



CSD & MAJOR GROUPS

ORIENTATION and TRAINING WORKSHOP

Sunday May 3, 2009

On behalf of the NGO Major Group organising partner, the SDIN Group¹ we would like to invite all representatives from the Major Groups community at CSD to participate in a training session prior to CSD.

The training session takes place on Sunday, May 3 at the Bahá'í International Community in New York.

The Bahá'í International Community is located just a few minute's walk from the UN on the corner of 1st Avenue and 48 Street, on the same side of 1st Avenue as the UN.

The correct address is 866 UN Plaza. You will find the entrance a block north of the UN, almost at the very end of the UN Garden, across from the German House and just south of the Beekman Tower Hotel.

Please

note:

The Major Groups' registration for accreditation to the CSD starts on Sunday May 4 at 12:00. The venue is accessible through the UN Visitor's Entrance located at 45th Street and 1st Avenue. Once inside, proceed to the NGO registration desk. In order to register for participation and receive a ground pass to enter the UN complex, you must present your confirmation letter together with a valid passport or other photo identification.

The training workshop, PROGRAMME

CSD and Major Groups

12:30 – a small informal luncheon.

13:15 How to behave, what are our opportunities, how to understand the CSD modalities and which opportunities are available to us:

By Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, NGO Co-organising partner at CSD

13:45 Questions and answers

14:00 CSD and the work-programme

By Federica Pietracci, MG Coordinator, UN CSD Secretariat

14:30 Questions and answers

15:00 the Political Challenges that faces us at this CSD

By Neth Dano (Malaysia), TWN and Nnimmo Basso (Nigeria), Friends of the Earth International with contributions from other issue based organisations.

¹ The SDIN Group consists of ANPED, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability (Europe, North America and Central Asia), ELCI, The Environment Liaison Centre International (Africa and Asia) and TWN; Third World Network, (Asia, Africa and Latin America)

16:00 – General discussion including questions and answers

17:00 The Monday presentation and participation, facilitated by Neth Dano.

Monday is the first day the Major Groups will meet the delegations. Each major group will be allowed to meet with their delegation and discuss the approach.

18:00 – the workshop closes (at the latest)

The following gives an overview of the content of the workshop:

The workshop will start with a small modest lunch and some beverages for those present.

The meeting will be chaired by Neth Dano, TWN, and Jan-Gustav Strandenaes, ANPED.

The modalities available to Major Groups at CSD.

Civil society through the Major Groups is according to decisions taken at CSD 11, granted extensive participation at CSD, and to ascertain some efficiency and relevance, both concerning the nine Major Groups and the delegations, a number of modalities have been developed. These can be described as rules of engagement and rules of performance.

From a technical point of view, these rules and modalities are the following:

- The organisation from the Major Groups must have relevant accreditation, according to rules by the CSD.
- Access is given to all meetings during negotiations, unless certain committee meetings or breakout groups are described as 'closed'.
- Access to all documents is provided on a continuous basis prior to as well as throughout the CSD negotiations.
- The Major Groups are further provided ample opportunities to participate in the policy session through
 - Organising side events;
 - Participating in 'official' side events;
 - Participating and presenting at the learner centre;
 - Participating in the Major Groups morning meeting, facilitated by the NGOs
 - Participating in the special policy sessions for each major group;
- CSD secretariat organises regular meetings with the Bureau for the 9 co-organising partners;
- The Chair of the Bureau may, if invited by civil society, address the Major Groups morning meeting;
- Regional groups (governments) may select a number of key representatives from the Major Groups and have meetings with them (often a practice used by the EU, the US and USCANZ/JUSSCANNZ)²;
- The dialogue sessions: Time is set aside for the official plenary to have a dialogue with all the 9 Major Groups on the cluster themes. After having listened to short presentations by representatives of each of the 9 Major Groups, the plenary discusses their inputs, in what should be an interactive exchange of ideas and concerns.
- The nine Major Groups have a right to address the plenary following certain procedures:

² USCANZ The USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; JUSSCANNZ Japan, the USA, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Norway and New Zealand

- There are formally designated spaces, so-called entry points, for a representative of the 9 Major Groups to address the plenary – at the opening of CSD, through the dialogue sessions, at the Ministerial Roundtables and at the closing of the formal session, and, opportunity provided, commenting on the chairs text; this last is usually at the discretion of the chair.
- The chair may ask Major Groups to address a segment in the official plenary with a prepared statement.
- During the review session, when many of the sessions are based on panel discussions, members from the 9 Major Groups are asked to be part of the panels.

Creating space for major groups, points of entry and engagement

The nine Major Groups, representing civil society at CSD, often has a long way to go to bring the procedural context to their constituencies and make use of it to maximise their opportunities in interacting with CSD in a constructive and meaningful way.

Obtaining as many entry points as possible during the official negotiations and discussions has been a goal the nine Major Groups always have been striving for. Making these entry points visible for major group representatives is imperative. Thus ongoing information services throughout the year on the CSD cluster themes, and a well-organised training session prior to CSD have been deemed crucial for the success of civil society/ Major Group participation at CSD.

The training session prior to the CSD opening is to familiarise major group representatives with procedure, lobby techniques, the agenda, the contentious issues, services available to the civil society participants etc.

This training session is also to some extent, kept up during the work carried out at the major groups morning meetings facilitated by the NGOs, partly by devoting these meetings to content and reporting, as well as explaining difficult issues pertaining to political positions etc, and partly by having an open agenda so people can ask questions and understand the difficulties embedded in intergovernmental processes and intricate UN policy matters.

Each of the Major Groups organise their own policy discussions at special meetings designated to deal with just policy.

Another success element for effective major group participation is the daily news service. The NGOs publish a daily newsletter, an 8 to 10 pager, commenting on the policy development during the CSD sessions and allowing the various major group participants to come with their own views and statements. The newsletter is read by most delegates, and gives them an opportunity to see what major groups are thinking as well. This has been an information service carried out by NGOs every year at CSD since 1997.