

eco

Thursday
29 August 2002

Bits and
Bobs

World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa

Published by Consumers International, the Danish 92 Group, Earthjustice, Friends of the Earth International, Greenpeace, Northern Alliance for Sustainability, Oxfam International, and WWF

GlobalisatiON! (and ON and ON...)

After seven hours of negotiations into the wee hours of Wednesday morning, five more hours on Wednesday, more than 100 references to the Doha Declaration and the Monterrey Consensus and two references to environment and sustainable development, Eco wondered as negotiators settled in for yet another late-night session: Are we still at a Summit about sustainable development? Subsidies, MEAs, sustainability assessments, and the precautionary principle remain in complete deadlock; globalisation rules! One thing's for sure: sustainable development negotiators sure know their Doha paragraphs by heart... in case negotiators wondered what in the world compelled them to lose so much sleep, Australia helpfully reminded them of the Summit's apparent overriding objective by intoning "in a manner consistent with WTO rights and obligations" throughout Tuesday night. To be fair, "fair trade" was in the text for 11 exciting minutes last night (thanks to Norway!).



Cartoon © 1989 by D.E. T. Trainer,
Development Economics, Melbourne; Heinemann.

Rivers Are Running Into Oblivion

Management of the 261 major trans-boundary rivers—along which 40 percent of the world's population makes its home—is truly an international challenge and an essential ingredient for future economic and political stability in many regions. Yet the essential paragraph that refers to this critical component of water management was excised at PrepCom 4 in Bali. The former para-

graph 25 of the Chairman's Text included language to:

"Support and enhance regional, sub-regional, and bilateral cooperation initiatives undertaken by States on international watercourses according to international law, where applicable, and bilateral and regional and international agreements, where existing, and achieve cooperation among the riparian States to ensure the effective development, management, protection and use of water resources, taking into account the interests of all riparian States concerned."

Continued on page 2.

هل يطلب العرب المبادرة ؟

تشكل المجموعة العربية تجمعا مهم داخل مجموعة ال 77 يتطلب منها ان تلعب دورا اكثر فعالية في تعزيز مطالب التنمية المستدامة لصالح الدول النامية.

ولكن السؤال المطروح هو ماذا تقوم به المجموعة العربية لتحقيق التنمية المستدامة لشعوبها؟ حتى الان لا شيء.

فالتماركة العربية تبدو ضعيفة في المواضيع الجوهرية المطروحة كتجارة ومسؤولية الشركات والمياه والتي هي قضايا لمصلحة ذات الحكومات على المجتمع العربي. في حين اننا نراها "عاصفة" في القضايا ذات الاعدد والمصالح الوطنية الاثنية.

لوحدة عربية تتطلب موقف موحد على الاكيد ولكننا نأمل ان يكون هذا الموقف لصالح الدول العربية كافة وتمتعها بشكل خاص.

سيكون لتمثيل العربي في هذه القمة في معظمه على مستوى الوزراء وهو تمثيل يعكس عدم اهتمام رسمي بمجريات القمة ولكن هذا لا يعطي تظلي المتدوين للحاضرين عن مسؤوليتهم التاريخية.

فهل سيقلب هؤلاء المبادرة ويسلون للتمة بعدها الحقيقي؟

تحالف "Ecoquity" سيتابع اصالح المجموعة العربية وستنشر في صند مقبل. حتى ذلك الوقت نأمل الحصول على تعليقات الوفود العربية على الرقم 0723 123626

Greenpeace and Businesses Seek Ratification of Kyoto Protocol

In a rare marriage of convenience, Greenpeace International and the World Business Council on Sustainable Development put aside their many differences last night and launched a joint appeal for governments to take an essential first step in tackling climate change by ratifying and implementing the Kyoto Protocol. The initiative sends a clear signal to governments that they have no excuse for not adopting a long-term framework to address climate change. Bjorn Stigson, head of the WBCSD, said that the Kyoto Protocol, "represents the seeds of an essential, long-term framework that can and should be built upon. There are differing views amongst our members but we are clear on the need for a long-term framework." He also said that members of the business coalition want to make it clear to the heads of state at the Summit that, "they are not waiting for business to make progress on climate change but business is waiting for them." George W. Bush has claimed that US industry and the economy would be hurt by adopting the Kyoto Protocol and that voluntary measures are sufficient. Putting their long-standing differences behind them for the time being, the groups expressed frustration with the lack of governments' political will and commitment. While Thailand today became the 86th government to ratify the protocol, it will remain significantly weakened as long as big polluters such as the US and Australia remain opposed. The business coalition did not, however, go so far as to point blame at any particular government but there was a clear reference to the "countries whose leaders are not attending the Summit." That is, the US and Australia.

