

# CHAPTER VI.

## THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### STATE MEMBERS

Algeria	Costa Rica	Hungary	Republic of Korea
Antigua & Barbuda	Croatia	Iran, Islamic Republic of	Russian Federation
Argentina	Democratic Republic of the Congo	Jamaica	Saint Lucia
Australia	Egypt	Japan	Saudi Arabia
Austria	Ethiopia	Kazakhstan	Sierra Leone
Azerbaijan	Fiji	Lesotho	South Africa
Bangladesh	Finland	Luxembourg	Sudan
Belgium	France	Nepal	The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Belize	Gabon	Netherlands	Turkey
Benin	Germany	Norway	Uganda
Brazil	Ghana	Pakistan	United Kingdom
Canada	Guinea-Bissau	Paraguay	United States
China	Honduras	Peru	Uzbekistan
Colombia		Qatar	

This year, AMUN is simulating the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), one of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Participation is open to one or two Representatives from any country currently seated on the Commission. The CSD will meet all four days of the Conference, and will present a report to ECOSOC on the final day. While the range of subject matter before the CSD may seem overwhelming, significant work on the topics of discussion is nonetheless achievable with thoughtful preparation.

### ABOUT THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The CSD was created in December 1992 as a follow up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), which addressed the urgent problems of environmental protection and socio-economic development. The UNCED, also known as the Earth Summit, endorsed the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and adopted Agenda 21, a plan for achieving sustainable development in the 21st century. The objectives of the CSD, as defined by the General Assembly, are to ensure effective follow-up to UNCED, enhance international cooperation, integrate environment and development issues and examine the progress of the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national, regional and international levels.

The CSD is a 53-member commission of ECOSOC and meets annually to monitor and report on the implementation of the Earth Summit agreements. Members are elected to three year terms by ECOSOC with broad regional representation. The CSD also receives assistance from the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development. Non-Member States, UN organizations, and inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations are also encouraged to participate.

A five year review of the Earth Summit (Earth Summit +5) was held in June 1997, where a special session of the GA adopted the CSD's Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21. The ten year review was held in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. The WSSD Plan of Implementation, reiterates the initial mandate and function of the CSD, and calls for an enhanced role for the CSD to respond in an integrated fashion to new demands in sustainable development. The Plan of Implementation focuses not only on linkages between global initiatives and regional and national plans, but also on increased integration between economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development goals.

### THE SIMULATION

During the 2004 AMUN Conference, the CSD will consider topics of Trade and Sustainable Development, addressed in Chapter 2 of Agenda 21 and Chapters V and X of the Plan of Implementation. To allow for more detailed substantive debate, the simulation will be limited to two topics: Making Trade and Environment Mutually Supportive; and Encouraging Macroeconomic Policies Conducive to Environment and Development. The Commission will be able to write both reports on the subjects, as well as resolutions when appropriate to recommend actions.

### PREPARATION

As a foundation for subsequent research, Representatives are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In addition, documents from past sessions that considered trade and development will be an extremely helpful starting point. Careful review of the following topic overviews and the related bibliographies will provide some assistance in this regard. It should be noted however that the topic overviews should not serve as the terminal point for research efforts but only as the beginning.



## BACKGROUND RESEARCH

### MAKING TRADE AND ENVIRONMENT MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE

The past three decades have marked a growing awareness of the connection between development and environmental protection. The need for economic growth in the developing world has clashed with the need to preserve vital environmental resources throughout the world.

In 1972, the UN Conference on the Human Environment initiated an investigation of the relationship between development and environmental protection. The UN World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland Commission) was the body created for this task. In its 1987 report the commission called for the development of specific strategies for achieving sustainable development.

With the interconnectedness of the world economy, and desiring to promote worldwide economic prosperity and environmental preservation, the UN sponsored the 1992 United Nations Conference of Environmental Development (UNCED) in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Representatives of 172 states attended, as well as numerous NGOs, representing groups such as women, farmers, trade unions, indigenous peoples, and local authorities. The most significant agreements passed at the conference were the Rio Conference Declaration on Environment and Development, and Agenda 21. The Declaration contains 27 principles that stress universal rights to economic development while addressing the needs of present and future generations. Agenda 21 is a long-term plan laying out how to achieve sustainable development throughout the world. Agenda 21 focuses on social and economic dimensions of development, resource management, and strengthening the role of those directly affected by the developmental policies. Agenda 21 also contains a proposal for the implementation of the above-mentioned issues.

More specifically, Agenda 21 calls for a new global partnership that would strengthen international collaboration and thus promote the implementation of the newly adopted strategies. In addition to states, organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are called on to promote global partnerships and cooperation with developing countries. Further, Agenda 21 contains commitments to promote economic policies that would favor environmental sustainability and highlights the need of a dynamic international environment that would provide the developing countries with the opportunity to grow economically while promoting environmental protection.

