



A Special Report on Selected Side Events at the
First Round of 'Informal-Informal' Negotiations on the Zero Draft of the
Outcome Document *and* Third Intersessional Meeting of the UN Conference
on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20)

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Events convened on Wednesday, 21 March 2012

Sustainable Development Goals and MDG post-2015 Development Agenda: The gender dimension

Presented by UN-Women, Switzerland and the Women's Major Group



Ambassador Dessima Williams, Permanent Mission of Grenada to the UN, called on those present to utilize the ideas and lessons discussed in the broader Rio+20 negotiations.

Ambassador Dessima Williams, Permanent Mission of Grenada to the UN, opened the session, saying that this event addressed gender equality and women's rights in the development agenda post-2015.

Saraswathi Menon, UN-Women, said that the outcomes of the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) need to set objectives that are transformative and inclusive in order to be successful. She called for systemic approaches for women to be included into the sustainable development agenda, and for gender inequality to be strongly reflected in proposed sustainable development goals (SDGs).

Usman Iftikhar, UN Development Programme (UNDP), noted that the success of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) depends on: effective policies to support implementation; improved quantity, quality and focus of investments; and appropriate institutional capacity to deliver quality services equitably.

Anita Nayar, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), called for the development agenda to move beyond the MDG definition of income poverty. She suggested that possible SDGs confront the inequitable distribution of poverty, urging women's groups and social movements to be fully involved in the Rio+20 process.

Ximena Andión-Ibañez, Information Group on Reproductive Choice and Realizing Sexual and Reproductive Justice, Mexico, said that the lessons learned from the MDGs have indicated that a holistic agenda and approach is needed. Andrea Ries, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), said there will be no progress in the development agenda if women are not involved or considered in all aspects.

Marcia Machagata, Ministry of Social Affairs and Combating Hunger, Brazil, said that equity is an important concept heading towards Rio+20, noting that addressing social security and poverty issues can have multiplier effects. Lize McCourt, Chief Operating Officer, South African Department of Environmental Affairs, stated that mainstreaming gender is important, but that this alone will not achieve gender equality. She stressed that implementation and monitoring functions are equally necessary.

In the ensuing discussion, delegates addressed: the need to focus on the goals already set; insufficient implementation of gender equality policies; and linkages between MDGs and SDGs.

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Food Sovereignty and Agroecology - A New paradigm for development

Presented by La Via Campesina

This event focused on food sovereignty and agroecology as alternate concept to development.

Chaired by Jessica Roe, La Via Campesina, she lamented that the contribution of small-scale farmers and traditional knowledge has not been fully recognized in the debates surrounding Rio+20.

Carlos Marentes, La Via Campesina, outlining the progression of the concepts of development and sustainable development, lamented that comprehensive, successful programmes addressing development, have yet to be seen. He said that food sovereignty is a concept defined by the right of people to healthy and culturally-appropriate food produced through ecologically-sound and sustainable methods and the right to define their own food and agriculture systems. He underscored that the definition goes beyond food production, approaching it from a holistic and societal point of view.

Ceci Charles-King, Voice of African Mothers (VAM) and Women's Major Group, noted that there are still disputes as to how the land is used and owned within traditional paradigms. Outlining her traditional roots, she said that food sovereignty addresses intergenerational food security, as well as intergenerational seed security. She highlighted the importance of traditional knowledge for ensuring well-nourished soil and well-fed communities.

Azra Sayeed, People's Food Sovereignty Coalition, said sustainable agriculture has taught us that food evolves along with the rest of nature. She lamented the "Green Revolution," saying that it has been detrimental for soil quality and led to mass crop production that is of poor quality. She cautioned that linking microfinance to agriculture and food security will increase the level of indebtedness of the people. She also cautioned against "Western" science and suggested that the knowledge and science of farmers and traditional knowledge be acknowledged as a part of science that can underpin these policies.

Silvia Ribeiro, ETC Group, noted that agriculture is of crucial importance for the Rio+20 negotiations given the failure of the current agro industrial food production system. Saying that the "largest" myth is that the "Green Revolution" has improved food poverty, she lamented that the percentage of hungry and malnourished people is increasing. She noted, however, that 70% of current food production is from small farmers, urban gardening, pastoralists, artisanal fishers and others.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed: overconsumption; the collaboration of scientists with small farmers; systems of sustainable agriculture; and terminator technology in seeds.



Carlos Marentes, La Via Campesina, said support for sustainable agriculture practices are needed as opposed to new ways or new mechanisms to ensure food security.



Silvia Ribeiro, ETC Group, said the crisis being faced is unprecedented, with food prices increasing as the climate crisis is worsening and food shortages are being experienced.