Potential Renewables Ample To Meet Legitimate Demand

Over the last few days, there has been a lively discussion about whether or not a 10 % new renewables target over the next decade is realistic. Although this article cannot provide the details, it certainly points out that if there is a will, there is a way. The bulk of the new renewables 10 % target over the next decade would likely come from wind and new sustainable and modern biomass.

The IEA-OECD estimates that with business as usual, in the next 20 years new renewables will increase by 2.8 % per year by 2020 and is referred to as the "fastest growing primary energy source. The co-chairs' report of the G8 renewable energy task force concluded that the barriers to renewable energy in developing countries are not technical but political, financial, educational, and institutional.

Furthermore, it is estimated that the investment costs for the installation for new fossil fuel power plants will increase substantially over the next 10 years. In the case of gas, the increase is about 40 %, with a similar increase for lignite and coal. By contrast, the installation cost for wind power is expected to decrease by 27 % over the same period. In the case of solar, the decrease in costs will be 50 %

Worldwide, the estimated wind potential is 53 000 TWh, or 4 times the current total world electricity demand. The European Photovoltaic Industry Association estimates that final electricity consumption across OECD could be covered up to 16 % from solar PV by 2010. It is interesting to note that the association includes BP Solar, COGEMA and Shell Solar.

The technical potential for biomass is about 10 times the current use of biomass and under a business as usual scenario the World Energy Council estimates that the potential increase for geothermal energy between now and 2010 is about 3 times the current use

Here are two examples of the potential out there:

Thailand: The potential electricity generation from biomass is high enough to meet approximately 90 % of the current Thai electricity demand. This scenario shows that even if energy consumption was to double, Thailand could increase its current new renewable electricity production from 0.8 % to 34 % by 2020.

China: Has adopted a Five-Year Programme on Sustainable Development (2000-2005) that would provide renewable electricity to 1.3 million household by 2005 (5 to 6 million people).

It is important to note that in order to bring implementation costs down any renewable energy policy must be implemented in parallel with a strong energy efficiency program.

As an example, a target for the OECD should be between 5 to 10 % over 10 years.

Ten percent new renewables over the

next decade is an ambitious target, of course. But aren't we here to tackle difficult issues? We're here to confront the most urgent and pressing issues of our time—climate change and poverty alleviation—is this not worth just a little ambition?

Uganda:

Lust for Large Dams

Like the EU, the government of Uganda is reportedly seeking to include large-scale hydroelectric projects under the definition of renewable energy in the Implementation Text. Uganda's position is hardly surprising, since it is currently seeking financing for the Bujagali project, a large dam on the Nile. This dam would add about 200MW to the country's electricity grid, roughly doubling existing capacity.

But Bujagali hardly meets the criteria for sustainable development. Ugandan environmental organisations had to take the government to court to release the project's Power Purchase Agreement. While the World Bank approved initial financing for the project, it is currently on hold after allegations surfaced that one of the project contractors bribed the former Minister of Energy, who ironically is now a World Bank Alternative Executive Director. A new World Bank report also revealed numerous policy violations and environmental concerns associated with the project.

Rivers, from page one.

It is unclear whether this text was deleted by the Chairman because of a lack of agreement, or withdrawn by the G-77 as an amendment. However, the text was proposed by the G-77 as compromise text at PrepCom 3 following a debate that showed some consensus on the language regarding international watercourses. That consensus is no longer reflected in the Draft Plan of Implementation and should be rectified by the reinsertion of the deleted compromise text. Without the text, the language is confined to addressing national planning for water resource management. It seems pointless to go through a major international exercise such as the World Summit on Sustainable Development to agree on issues at a national level, but not on those of major global significance.

Come on, Wolf!