Agenda 21 recognizes that trade is one of the principal means to achieve sustainable development. The agreement recognizes that developing countries must make a continued effort to integrate into the international trading system in order to experience economic growth. While international trade provides the developing countries with a fundamental chance to achieve economic growth, it is important that such growth does not occur at the expense of the environment. Therefore Agenda 21 calls for (a) achieving sustainable development through trade liberalization, (b) providing for trade and environment to be mutually supportive, (c) aiding financially the developing countries, and (d) encouraging economic policies supportive of both environment and economic development.

In December 1992, the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created to monitor the implementation of Agenda 21. The CSD is a commission of the UN Economic and Social Council. Since 1992 it has been evaluating reports on

the implementation of the provisions enshrined in Agenda 21.

From June 23 to 27, 1997 the UN General Assembly gathered in special session in New York, in what was called Earth Summit +5, to discuss the process of implementation of the Earth Summit agreements. Although modest progress was made in areas such as population growth, collaboration between international institutions and world food production, general trends suggested that the commitment demonstrated by States to implement the goals of Earth Summit Agreements are still far from producing sustainable development.

Stressing further the importance of environmental sustainability, the UN in 2000 adopted the Millennium Declaration, containing eight goals to be achieved by 2015. One of these goals was environmental sustainability. The Millennium goals represent an additional commitment of both developed and developing countries to eradicate poverty through promotion of economic growth and environmental sustainability.

In 2002, the Earth Summit +10 was held in Johannesburg, South Africa to follow-up on the grave concerns that emerged during the Earth Summit +5 on the implementation of Agenda 21 (1997). The summit convened to once again assess the progress in the implementation of the aforementioned plan. Nevertheless, it was once again recognized that the provisions contained in Agenda 21 demanded severe structural changes in international and national economic and environmental policies. The Earth Summit +10 was called to reinforce the necessity of the implementation of the provisions of Agenda 21, the failings of which were recognized during the Earth Summit +5. Some of the failures were identified in the field of international aid, which fell since 1992, growing international debt and inadequate technology transfer. States once again re-affirmed the necessity of protecting the environment while encouraging development. It was, once again, recognized that the economies of the developing countries depend heavily on the use of their environment for production. Therefore it is important to reaffirm the necessity of promoting global partnerships that will promote cooperation, technology transfer and protection of the environment while encouraging economic growth of the developing countries. While the Western countries again stressed the importance of the commitments made, the representatives of Group of 77 and the NGOs participating in the conference acknowledged that too little is being done.

While Agenda 21 remains the most comprehensive long-term plan on achieving sustainable development and economic growth in the world, it has also not yet been fully implemented. The 2002 Johannesburg Earth Summit +10 revitalized the work of the CSD, but further commitment is needed on the part of both developed and developing countries to fully implement the principles of Agenda 21.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- What steps can your nation take to promote sustainable development?
- What position has your nation taken on issues relative to international cooperation to achieve broad-based equitable growth?
- What additional steps can the UN use to ensure greater compliance with Agenda 21 and other international agreements?
- What steps can the industrialized world take to encourage equitable trade with the developing nations?



- What can the developing nations do to promote environmental protection while improving their national economy and international trade?

### Bibliography:

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- “Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.” UN Environment Programme. [www.unep.org/Documents/Default.asp?DocumentID=78&ArticleID=1163](http://www.unep.org/Documents/Default.asp?DocumentID=78&ArticleID=1163)
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- “Summit Ends; Countries Approve Action Plan” *UN Wire* 4 Sep 2002.
- “Trade and Sustainable Development.” UN Department on Economic and Social Affairs. [www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/trade/trade.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/sdissues/trade/trade.htm)
- “UN Says Outcome Plan Moving Ahead” *UN Wire*, 27 Aug 2002.
- “U.N. Special Session Opens Today Will Assess Progress Since 1992 Rio Earth Summit.” United Nations Association. [www.unausa.org/aboutus/press12.asp](http://www.unausa.org/aboutus/press12.asp)
- “World Bank To Discuss Best, Worst Practices For Development.” *UN Wire*, 3 May 2004.

#### *UN Documents:*

- A/C.2/58.5, 5 Oct 2003, Implementation of Agenda 21
- A/RES/44/228, 22 Dec 1989. United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
- A/RES/45/210, 21 Dec 1990. Environment and International Trade.
- A/RES/55/2, 18 Sept, 2000, UN Millennium Declaration
- A/RES/58/218 23 Dec 2003, Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development
- A/RES/58/197, 23 Dec, 2003, International trade and development
- E/CN.17/2001/PC/10
- E/2001/29
- E/CN.17/2000/4
- E/CN.17/1996/8
- E/CN.17/1996/IDC/Misc.1
- E/CN.17/1995/12