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The Future We Want With Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Innovation

Presented by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

This event highlighted the role of ICTs for achieving a sustainable future.

Gary Fowlie, Head, ITU Liaison Office to the UN, said that ICTs are catalytic to connect the three pillars of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental - and allow their integration. He highlighted that ICTs are advancing social equity and progress by providing a way to communicate, access online information and exchange knowledge in real-time, saying that this empowers users to make their own choices and decisions. He said that ICTs are also unique, cost-effective, environmentally-friendly and inclusive, citing a 10% increase in broadband penetration contributing to 1.8% GDP growth as an example. From an environmental perspective, he said ICTs enabled solutions that can deliver approximately 7.8 gigatonnes of emission reductions in 2020. To turn the vision of ICTs' relevance into action, he said that the conference should acknowledge the importance of ICTs, and broadband in particular, with special recognition that ICTs are basic infrastructure that enables access to education, information, health care and other services. He additionally noted that its inclusion would accelerate sustainable development. He suggested delegates adopt concrete targets and goals on ICTs.

Rama Rao Sankurathripati, Director of World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Office to the UN, explained different aspects of how technology can contribute to sustainable development and to preserve traditional knowledge and intellectual, artistic and scientific inventions. He described an on-line tool that WIPO has developed to facilitate searches for patent information relating to environmentally-sound technologies, saying that it is linked to its International Patent Classification system. He explained this tool is helpful in identifying existing and emerging green technologies, and match potential partners and users.

In the ensuing discussion, participants addressed, *inter alia*, the relevance of open sources in different ways, including in building up the environment for the creation of new knowledge, and the need to consider it in the Rio+20 process.



Gary Fowlie, Head, ITU Liaison Office to the UN, highlighted that ICTs infrastructure can empower communities, women, children and the elderly, and be a platform for poverty eradication and sustainable development.



Rama Rao Sankurathripati, Director of the WIPO Office to the UN, highlighted increasing participation of emerging economies, such as Brazil and China, in renewable energy technology.



L-R: Rama Rao Sankurathripati, Director of WIPO Office to the UN; Gary Fowlie, Head, ITU Liaison Office to the UN; and Sharon London, ITU.

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One UN for SCP: Promoting joint efforts for a 10 Year Framework of Programmes Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP)

Presented by the UN Environment Programme

This event addressed aims to provide information and updates on new and existing UN inter-agency activities and initiatives on SCP.

Sylvie Lemmet, Director, UNEP-Division of Technology, Industry and Economics (UNEP-DTIE), welcomed participants and, with Timo Mäkelä, European Commission (EC), launched 'The Global Outlook on SCP Policies.' Mäkelä said the Outlook intends to scale-up existing initiatives at country and regional levels.

Henry Tachie-Menson, Permanent Mission of Ghana to the UN, highlighted national experiences on SCP supported by UN agencies, including adopting a sustainable development action plan strongly focused on SCP.

Lila Ratsifandrihamanana, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), highlighted the relevance of promoting sustainable food systems and food security and explained the UNEP/FAO Agri-food Task Force, which works in partnership with multiple key stakeholders.

Heinz Leuenberger, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), described the Resource Efficient and Cleaner Production (RECP) programme aimed at providing a strategic and coherent framework for scaling-up and mainstreaming resource efficiency and cleaner production activities in national development frameworks.

Charles Arden-Clarke, UNEP-DTIE, underscored the need for fostering public investments and markets for SCP. He described the Sustainable Public Procurement Initiative to review progress on these policies around the world and propose innovative solutions to barriers. Dorothee Convers-Billerbeck, EC, described the SWITCH-Asia Programme, which replicates proven good practices that can facilitate a shift to SCP patterns, saying activities include: providing grants for projects; a network facility; and policy support.

Yamina Djacta, UN-HABITAT, presented on joint UN efforts on sustainable urban development which, *inter alia*, have supported countries and cities in developing policies and action plans. Ana Persic, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), described the UNESCO/UNEP YouthXchange Initiative, which aims to promote sustainable lifestyles among the youth. She noted activities include developing thematic guidebooks and providing targeted information and concrete proposals for everyday action.

On the key role of civil society, Caroline Howe, UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), described how initiatives launched by UN agencies and targeted at youth contributed to promote SCP patterns at the local level.



Sylvie Lemmet, Director, UNEP-DTIE, outlined UN agencies' efforts in the context of the 10 Year Framework Process on SCP.



Heinz Leuenberger, UNIDO, highlighted the creation of more than 45 centers for capacity building and further involvement of the industry and environment ministries under the RECP programme.

More information:

<http://www.unep.fr/scp/marrakech/>
<http://esa.un.org/marrakechprocess/>

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