It's Time the World Bank Lived Up to Its Obligations

The current WSSD text on trade and finance contains no language addressing the World Bank's environmental performance. World Bank President James Wolfensohn, who is expected any minute in Johannesburg, should put his words into action and announce that he will impose measures to ensure that the Bank strictly adheres to its environmental policies and shifts its lending portfolio away from environmentally harmful projects, and to invest in environmentally beneficial ones.

If Mr. Wolfensohn can't make such an announcement, *Eco* would urge governments here to demand that the Bank do so.

The World Bank's new *World Development Report 2003* predicts greater environmental catastrophes and social fallout if world leaders fail to take action in Johannesburg to curb global environmental threats and unsustainable development patterns. A report released Tuesday by Friends of the Earth US and the Halifax Initiative Coalition of Canada, however, shows that the Bank is not meeting its Rio obligations and is not fulfilling its sustainable development mandate. From 1992 to June 2002 the World Bank supported 226 fossil fuel projects with more than \$22 billion in financing and only 35 renewable or energy efficiency projects with \$1 billion in financing. The Bank has ignored its own environmental policies on pest management and contributed to increased use of hazardous pesticides. Fifty million dollars in World Bank loans have gone to biotechnology crops, despite their environmental and health risks, commercial uncertainty, and the fact that the Biosafety Protocol has not entered into force. The World Bank has weakened its forestry policy, removing a ban on investing in primary moist tropical forests. Meanwhile, the World Bank's ability to market itself has grown, as the External Affairs Department's budget increased by 52 percent since 1992, compared to an increase of 16 percent in the Bank's overall administrative budget.

Come on, Wolf, you are a charming man with visionary speechwriters, but it's time to deliver.

Oceans Success At WSSD?

The first success at WSSD has been widely reported to be on oceans. Certainly the oceans, seas, islands, and coastal areas paragraphs of the Plan of Action have seen more progress than others, but *Eco* must ask if it is all good news.

The 70 percent of the world's surface covered by salt water has hovered behind mainstream issues throughout the preparations for WSSD; maybe this is why there is greater consensus on ocean matters than other issues. The commitment to the application by 2010 of the ecosystem approach is indeed welcome, as is the intention to establish representative networks of marine protected areas by 2012.

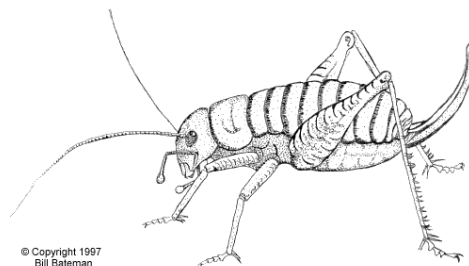
The reported success on the agreement to restore depleted fish stocks "by 2015, if possible" to levels that can produce the maximum sustainable yield is, however, questionable. For many coastal fishing communities measures to restore depleted stocks are fundamental to survival. If the life cycle of many commercial fish species is considered, restoration

of many stocks should be possible in less than 13 years provided the correct measures are introduced. *Eco* knows that a loose term "if possible" would be misused.

Of even greater concern is the implication that fish stocks should only be restored to levels which allow "maximum sustainable yield." MSY is a discredited management tool hardly reflective of best practice. One mistake and over you go. There is no precaution in the acceptance of MSY.

The proposal to eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and to over-fishing is welcome, and indeed is stronger than the draft text on subsidies elsewhere in the Plan of Action. However, no deadlines and no specific measures are proposed other than completing efforts at the WTO to clarify and improve its disciplines on fisheries subsidies.

So, while some positive commitments have been agreed the oceans there are, in reality, few new measures and too few deadlines for action. Or in other words, if I were a codfish, I wouldn't hold my breath.



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Bill Bateman

Parktown Prawn

Memorable quotes:

Following the joint Greenpeace-WBCSD meeting on Kyoto, the *Eco* team would like to know if this is but a prelude to the long-awaited joint NGO-WBCSD platform promoting binding rules for corporate accountability.

Perhaps this is wishful thinking. Business opposition could be the real reason behind yesterday's comments by a representative from DG Trade in a NGO meeting with the Danish EU Presidency.

