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**The Practice to Policy Continuum in
Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development (SARD):
A Civil Society Reflection on the Importance of Collaborations
of Major Groups and Governments to Advance SARD***

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* This discussion paper was drafted by Thomas Forster, International Partners for Sustainable Agriculture (IPSA). Mr. Forster and IPSA colleagues have been involved with civil society major groups concerning global and regional SARD policy and implementation from the preparation for the Earth Summit to preparation for the 16th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development. A summary outline of this paper was shared with major groups Organizing Partners for CSD-16 in January 2008, and based on feedback received, developed into this paper. The revised version was vetted again in April to major group SARD Focal Points and Organizing Partners. For a concise history of IPSA's work on SARD policy, see: <http://www.practice2policy.org/?q=node/2>

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Introduction

1. *Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development* is the title of Chapter 14 of Agenda 21, the first comprehensive international policy decision directing government action on sustainable development, agreed to in 1992 as one outcome of the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), also known as the Rio Earth Summit. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created shortly after the summit in late 1992 to monitor and improve upon commitments made in Rio de Janeiro.

2. Through the 1990s, CSD sessions addressed agriculture and land in relation to other issues, but it was not until April 2000, at the eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-8) that agriculture and land were focused topics for policy debate and decision making. At CSD-8, seven civil society major groups¹ joined together in a request for a small but important decision by Governments. This request came as a product of a rich multi-stakeholder dialogue, lasting over eight hours during CSD-8. The nature of the request was simply to continue the productive dialogue between major groups and Governments on the road to the 10-year review of Agenda 21.

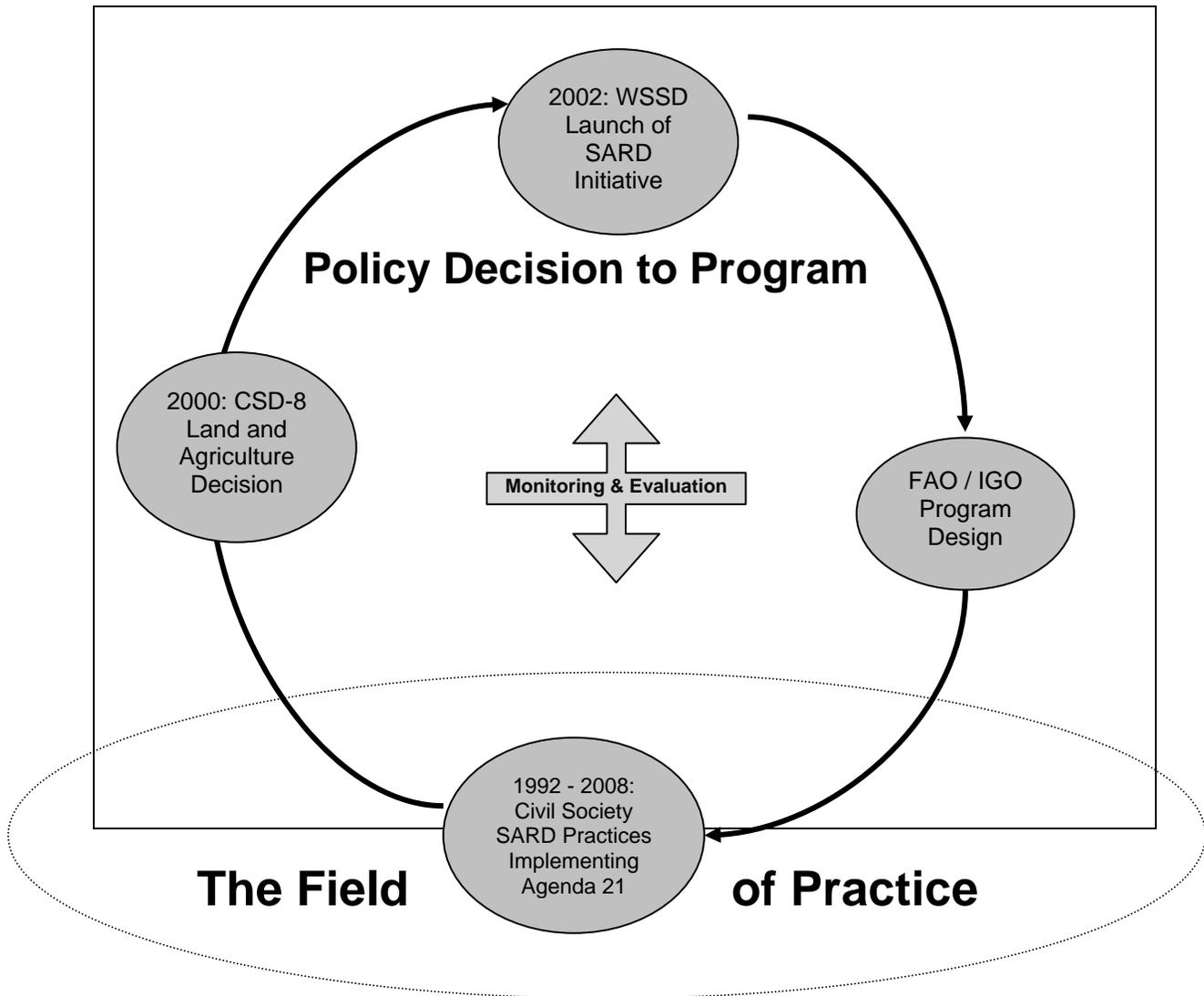
3. This seemingly minor decision (found in CSD-8 Decision 8/4, paragraph 46) would set the course for many interrelated collaborations at global and national levels. With this decision seeds were planted for civil society, Government and intergovernmental collaborations to implement SARD at a global level and in many countries. Some of the fruit that grew from these seeds came to be known by the name of the SARD Initiative. Other fruits of civil society effort resulted from the collaborations that ensued in parallel with or as a result of the SARD Initiative. As SARD-related projects and programmes increasingly impact local communities, it is necessary to ask what the effect of these collaborations have been on the effectiveness of the projects and their real outcomes on the ground compared to prior approaches to agricultural and rural development (see diagram below: field practice to policy, program and back to practice²).

