness</li> <li>-promote safety (labor)</li> <li>-promote rural infrastructure</li> <li>-encourage ICAO, IMO and UNIDO and govts. to improve transport systems</li> <li>-ratify annex VI to Marpol int'l convention for prevention of pollution from ships</li> </ul> <p>-Regional cooperation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-exchange experience and collect/share data</li> <li>-strengthen transboundary agreements to reduce pollution</li> <li>-finance regional projects (local)</li> <li>-coordinate regional approach to influence travel demand</li> </ul> <p>-National level cooperation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-integrate objectives with policy, <b>regulation</b>, economics, internalization of costs, impact analysis and information</li> <li>-integrate economic, social and environmental concerns in decision-making</li> <li>-develop responsive systems that rationalize traffic flows and road structures, manage transportation demand and facilitate flow and access of goods</li> <li>-reduce noise, better use technology,</li> </ul>

	<p>-some innovations lead to increased or altered energy use  -rail has greatest potential; <u>use instead trucks for shipping</u>  -sever problems due to corruption and unfair access particularly war areas</p> <p>-once transport is private, hard to change  -workplace programs to develop alternative travel to work programs</p> <p><b>Regulations:</b>  -Scientists: effective in increasing efficiency and innovation  -Local: imp but need to instill community responsibility and behavioral change  -NGOs: use to make difficult for industry to pollute and for them to produce unsafe and unclean vehicles  -Labor: focus on enforcing existing regulations</p> <p><b>Integrated Land use planning:</b>  -Local: more regional planning  -Scientists: should include life-cycle costs, effective pricing and zoning regulations; discourage private auto use and promote public transit; effective and jurisdictional base should be created  -Labor: offer choices based on community needs; land use policies should be local</p>	<p><i>inspection and maintenance, cleaner fuels and alternative fuels (scientists?)</i></p> <p><b>-involve private sector</b>  -build capacity and use of IT (scientists)  <b>-create environment conducive to R&amp;D and tech innovation</b>  -promote links between transport modes—intermodal systems (scientists)  -promote access, including rural, remote, urban and inter-urban services  -promote road safety (labor)  -increase low-cost modes, including non-motorized (NGOs, scientists)</p> <p><b>-gender-age and disabled sensitive planning</b>  -increase participatory planning that addresses social needs (local)  encourage safe cycling infrastructure (NGOs)</p> <p><b>-economic, technical and managerial capabilities</b>  -joint efforts by enterprises and govts.</p> <p><b>-systematic training and capacity building over extended time</b>  -progress can be achieved by new technologies, R&amp;D and transfer  -transport should be:  -affordable  -safe  -ensure mobility  -equitable  -efficient  -environmentally sound</p>
<p><b>Decision-making/ stakeholders</b></p>	<p>NGOs: <i>participatory decision-making</i>  -ready to assist stakeholder participation in <u>planning</u></p> <p>Business-innovation, incentives, infrastructure and investment and integration of all stakeholders</p> <p>--ready to assist stakeholder participation in <u>planning</u></p>	<p><b>-decisions should reflect interdependent and mutually reinforcing components</b>  <b>-national level cooperation to integrate objectives with policy, regulation, economics, internalization of costs, impact analysis and information</b>  <b>-national level cooperation to integrate economic, social and environmental concerns</b>  -policy making complex and multi-dimensional  --wide variety of stakeholders  -dialogue with major groups encouraged</p>
<p><b>Women</b></p>	<p><i>Unions and NGOs: women are key (sustainable transport planning)</i></p>	<p><b>-impacts on women</b>  <b>-health</b>  <b>-access to markets and income-generating activities</b></p>