Responding to a question regarding the European Parliament resolution that calls for binding rules on corporate accountability,

said Trade zealot protested, "We are not here to defend the positions of the European Parliament." So much for the Commission's tireless work on the democratic deficit.

The realities of poverty and hunger that plague the southern African region, are blissfully remote for delegates from Canada, who still can't understand that not everybody is a winner in the globalisation game.

At the suggestion on the part of the EU that "there is concern" about globalisation, the Canadian delegate wanted to know: "Whose concerns are you talking about?" He went on to inform the assembly that the U.S. and Canada are not concerned, and that

if others have concerns, the Summit is not the place to bring them!

More news stories the Prawn would like to see:

DISPUTE-SETTLEMENT SYSTEM IN PLACE

The EU, USA and G77 are promising free trade in insults and body blows.

BUSH IN SOUTH AFRICA

However, the indigenous "Bushmen" remain adamant in their demand not to be called so. "How politically-correct do you want us to get?" asked Colin Powell despairingly. "I am black and our President has been named after an African ecosystem!"

DRUGS TO SECURE SUMMIT SUCCESS

To create good vibes and positive energy, heads of state will be on weed, negotiators on speed, protesters on valium, and NGOs on ecstasy.

We Get Letters

The Evils of Access

What is the purpose of UN-provided meeting space if access is denied?

International youth faced the harsh realities of UN politics Monday as access to Sandton was denied to all but a few NGO delegates. Of the hundreds of youth that make up the International Youth Caucus, most of whom paid their own way to this conference, all but a few were denied access to Sandton for the whole day. Frustration was high as those on their way to the Youth Meeting at 11:00 found themselves unable to connect at all with the rest of the caucus. Many youth looked out at the conference center from the window in the mall across the street while snipers stood high above the conference center.

The frustration of the day compounded an ongoing feeling that youth are not institutionally or personally respected by the WSSD process. Why bother having youth as a multi-stakeholder group if the UN denies them access to their own caucus meeting space? The purpose of sustainability is to ensure a secure future for the future generations. A question for the UN. . . will you let them in?

—Joshua Tulkin

eco-equity

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Eco is posted on several websites including greenpeace.org, earthjustice.org, anped.org. Please send letters to ecoeditor@yahoo.com.

Health Plenary— Nonconstructive Back Patting

With good spirit and energy the first thematic plenary session was started Monday morning at 11.30 with an introduction, touching upon all the pressing health issues. Health education, prevention, and HIV/AIDS were mentioned, but also the precautionary principle, tuberculosis and the drawbacks of diseases on opportunities for development.

This inspiring introduction was followed by a panel discussion, facilitated by Jan Pronk. Sadly, time constraints forced the panel to be smaller than wished for and only UN officials were invited to speak. Despite this fact the discussion was fruitful and the comments made were valuable inputs to the report, which is going to be handed over to the Summit negotiators next week.

As the closing part of the morning, an interactive discussion was initiated, intending to give more valuable input. Alas, this discussion time was exhausted by lengthy speeches from government officials. Despite repetitive appeals, those officials continued reading out their prepared speeches, raising issues, but mainly patting their own backs.

Now I wonder: Isn't a plenary session with the presence of all the nine major groups representing civil society meant to also show what civil society's concerns are?

—Billy Joe

Look to the Ecocity

From all we can tell, the WSSD, like Rio ten years ago, is ignoring the foundation of sustainable development—the human habitat built in balance with nature. The “ecocity” IS sustainable development, but nobody is talking about the structure of the city! Rio failed, not so much because commitments were not kept, though this is largely true, but even more because the largest creations of humanity were virtually ignored in their basic structure and functioning: the city, town, and village. The city has become, and in developing nations, is becoming, a “whole systems” creation made up of generally unhealthy development dependent primarily upon cars, freeways, and cheap energy infrastructure, namely oil.

The car/sprawl city can be transformed into healthy places for people and nature. The ecocity is the ecologically healthy city that respects ecological principles in its organization and relationship with the local and global natural environment.

—Kirstin Miller

US & Transparency

At the US government briefing on agriculture for civil society and business groups Tuesday afternoon, the representatives of the US delegation had to field contentious questions about the labeling of GMO foods, and about the GMO food aid to southern African countries that has recently been in the news.