4. For the first time since 2000 and the CSD-8 meeting, sustainable agriculture, land, rural development, drought, desertification and related issues will again be considered at CSD-16 in 2008 and CSD-17 in 2009, along with a special focus on Africa. The challenges for sustainable agriculture are just as dramatic in 2008 as they were in 2000, and CSD-16 will undertake a review of progress in the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI), including the goal of halving, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar a day and the proportion of

¹ The seven major groups were Farmers, Workers and Trade Unions, NGOs, Business and Industry, Women, Children and Youth, and Indigenous People, who were also the major groups engaged in the multi-stakeholder dialogue. The only reason that the two other major groups were not in the dialogue was for lack of sufficient discussion time and seating. More history on the process that led to the SARD Initiative can be seen at <http://www.fao.org/SARD/en/init/2224/index.html>

² Adapted from Arthur Getz Escudero and Clive Lightfoot, 2003.

people who suffer from hunger.³ CSD-17 will then negotiate policy decisions based on the review outcomes.



Multi-stakeholder dialogue, policy and collaborative programme development in SARD

Civil Society and a People-Centred Collaborative Approach to SARD

5. The purpose of this paper is to present, from a civil society perspective, the unfinished story of structured collaborations among major groups with each other, with Governments and with intergovernmental organizations over the past five years around the goals of SARD and related issues. The paper addresses the some of the lessons,

³ Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August - 4 September 2002 (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1), Section II, paragraph 7a.

challenges and recommendations for the future of similar collaborations. In the wake of WSSD, there has been a spotlight on partnerships for sustainable development. This paper seeks to present a reflection on both the strengths and the shortcomings of partnerships between sectors and stakeholder groups on implementation of policy in support of SARD.

