

Multistakeholder Dialogue on Implementing Sustainable Development

Briefing Note

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Rationale and Background

At its eleventh session, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) decided that its multi-year programme of work beyond 2003 would be based on seven two-year cycles, with each cycle focusing on selected thematic clusters of issues. These two-year cycles comprise *Review and Policy Years*. The *Review Year* is meant to evaluate progress made in implementing sustainable development goals and identifying obstacles and constraints, while the *Policy Year* goes beyond this to reach agreements on measures to speed up implementation, mobilize action, and overcome the obstacles and constraints.

Out of the three cycles completed thus far, the Commission reached agreed decisions in two cycles, namely on water, sanitation and human settlements during the 13th session (2005) and on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa during the 17th session (2009).

The slow rate of implementation of the sustainable development agenda, including the CSD decisions, remains a source of concern at all levels. This concern has been expressed by many stakeholders at different international meetings including in sessions of the Commission itself. Although CSD continues to remain the leading mechanism within the United Nations system to follow up the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, many stakeholders hold the view that CSD needs to become more forward-looking and action oriented. This is possible, but requires that decisions taken by the Commission are implemented in their true spirit by all stakeholders. Governments of developing countries continue to struggle with accessing enough resources, and acquiring capacities and technologies to implement the decisions leading to slow progress in meeting internationally agreed goals.

While most of these questions will continue to require political discussion and consensus, more immediate progress is possible in some areas. The foremost of these consists of actions that involve the more effective use of technical knowledge and policy agreements. Against this background, the dialogue among the political groups and other stakeholders must continue beyond the CSD sessions in an effort to jointly translate agreed decisions into action. The “*Multistakeholders Dialogue on Implementing Sustainable Development*” is a modest effort in this direction.

Key Messages from CSD-17 Session

Negotiated Outcomes include 278 decisions/actions, including 46 (in 5 clusters) on Agriculture; 49 (in 6 clusters) on Rural Development; 41 (in 5 clusters) on Land; 27 (in 4 clusters) on Drought; 27 (in 3 clusters) on Desertification; 53 (in 9 clusters) on Africa; and 35

(in 4 clusters) on Inter-linkages and Means of Implementation. Key messages stemming from these agreed decisions include:

- Enhance agricultural productivity and food security
- Improve policy coherence for agricultural development
- Create conditions for sustainable rural livelihoods
- Build social capital and resilience of rural communities
- Promote integrated management of land and water resources
- Intensify efforts for capacity building and technology transfer
- Make green revolution in Africa a reality
- Adapt to climate change
- Increase international financial and technical cooperation for development
- Strengthen multi-stakeholders participation and partnerships

Objectives of the Dialogue

Main objective of the proposed dialogue is provide further impetus to the implementation of decisions made during CSD-17 to promote sustainable agriculture and rural development. In this regard, the Dialogue will specifically focus on:

- Reviewing the extent to which different implementing partners are engaged in the implementation of agreed decisions.
- Raising awareness about innovative methods and tools for strengthening farmers' capacities in developing countries.
- Enhancing stronger linkages and building partnerships between government agencies, the private sector, civil society, research community, international and regional institutions, local communities as well as the UN system.
- Promoting a fast-track strategy for scaling up of successful practices.

Format and Scope of the Dialogue

The dialogue will be organized in two sessions, each session of 3 hours duration.

The first session will focus on the role of different implementing partners in advancing the implementation of decisions made during CSD-17. The session will be divided into three parts. In the first part, three keynote presentations will be made by eminent experts. These presentations will provide an overarching framework to highlight the importance and usefulness of CSD-17 decisions to advance the cause of sustainable agriculture and rural development. The intent here is not to discuss the merits of agreed decisions but to see what actions are being taken by the countries to secure the implementation of agreed decisions. Key themes to be covered during the presentations include: food security, poverty reduction, capacity building of farmers, and scaling up of successful practices.

During the second part of the session, implementing partners (Governments, UN system organizations, IFIs, international NGOs and private sector etc.) will be invited to express their views on the state of implementation. Although it is too early to evaluate as to what extent CSD-17 decisions have been implemented, the discussion will at least points out whether or not we are moving in right direction.

The third part of the session will be devoted to a dialogue between the Member States and the Secretariats of the Governing Bodies of UN system organizations. The CSD Secretariat has already begun efforts to strengthen the inter-agency partnership within the UN system, encouraging the UN agencies, funds and programmes as well as relevant MEAs to reflect the relevant CSD decisions in their respective work programmes for implementation.

The second session will focus on promoting the need for building partnerships around decisions of common interest to different implementation partners.

Like the first session, in the first part, three keynote presentations will be made by eminent experts. These presentations will highlight, based on the lessons learned from past interventions and experiences, as to what do we need to do differently to advance the pace of implementation. The experts will talk about adaptation strategies to address threats posed by the climate change to sustainable rural livelihoods, as well as about the need for expanding social services to reduce rural poverty.

The second part of the session will highlight how different partnership initiatives are contributing to the implementation of CSD-17 decisions especially in the areas of capacity building, technology transfer, financing and connecting farmers to research and extension systems. A dialogue with the representatives of partnership initiatives will help in understanding key elements of the fast-track strategy needed for scaling up of sustainable agricultural practices.

The third part of the session will brief the stakeholders on the plans to operationalize the Sustainable Development Knowledge Partnership (SDKP) that was established during CSD-17. One of the first priorities for the SDKP is to use information and communication technologies to enable more streamlined access to policy relevant information. This could be achieved by organizing a web-based information system for sustainable development and make it available to the policy-making and other communities in a coherent, searchable, and user-friendly form. One example of such a potential platform is the eXtension project which connects knowledge consumers with knowledge generators through an internet based platform. eXtension.org.

Participants

The Multistakeholder Dialogue is open to all representatives of the UN Member States, business sector, civil society including policy research community, international and regional institutions and networks, local communities and the relevant UN agencies funds and programmes. The Secretariats of the Governing Bodies of UN system organizations are also invited to participate in this dialogue.