Luckily, the members of the delegation had no problem answering as a representative from Biotechnology Industries Organization was present in the audience to offer his answers.

The three speakers from the US delegation repeatedly passed off questions to Val Giddings of BIO, who was more than happy to take the microphone and make sure that the delegates didn't stumble on the oft-repeated corporate positions on these issues.

It is good to see that the US delegation is finally placing value on a transparent process, and sharing openly where its positions come from.

—Jason White



Thirty Years Ago in Eco

Brazil, with the tacit cooperation of major industrial powers, is now embarked on shattering the Conference's vital “Only One Earth” concept. In yesterday's Committee 2 debate on natural resources, she introduced two crucial amendments, both designed to affirm national sovereignty at the expense of any semblance of a global ecosystemic approach. . . .

Both Brazil and her industrial allies (in this case the UK and Australia) were forced to make the most unscientific pronouncements imaginable in defence of their positions. Thus the Australians declared there was “no such thing” as global environmental stability, while Brazil added that it was “scientifically impossible, as a stable system does not consume energy”!

Eco 1, Number 4, Stockholm,
9 June 1972

attention seeking

A special Eco insert from the groups listed below

G77: Don't Sell Out Our Small Farmers and Fishermen

By The Philippine Civil Society Counterpart Council for Sustainable Development

The battle to end environmentally harmful and trade-distorting subsidies continues. At stake is the provision in various drafts of Chapter IX (Means of Implementation) which reads "Reduce or eliminate, as appropriate environmentally harmful and/or trade-distorting subsidies that inhibit sustainable consumption and production patterns in developed countries". On the one hand are the developed countries ganging up for its deletion, on the other is the G77 pushing for its retention. The most recent discussion on this provision also calls for developing countries to end such subsidies.

The most recent wording raises two issues. The first is its retention or deletion, and the second is the removal of the distinction between developed and developing countries.

On the first issue, retention is beneficial to the South, as subsidies stifle their export producers' access to international markets. Moreover, some of the heavily subsidised Northern industries, e.g., the fishing

industry, has depleted fish stocks of the South, often in breach of agreements, to the detriment of small fishermen in the South.

The second issue recognizes that the matter of subsidies is not purely divided along North-South lines. In general, it is. But it is also a national issue for some G77 countries who can afford to dole out subsidies to relatively large, export-oriented farmers or fishermen who may happen to be politicians or top government officials. Or they may be corporations lobbying hard for continued subsidies even in hard-up developing countries. Subsidy schemes benefitting small-scale farmers and fishermen may be justifiable, but are certainly rare.

The fear is that the G77 is willing to use its position as a trading horse once it is crunch time, accepting subsidies in exchange for some provisions on governance from the North. Another leverage to push developing countries into agreeing to wholesale deletion of the entire provision is the

removal of the distinction between North and South, as suggested in alternative versions of the provision.

We call on G77 to look beyond the welfare of special-interest groups, and champion the small farmers, who constitute the majority of their constituents. Your unyielding support for the retention of this provision in the Implementation Plan would send an important signal with positive social and environmental impacts, not only in the South, but also in the North.

We call on Southern NGOs to immediately put pressure on their respective country delegations not to compromise on this issue whatsoever.

Finally, we also call on developed countries to play fair by removing perverse subsidies. Instead, they should channel these funds to assist developing countries to attain sustainable development in line with what they promised in Rio.



Cartoons Courtesy CSE India

RENEWABLE ENERGY NOW

By Fundación Solar (Guatemala),
Fundación Ecológica Universal
(Argentina)

The concept of sustainable energy is about energy efficiency and renewables, the latter comprising solar, wind and geothermal power, biomass, tidal energy, and small-scale hydropower plants (less than 10 MW).

We strongly recommend that world leaders adopt the target of 10% new sources of renewable energy. Moreover, we wish to combine this effort with equity and social targets, providing power access to isolated rural communities and to the urban poor. To this end, we need innovative financial delivery mechanisms that allow the private sector to participate in renewable energy investment. Once the 10% new renewable-energy target is agreed by the heads of government,

we call for an implementation, monitoring and verification process led by the United Nations Commission for Sustainable Development, in close consultation with stakeholders across the world.