6. Developed countries and certain civil society stakeholders championed partnerships for sustainable development implementation in the 1990s. Over two hundred such partnerships were launched during and after the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).⁴ Diverse partnerships between sectors and at all levels, local to national and international, and for diverse purposes, raised concerns about accountability, governance and potential Government inaction on Agenda 21 commitments dating from UNCED and continue unabated today.

7. This story of the SARD civil society experience of collaboration necessarily begins on the farms and in the fields, villages, and cities where communities of practice have adopted diverse approaches to sustainable agriculture and rural development.⁵ From there, leaders of farmers' organizations, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, trade unions, women's organizations, businesses, research and scientific organizations and other major civil society groups and their representatives, brought their concerns and creative solutions to international debate and policy forums over 17 years from 1991 to 2008. This "practice to policy continuum" is under review again at CSD-16.

8. The SARD Initiative did not actually start as a partnership in the way defined by the WSSD, and to this day is not referred to as a partnership.⁶ CSD-8 occurred one year before "Type II" partnerships for sustainable development were called for in November 2001 as a product of the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002.⁷

9. Nonetheless, many of the elements of the SARD Initiative framework were called for later by civil society and Governments, as voluntary partnerships for implementation of sustainable development policy became a bright beacon as well as a controversial dilemma in the debate over international governance of progress toward sustainable development. This paper focuses on the history of the collaboration that led to the SARD Initiative and related outcomes, and the lessons of this collaboration for the future governance of sustainable development partnerships.

⁴ Since WSSD, a database of sustainable development partnerships has been maintained at: www.un.org/esa/sustdev/partnerships/partnerships

⁵ For an excellent overview of the diversity of alternative farming practices and approaches, most of which were initiated by Civil Society, see National Ag Library: Alternative Farming Systems Center: <http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/pubs/terms/srb9902.shtml>

⁶ The primary reason for the decision not to use the term "partnership" for the SARD Initiative was the concern among certain stakeholders that the term connotes a level of equal access and relative position that does not reflect the actual reality of actors across a spectrum of policy and development engagement.

⁷ For a comprehensive account of the evolution of the push for partnerships for sustainable development to be a formal outcome of the WSSD, and the controversy surrounding them, see: Progress or Peril? – Partnerships and Networks in Global Environmental Governance: The Post Johannesburg Agenda (2003) <http://www.gppi.net/index.php?id=140>

10. The remainder of this paper is divided into six parts:
 - I. Civil society's contributions to SARD policy from UNCED to WSSD
 - II. The road to Johannesburg: from policy to program
 - III. Major group roles and experiences following the launch of the SARD Initiative
 - IV. Lessons learned from the first five years of the Initiative
 - V. Recommendations for the future

I. Civil society's contributions to SARD policy from UNCED to WSSD

11. The framework for Chapter 14 of Agenda 21, *Promoting Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development*, evolved over a period of four years before UNCED. Governments of developed, mostly European nations began to push in 1987 for the integration of the principles of sustainable development into agricultural and rural development. For years there had been criticism of the failures of conventional agricultural development approaches and subsequent decline in government assistance for agriculture.

12. In November 1991, at a conference in Den Bosch, Netherlands, the SARD concept and programme of action was developed and subsequently refined and ratified by 160 Governments of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). In early 1992, this programme of action became Chapter 14 of Agenda 21, known then as the "dark horse" of Agenda 21 for having arisen so late in the process. The final 40 chapters of Agenda 21 were ratified by 178 governments in June 1992.

13. Civil society organizations (CSOs) that followed these developments were European environment and agriculture NGOs, the International Federation of Organic Farmers Movements (IFOAM), representatives of US organic and sustainable agriculture NGOs, and developing country NGO and smallholder farmers' organizations. Many CSOs were unhappy with the SARD framework that emerged from Den Bosch and the resulting chapter in Agenda 21. NGOs challenged the apparent green light for a technology-driven industrial food system as the only viable food system model for feeding 21st century growing populations in developing and developed countries.