#### *Additional Web Resources:*

- [www.greenpeace.org/international\\_en/campaigns/intro?campaign\\_id=3943](http://www.greenpeace.org/international_en/campaigns/intro?campaign_id=3943), Greenpeace on trade and environment
- [www.foei.org/trade/](http://www.foei.org/trade/), Friends of the Earth
- [www.fao.org/DOCREP/003/X6730E/X6730E01.HTM](http://www.fao.org/DOCREP/003/X6730E/X6730E01.HTM), FAO
- [www.unep.org/wssd/Default.asp](http://www.unep.org/wssd/Default.asp), UN Environment Program, World Summit on Sustainable Development.
- [www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.asp?intItemID=1530&lang=1](http://www.unctad.org/Templates/Page.asp?intItemID=1530&lang=1) United Nations Conference on trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- [earthwatch.unep.net/development/index.php](http://earthwatch.unep.net/development/index.php), UN System-Wide Earthwatch.
- [www.un.org/esa/sustdev/](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/), CSD Homepage

## ENCOURAGING MACROECONOMIC POLICIES CONDUCIVE TO ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

The Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development defined sustainable development as “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” In order to set a solid foundation in which nation states can develop policy that is conducive to sustainable development, world leaders met in 1992 for the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. The product of the summit was Agenda 21, a framework for the global plan of action for sustainable development. The Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created in order to ensure the implementation of Agenda 21. The role of the CSD is to ensure adequate follow up of the Earth Summit and to report on the implementation of Agenda 21. A five year follow up conference was held in 1997 and a ten year follow-up conference was held at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. The WSSD built upon work done by the World Trade Organization’s Ministerial Conference (fourth session, Doha, November 2001) and the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, March 2002). The summit launched the Johannesburg Plan for Implementation which contains specific and time bound goals (A/58/210).

Several key issues have been recognized that can be addressed on the macroeconomic level (Agenda 21, Chapters 2, 33). It has been recognized by the CSD, the World Trade Organization, and numerous NGOs that trade liberalization can have substantial impact on sustainable development. Trade liberalization helps to reduce poverty by creating new markets for goods, along with access to resources; this in turn has an effect on sustainable development. When trade liberalization is properly implemented, new economic avenues are opened to those in poverty, and the poor no longer need to rely on practices that lead to environmental degradation in order to survive. However, it is important to note that policy on the national level must be implemented such that all citizens are ensured equitable access to economic opportunities and natural resources.

A report on the progress of the implementation of Agenda 21 states that, “scientific understanding of the ecological, social and economic implications of biodiversity loss is limited and scattered” (E/CN.17/2004/2). The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment was commissioned to study this complex issue through a global research endeavor. A conceptual framework was developed and published in September 2003.

With the onset of globalization there has been an influx of environmentally sound technologies into developing countries. The transfer of technology typically occurs within the context of “trade, foreign direct investment, and infrastructure projects” (E/CN.17/2004/2). Technology transfer is vital to developing countries in that it allows them to become competitive in the world market and use natural resources more efficiently and with less damage to their ecosystems.

At the national level, strategies for sustainable development generally evolve as poverty reduction strategies that incorporate social, economic and environmental issues. It is important to encourage member states to truly integrate social economic and environmental issues, and not to allow them to become secondary considerations when formulating policy. Also, in many developing countries macroeconomic policy for development and environmental policy are often disjointed, thus the challenge becomes creating cohesive policy.



Also bear in mind that many of the goals and the plans of actions of the Millennium Development Goals are conducive to achieving sustainable development. While sustainable development is not one of the specific MDGs, implementation of several of the major goals including eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, ensuring environmental sustainability and the development of global partnerships for development are related to sustainable development. Achievement of these development goals will have direct effects on issues of sustainable development. Concurrent implementation of Agenda 21 and the Millennium Development Goals will each reinforce the other.

While real progress has been made in the last decade, it is vital that a continued and sustained effort toward sustainable development be maintained. Several key areas where more progress is necessary include efforts to make consumption and production patterns more equitable as well as strategies to ensure market access for developing countries.

Questions to consider from your government's perspective on this issue include:

- Sustainable development occurs at both the national and international level. What commitments from the international community will your state require to successfully implement Agenda 21? What national commitments will need to be made to successfully implement Agenda?
- What is your country's position on free trade? What barriers stand in the way of free trade for your country?
- How does free trade effect the environment? Are there ways in which "sound macroeconomic policies" may not be the best route for sustainable development?

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- A/CONF.199/20, 26 Aug - 4 Sep 2002, Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa
- A/RES/55/199, 5 Feb 2001, Ten-year review of progress achieved in the Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
- A/RES/55/2, 18 Sep 2000. United Nations Millennium Declaration
- E/CN.17/2004/2, 24 Feb 2004 Overview of progress towards sustainable development: a Programme for the Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development Report of the Secretary-General: Review of the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation Report of the Secretary-General

### Additional Web Resources:

- [www.un.org/esa/sustdev/](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/) -- The Commission on Sustainable Development
- [www.johannesburgsummit.org](http://www.johannesburgsummit.org) -- Official UN website for the Johannesburg Summit 2002
- [www.un.org/millenniumgoals/](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/) -- Official UN website for the Millennium Development Goals
- [www.millenniumassessment.org](http://www.millenniumassessment.org) -- Millennium Ecosystem Assessment: Strengthening Capacity to Manage Ecosystems Sustainability for Human Well-Being