In order to achieve poverty alleviation and sound, responsible private sector investment, a strong emphasis should be put on job creation through productive uses of electricity. Furthermore, three key elements must be integrated into an immediate implementation plan: no barriers to technology transference, encouraging South-South cooperation, scaling down high-tech options and scaling up traditional technologies. Finally, we need to give priority to financial measures to ensure access to everyone, including tax incentives and Clean Development Mechanisms.

New renewables must provide 10% of our energy supply by 2010

The War on Drugs Is A War on People

Watch out for Article 38(o)

By **Margarita Pacheco Montes**
Colombian NGO Confederation

At Prepcom III in New York, the Colombian government introduced the following sentence into the Plan of Implementation: "Enhance international cooperation to combat illicit crops (Article 38(o))". This is still being debated here in Johannesburg. An informed approach to the drugs issue is crucial to avoid further social, environmental and even military disaster.

The current sentence in Article 38 goes further down a losing path. It implies even greater military intervention of the kind that has failed over and over again to reduce the

supply of narcotics. It means more crop-dusting with defoliants similar to those used in the Vietnam war (incidentally another lucrative Monsanto business), devastating our tropical environment. A bitter irony is that, even by its own standards of success, this strategy would only raise prices of illicit drugs and their raw materials. This is tantamount to rewarding inscrupulous drug traffickers and war lords, while tempting millions of dirt-poor farmers to clear more land for illicit cultivation in an ever-escalating vicious circle.

Moreover, as it stands, Article 38 fails to distinguish between "illicit crops" and "illicit use of crops". One thing is traditional use, such as coca leaves for the indigenous peoples of the Andes, opium for old men in Iran, marihuana for ethnic minorities in Vietnam. Another is exports to mass markets in the US and Europe.

As the US steps up arms sales to its War on Drugs waged in the Andean region, our young men are being recruited as foot soldiers, sent to die to defend US drug users against themselves. The same hopeless cause is forced upon our civilians getting kidnapped or killed in crossfire. Women and children bear the brunt of the cost, as two million Colombians have been displaced. Emigration has become the only escape, as the majority of our people are kept in poverty by a climate of fear and disinvestment.

We propose that the war-like language in the Plan of Implementation — "to combat" and "to eliminate" — be replaced by a pledge "to substitute" job creation and alternative crops for illicit ones. Moreover, we call on the developed world to focus on the demand side of the equation in their own countries, bringing the drugs problem into the medical rather than the policing sphere. Exporting the prohibition strategy to developing countries by military means is unfair, self-defeating and an unmitigated disaster.

All Southern NGOs are welcome to seek attention, as this insert aims to give more voice at the Summit to civil society in developing countries. This springs from the Rio+10 Project, facilitated by the Danish 92 Group, working in Africa, Latin America and Asia through a series of national and subregional networks coordinated by the following organizations.

Southern Africa: EMG; Mozambique: ABIODES; Namibia: Desert Research Foundation within the NANGOF NGO Forum; South Africa: ENJF, ENDABA and the WSSD NGO Secretariat. East Africa: EcoNews, Kenya; Zimbabwe: Zero Regional Environmental Organisation; Uganda: The Rio+10 Coalition; Kenya: EcoNews and ELCI; Tanzania: JET; West Africa: Friends of the Earth Togo and networks in 11 countries. Ghana: ICA. South East Asia: WWF-Philippines, alongside WWF in Indonesia (with IPF), Malaysia, Thailand (with NGO COD), Vietnam and national NGO networks. South Asia: CSE India; Nepal: Forum of Environmental Journalists; Bangladesh: Forum for Environmental Journalists; South America and Argentina: Fundación Ecológica Universal; Brazil: Vitae Civilis; Ecuador: Fundación Natura and IUCN Quito; Bolivia: Fundación Tierra; The Amazon: Coordination of Indigenous Organisations in the Amazon including rainforest peoples in Peru, Guyana, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Venezuela, French Guyana, Surinam, and Colombia. Central America and Costa Rica: CICAFOC, supported by UNES and Enlace Sur Sur; Nicaragua: Centro Humboldt; Guatemala: Fundación Solar; El Salvador: UNES.

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