14. With little opportunity to influence the text of Agenda 21, cross-sector groups of NGOs, farmers, women and youth organizations gathered parallel to Governments and debated and refined an "NGO Treaty on Sustainable Agriculture".⁸ Unlike Chapter 14 of Agenda 21, the NGO Treaty defined sustainable agriculture. It said:

Sustainable agriculture is a model of social and economic organization based on an equitable and participatory vision of development, which recognizes the environment and natural resources as the foundation of economic activity. Agriculture is

⁸ The alternative NGO "Treaty on Sustainable Agriculture" is still valid and useful to many groups today: <http://csdngo.igc.org/alttreaties/AT20.htm>. The definition found here was adopted as a product of multi-stakeholder collaborations between major groups and FAO in the development of the SARD Initiative (2002-2005).

sustainable when it is ecologically sound, economically viable, socially just, culturally appropriate and based on a holistic scientific approach. (paragraph 11)

15. Governmental agreements as found in Agenda 21 concerning SARD, and those that include international and multi-lateral agencies tend to emphasize technocratically-driven programmes and techniques alongside improvements in efficiency and productivity. International NGO agreements, however, tend to place the emphasis upon the requirement for people-centered approaches as a precondition for sustainable agriculture. “The concerns of NGOs and citizens’ organizations will only be effectively addressed in the field of sustainable agriculture and food security when the issues of empowerment and participation are viewed as a prerequisite to the achievement of sustainability”.⁹

16. During the CSD meetings between the 1992 Rio Earth Summit and the 2002 Johannesburg Summit, the policy and commitments agreed to by governments in Agenda 21 came up for review in several CSD sessions. The most important review before the WSSD in 2002 came in 2000, when CSD-8 focused on the themes of agriculture, land and trade. The 1990s had seen a steady increase of tension and controversy over the conflicting commitments of Governments to sustainable development in Agenda 21 and more binding commitments to liberalize trade policy as a priority over competing development goals with the founding of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994.

17. As part of the proceedings of CSD-8, multi-stakeholder dialogues on agriculture, land and trade occurred between governments and major groups, including Farmers, NGOs, Workers and Trade Unions, Business and Industry, Children and Youth, Women and Indigenous People. Multi-stakeholder dialogues had been initiated at CSD-6 in 1998, and this was the third time this experimental dialogue format was used. Each of the major groups prepared discussion papers¹⁰ and other background information¹¹ published in advance, and the dialogue was in four parts addressing:

1. Choices in agricultural production techniques, consumption patterns and safety regulations, potentials and threats to sustainable agriculture;
2. Best practices in land resources management to achieve sustainable food cycles;
3. Knowledge for a sustainable food system: identifying and providing for education, training, knowledge-sharing and information needs;
4. Globalization, trade liberalization, and investment patterns: economic incentives and framework conditions to promote sustainable agriculture.

18. The dialogue is to this day considered one of the best multi-stakeholder dialogues, and the CSD and ECOSOC called for continued discussion on the basis of this

⁹ NGO How to Booklet: Sustainable Agriculture and Food Security, by Linda Elswick, Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems (SAFS) Caucus Co-Coordinator, http://csdngo.igc.org/agriculture/agr_How_to.htm

¹⁰ The Papers prepared for CSD-8 can be found at: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/docs_csd8.htm

¹¹ As one example, the NGO Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Caucus prepared a wealth of background papers, found at http://csdngo.igc.org/agriculture/agr_paper.htm

dialogue.¹² Moreover, the dialogue process led to a call by the participating major groups for a decision to continue further development of issues discussed in the dialogue. The final Decision adopted by CSD-8 includes the following paragraph:

*As part of the ongoing review of progress towards SARD and within existing structures and resources, FAO and the Commission secretariat, in consultation with Governments, relevant international organizations and all major groups, are invited to continue the stakeholder dialogue on SARD, including facilitating the adequate and meaningful participation of stakeholders from developing countries. In preparing for the tenth session of the Commission and the 10-year review of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, this dialogue should emphasize the identification of specific examples and the development of case studies that illustrate or support the principles of SARD.*¹³

19. The positive dialogue was even more pronounced because the 1999 Seattle WTO Ministerial negotiations had collapsed, with widespread media coverage only four months prior to CSD-8 in April 2000. In fact, Governments meeting in the CSD were unable to make any significant progress balancing the conflicts between trade and agriculture, which made the multi-stakeholder dialogue stand out in that session. The decision made by Governments based on the dialogue would have multiple effects over the next eight years, when the same themes return to CSD-16 in May 2008.

II. The road to Johannesburg: from policy to program

20. While Governments inserted into paragraph 46 a reference to FAO as the facilitator of the continued dialogue from CSD-8, it was clear from the start to the civil society major groups that there were other equally important intergovernmental organizations that should have a part in the development of new collaborations on implementation of SARD. The institutions suggested for facilitation were FAO, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the International Labour Organization (ILO). At one point a joint, or shared, facilitation was even discussed among civil society groups and representatives of these organizations at CSD-8. The choice of FAO without reference to a shared responsibility would have certain consequences for SARD collaborations later.

21. Within a few months of the CSD-8 Decision, discussion began between FAO and the major groups responsible for the proposed policy. As the 16th Session of the FAO Committee on Agriculture (CoAG) was not far away, planning for an exportation of the New York CSD-style multi-stakeholder event began. In the spring of 2001 this dialogue occurred as a parallel event to CoAG, together with considerations related to the World

¹² See *Multistakeholder Dialogue on Sustainable Agriculture: Note by the Secretary General* (Feb 2000). http://csdngo.igc.org/agriculture/agr_How_to.htm

¹³ United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, Report on the eighth session (30 April 1999 and 24 April-5 May 2000). Economic and Social Council Official Records, 2000. Supplement No. 9. Decision 8/4, Paragraph 46. <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/mgroups/csd8decisions.htm>

Food Summit Five Years Later (WFS-FYL) and the WSSD. The dialogue was a great success, and the summary of the event included a decision to consider SARD every two years at CoAG. Further, the FAO recommended a further development of this work as a contribution to the WSSD.

22. The issues debated in New York at CSD-8, and revisited in Rome at CoAG-16, led directly to four themes proposed by major groups for a new Initiative, determined at a SARD consultation led by major groups at FAO in November 2001, just as plans for WSSD were starting to congeal. Among those plans was the call for “Type II” partnerships as an official outcome of the Johannesburg Summit. The SARD Initiative was called a “civil society-led, Government-supported, intergovernmentally-facilitated” Initiative, whose themes would be:

1. Access to resources
2. Fair conditions of employment
3. Good practices for SARD

The fourth theme was to address trade and food security, what later came to be called “food sovereignty”. At this time (2001) the term was not adequately understood by FAO and it was rejected as a theme of the SARD Initiative (later, the terms would be deemed acceptable and incorporated into intergovernmental decisions by 2007).

23. The major group sectoral model of civil society organization from CSD was brought to FAO where there was a different culture of engagement with external groups. FAO, as it is organized among Regional Conferences, supported a regional civil society representation and within that, a loose sectoral division among farmers, indigenous peoples, fisherfolk, and other social movements. In Rome, this civil society formation was and still is represented by the International Planning Committee (IPC), formed to bring civil society voices to FAO since the 1996 World Food Summit. In addition, FAO separates its relations with civil society from the private sector, whereas the major groups include business and industry.

24. Major groups led the call for new civil society leadership for SARD collaborations, termed “People-Centred Approaches to SARD”. In advance of the WSSD, civil society major groups jointly advocated for increased Government attention to agriculture and rural development. The result of civil society and Government pressure for attention to agriculture, rural development and land issues was positive in the sense that the JPOI had more substance in support of SARD and land than had been expected by most parties.

25. At the WSSD a formal side event was scheduled to launch the SARD Initiative, a direct outcome of all the dialogue and thematic development since CSD-8 in 2000. The SARD Initiative included a commitment to the three themes of access to resources, improving the conditions of employment in agriculture, and good practices for SARD. Over 60 Governments and civil society groups from 90 countries expressed commitment to the Initiative. It was launched as a “civil society-led, Government-supported and

Intergovernmentally-facilitated” Initiative, and was registered in the UNCSD database for sustainable development partnerships.

26. The major group leadership on SARD recognized the importance of building on common objectives among different stakeholders. They understood that it may take time and effort, but that lasting value results from mediating priorities for common efforts among unequal stakeholders. To accomplish this, the SARD Focal Points committed to facilitate a transparent structure for implementing these common efforts, beginning with the three thematic areas of the SARD Initiative. They agreed that improving indicators and the ability to assess good practice for SARD is a multi-stakeholder consensus-building process itself, and very necessary to continue to improve field practice and inform policy.

26. The SARD Initiative was not the only agriculture and land related partnership, but it was the only one that was presented in dynamic balance between these three sets of stakeholders: civil society, Governments and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). After two years of hard work following the CSD-8 Decision, the SARD Initiative was now a formal programme start. However, the details of programme design and resource mobilization all lay ahead. It would take another three years to see the SARD Initiative and related collaborations reach the level of country and thematic applications.

III. Major group roles and experiences following the launch of the SARD Initiative

27. From 2003 to 2005 the major groups worked with FAO on a programme development framework for the Initiative. Major groups SARD focal points from the CSD-8 and WSSD phases of policy development began to work on implementation of the Initiative with the FAO SARD Team. This process was guided in part by a decision-making process jointly arrived at by the FAO SARD Team and by the major groups. The products of this effort include a decision making protocol and a draft framework for the SARD Initiative programme. Frequent meetings of the FAO with major groups and a consulting facilitator for major group work helped to keep this process moving through 2003 and early 2004. In-person meetings occurred on an average of two times per year.

28. From the moment of the SARD Initiative launch in 2002, the resources for the design phase and implementation became challenging. While there were 60 Governments who committed to the launch of the Initiative, the resources for design and implementation did not materialize. FAO did not commit core funding, which meant the resources would have to be externally raised. Modest external resources did materialize over time, but in small amounts and not for structured civil society participation to work with FAO on the design and implementation of the SARD Initiative. What meager resources were found went primarily to the needs of the FAO SARD Team and other SARD-related units of FAO. The result is that the civil society leadership of the SARD Initiative was severely under-resourced to stay in the intended leadership role. This would have certain consequences for the programme.

29. Despite the resource challenge, there was a good faith effort on the part of both civil society major group focal points and the FAO SARD Team to develop a project proposal for a multi-donor trust fund and work plan. With the support of short-term consultancies and participation of many devoted volunteers, a multi-year project plan was developed in time for the 2005 meeting of CoAG, when SARD was on the agenda again. The role of civil society major groups in the implementation of national SARD projects was clearly articulated in the programme of work. A compilation of civil society contributions to SARD considered examples of good practices and as inputs to the SARD Initiative were included in a publication presented to governments at CoAg-19 in April 2005.¹⁴ In 2005, FAO designated the SARD Initiative a “high priority programme area”, the project framework was approved, and activities began to implement SARD collaborations at country levels.

30. Throughout the programme design period from 2003 to 2005, not only was there an ongoing resource challenge, as described above, but the difficult and often complicated process of communicating across organizational cultures presented a challenge for effective participation. The problem was greater than a lack of resources. From an institutional perspective, working with nine global major groups and many other stakeholders in an intergovernmental environment presented many challenges. Managing this complexity required a shift in priorities that the intergovernmental institutional environment had not been adequately prepared for. While there was a professional staff with the cultural and organizational knowledge base to work with diverse civil society stakeholders, there was less understanding and support from higher institutional levels.

31. The often intense pressure for resource and program deliverables as defined by the intergovernmental environment appeared to some civil society leaders as a drift away from the relevance to “people-centred development”. The pressures of the institution “facilitating” the Initiative moved steadily towards a focus on good practices more than access to resources and social equity issues, such as conditions of fair employment. These three thematic areas of work, defining the SARD Initiative as a programme of action, did continue to be developed, but not as an integrated framework. Part of the fractured nature of this development has to do with institutional divisions of focus, internal staff changes and leadership turnover. For example, the designation by FAO of the SARD Initiative as a “high priority programme” did not lead to a commensurate high level of championship within the institution, even with supportive Decisions of FAO Council in 2001, 2003 and 2005.

32. The question has been asked whether, in the SARD Initiative, an effective institutional framework for real partnership evolved in the first five years since 2002. In 2006, as the Initiative began to be taken up by donor countries and applied in developing countries, an effort was made to carry the institutional framework, which includes a permanent structure for multi-stakeholder governance to the next level. For the variety of reasons already mentioned, this structure has not been implemented.

¹⁴ <http://www.fao.org/SARD/en/init/963/2952/index.html>

33. Despite the difficulties of managing a multi-stakeholder, multi-major group programme at a global level, there are a number of results in thematic areas that can be attributed directly or indirectly to the collaborations between major groups and the intergovernmental environment. As the FAO states on the web pages listing the accomplishments of the SARD Initiative:

Perhaps the most important accomplishment has been to put agriculture-environment linkages back on the international development agenda. In many developing countries, sustainable development of agriculture and the rural economy are preconditions for success in the fight against poverty and hunger. Yet, for various reasons, this reality risked being overshadowed by other preoccupations in the run-up to Johannesburg. Civil society stakeholders participating in the SARD Initiative were among the first to recognize the fundamental importance of sustainable agriculture for poverty reduction and environmental protection; their active support in promoting this idea in numerous international fora has been crucial in getting it widely accepted.¹⁵

IV. Accomplishments and lessons of SARD multi-stakeholder collaborations from the first five years of the Initiative

34. A number of projects emerging from the SARD Initiative with important benefits and addressing gaps in the implementation of SARD at national levels did occur. Select but important examples include:

- a. An agreement on waged agriculture workers between ILO and FAO;
- b. Major group and CSO participation in the SARD Mountain Project;
- c. Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Indicators for SARD;
- d. A global livestock working group; and
- e. Focus on good practices for SARD by the Scientific and Technological Community major group sector in concert with FAO and IFAD.

35. The landmark agreement between the ILO and FAO resulted from the collaborations among the SARD Major Group Focal Point; the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers Associations (IUF); FAO; and ILO. As recently as WSSD, waged workers in agriculture were “falling through the cracks” in between these intergovernmental organizations. The agreement led to a joint FAO-ILO website, a focus on hazardous child labour in agriculture and a new division on rural employment at FAO. All this and more is detailed in a 2007 report entitled, *Agricultural Workers and their Contribution to Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development*.¹⁶

36. At the time of WSSD, a parallel multi-stakeholder SARD Mountain Partnership formed with the support of FAO and certain Governments. Elements of the major groups and the multi-stakeholder process found in the SARD Initiative were incorporated into the “Adelboden Group”, as the SARD Mountain Partnership governing body is called.

¹⁵ <http://www.fao.org/SARD/en/init/2536/966/index.html>

¹⁶ <http://www.fao.org/docrep/008/af164e/af164e00.htm>

The project framework combines good SARD practices in mountain regions with the need for good policy in a way that is exemplary for future linking of good practice to policy.¹⁷

37. From early in the debates on SARD, indigenous peoples have been leading on the subject of culturally appropriate SARD practices, from respect for native food systems and their diversity, to the ways resources are managed and preserved for an integrated biological and cultural diversity. The debate about these issues during CSD-8, especially on the relationships between traditional and science-based knowledge for SARD, led to a focus on culturally appropriate indicators for SARD. The Indigenous People's sector held two consultations on the right to food, with a focus on access to resources, knowledge, and the resilience of traditional food systems. This important work also resulted from the collaborations between civil society and Governments on SARD, starting with UNCED and continuing through CSD-16.¹⁸

38. A global livestock working group making local to global linkages was a priority agreed to by SARD major groups and other stakeholders, including FAO and IFAD. The purposes of the working group are to raise visibility of and attention to livestock-related issues at all levels and develop local, regional and global linkages among groups pursuing this common goal. One country-level application of this priority is the Kenya Livestock Working Group¹⁹ led by the Business and Industry SARD major group, and the Kenya-based SARD Livestock Self-Help Group. This collaboration among Governments, major groups and IGOs is ongoing.

39. A number of country experiences with national cross-sector or major group capacity building have occurred and are reviewed in FAO documents. Kenya was the first country level implementation of the SARD Initiative, and advance investments of time on the part of international major group and intergovernmental (FAO) staff helped the country level leadership to identify SARD priorities reflected in work plans funded by international donors. This "bottom-up" assessment of priorities in countries where donors are ready to implement a SARD project has been a varied experience, and worked well in Kenya, serving as an example for other countries.

40. These experiences, among many others, have been important positive developments as a clear and direct result of the SARD Initiative-generated collaborations. They have had clear impacts in communities and field levels. The monitoring and evaluation of these impacts is not developed in ways that respect the diversity of stakeholder engagement with all levels of the SARD process from practice to policy. The four areas of challenges for the future of these collaborations must be addressed:

- a) the *institutional challenge* of managing a program across diverse organizational cultures and the need for decision-making policies and protocols;

¹⁷ <http://www.fao.org/sard/en/sardm/home/index.html>

¹⁸ <http://www.fao.org/sard/en/init/964/2687/2453/index.html>

¹⁹ Kenya Livestock Working Group: www.sard-klwg.org

- b) the *resource challenge* of adequate funding and skilled professional staffing in both civil society and the Civil Service;
- c) the *participation challenge* of balancing donor Government/NGO priorities and developing country CSO/major group priorities dialogue, capacity building and programme development; and
- d) the *leadership challenge* of maintaining champions for the spirit and letter of intent at both intergovernmental and civil society levels.

V. Recommendations for the future

41. Our review of the lessons and challenges for collaboration on implementation of SARD undertaken at CSD-16 will provide the platform to recommend policy actions at CSD-17 that continue to connect good practice in the field with good policy. Among those recommendations should be both renewal and refinement of Government commitment to collaboration efforts among stakeholders including major groups of civil society, Governments, intergovernmental organizations and other stakeholders. The lessons and challenges listed above suggest more specific policy is needed to tie good practice at the community level to improved policy and improved programme development at Governmental and intergovernmental levels.

42. **The institutional, resource, participation and leadership challenges should be met in the beginning, not in the course of the development of a collaboration, initiative or partnership for SARD.** The SARD Initiative and related collaborations reveals the good multi-stakeholder development practices required capacity building that is ongoing. Often capacity building is considered for the sectors with less technical or formal training. In fact it is also the case that capacity building is needed for intergovernmental organizations to work productively with civil society consultative and governance processes.

43. **Decision protocols should become standard with regular accounting for their use.** Some of the innovations are relatively simple, such as always having both government *and* civil society co-chairs for consultations and summary reports and official documentation. Vetting systems for institutional organizations and community-based organization can be very different, but both are essential and need to be accommodated. For example, it may be possible to have a turnaround in a week in one, but not less than three or four weeks in another.

44. **The metrics or indicators for measuring progress should be agreed to by all parties to a multi-stakeholder collaboration** without a bias to one metric or another for the whole collaboration. For example, a certain way of describing development outcomes in the institutional sector may be not important in the civil society arena. Other development criteria may be more important to funders than to village level participants, and different again for institutional evaluators. All are important within their institutional and cultural contexts, but what matters across a collaboration must be negotiated.

45. In conclusion, the SARD Initiative has been an excellent springboard for policy advocacy on a range of issues, increasing stakeholder engagement at all levels, linking local practice to policy and building on comparative advantages of wide range of different sectors and stakeholders working together. For civil society, the success of this kind of collaborative work will require capacity building at all levels, equalizing access to financial and human resources, enforcing established decision protocols, and careful strategic planning with the full array of partners at international and national levels.