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**Second Committee****Summary record of the 16th meeting**

Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 20 October 2003, at 3 p.m.

*Chairman:* Ms. Zubčević (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Croatia)**Contents**Agenda item 95: Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (*continued*)Agenda item 96: United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (*continued*)

Agenda item 94: Environment and sustainable development

(d) Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (*continued*)Agenda item 98: Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (*continued*)

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*In the absence of Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh), Ms. Zubčević (Croatia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair. The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.*

**Agenda item 95: Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development** (A/58/3 (Part I), A/58/204, 210, 337 and 362, and A/C.2/58/5 and 6) (*continued*)

**Agenda item 96: United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development** (*continued*)

**Agenda item 94: Environment and sustainable development**

**(d) Further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** (A/58/3 (Part I), A/58/170, 303 and 304, and A/C.2/58/4) (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Jose** (India) said that the Johannesburg Summit had focused on concrete action for the implementation of Agenda 21 and the achievement of sustainable development and had reaffirmed that poverty eradication was central to the efforts of the developing countries in that area. International action to mobilize the financial resources to achieve the Millennium Development Goals was imperative. Means of implementation must be made available to the developing countries through new and additional financial resources, technology transfer on concessional terms, and capacity-building.

2. India welcomed the outcome of the eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), the enhancement of coordination within and among organizations of the United Nations system and other international institutions, and the participation of all major groups and other stakeholders in the process. However, the involvement of civil society and the business sector could complement but not replace Governments' existing commitments.

3. **Mr. Kazemi-Kamyab** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation hoped that the new CSD programme of work and organizational modalities would advance the attainment of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Since at its next session CSD would have to identify the real constraints

in that area on the basis of national reports, proper preparations must be made for the session. The Secretariat should help countries with their national reports, and the General Assembly should respond positively in the resolution on agenda item 95 to paragraph 3 (b) of CSD draft resolution I. The substantive reports of the Secretary-General to the next CSD session should be limited to a report on the overall progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan and a report on each of the issues contained in the thematic cluster, with sections on the identified constraints. The Secretary-General should note only those major group activities which had concrete results and review progress in promoting the representation of major groups from the South. There should be a single report on partnership initiatives and no separate discussion of reporting and indicators. The present report of the Secretary-General on the Organization's sustainable development activities (A/58/210) should have contained more information on the inter-agency preparations for the next CSD session.

4. The United Nations Forum on Forests had made a substantive contribution to the Johannesburg Summit and forests were receiving particular attention in the follow-up process. The Forum's third session had marked a significant development in the debate on sustainable forest management; the establishment of the ad hoc expert groups, and the agreement on a Trust Fund and the budget and on cooperation with CSD indicated the determination of the international community to move ahead. The General Assembly must now take decisions to facilitate the Forum's work.

5. **Mr. Casado** (United Nations Industrial Development Organization) said that various United Nations organizations had incorporated the outcome of the Johannesburg Summit in their work programmes, launching partnership initiatives and organizing events. UNIDO was ready to cooperate with CSD in that area. There was, however, a need to build on the existing initiatives.

6. There were four key issues: focus on implementation; integration with the Millennium Development Goals strategy; partnership initiatives; and coordination with local and regional initiatives. UNIDO had developed four energy and technology transfer partnerships: on technology transfer, assessing needs and promoting action; on development strategies to promote rural energy systems; on the Industrial

Energy Efficiency Initiative; and on the productive use of clean energy for the sustainable development of small island developing States. In the latter area, it was elaborating a programme proposal for Saint Lucia, Dominica and Grenada aimed at achieving energy self-sufficiency; it would also assess cooperation possibilities in the Pacific region.

7. **Ms. Filip** (Observer for the Inter-Parliamentary Union) said that at the Johannesburg Summit parliamentarians from developed and developing countries had pledged to bring a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation on sustainable development issues and in their Johannesburg Declaration they had stressed the need for all sustainable development policies to include implementation targets and deadlines. The emphasis must be on partnerships between all the players. Legislative institutions clearly had an important role: the Millennium Summit itself had called for stronger cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments and for the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to help in that respect, and the Secretary-General had drawn attention to the contribution which legislatures could make to the work of CSD.

8. A stronger working relationship between IPU and United Nations bodies mandated to facilitate the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation could only increase the possibilities of success. IPU would welcome suggestions as to the best areas for stronger cooperation between the United Nations and national parliaments. Those areas should certainly include rigorous green accounting in both public and private sectors, which would require not only political will on the part of members of parliament but also the technical know-how which they often lacked. Another area related to the regular reports on sustainable development activities, which were far too onerous for parliamentary study; they should be streamlined and simplified.

9. **Mr. Singh** (Observer for the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources) said that the Union was concerned about the lack of progress in achieving the Millennium Summit commitments and called for a renewed undertaking to implement the decisions taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session. The role of CSD was of central importance in ensuring that United Nations institutions adopted sustainable development

as a key element of the overarching framework of activities.

10. The coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council session was also essential to the integration of the three pillars of sustainable development; the Council's decision to base that segment on issues common to the outcomes of the major United Nations meetings was therefore welcome, as were its efforts to coordinate gender policies and programmes. The cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization was essential to sustainable development. The Union had taken an active part in the Council's high-level segment and in the Cancún Ministerial Conference of WTO.

11. International forest policies must be brought into closer alignment with the priorities of the broader international community, and the Forum on Forests must be linked to the Millennium Development Goals. It was good that the Forum's fourth session was to address the social and cultural aspects of forests. The session should also address the synergies between the Forum's activities and the Millennium Development Goals, the integration of forests into poverty-reduction strategies, and collaboration between the Forum's secretariat and the Millennium Project.

12. The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development must not only place sustainable development on the education agenda but also challenge social, economic and environmental organizations to align their education work with the goals of sustainable development. Attention should also be given to adult and community education and to education within enterprises. National and local councils for sustainable development might serve as coordinators of the Decade, and Governments must be encouraged to see the Decade's relevance to their own commitments and work programmes. The Union would share examples of good practice and strategies for education for sustainable development, focusing in particular on non-formal adult education. At Johannesburg it had co-sponsored the Summit Institute for Sustainable Development and drew attention to the Institute's continuing efforts in the context of multilateral conferences. It was also necessary to involve non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders more closely in the work of the United Nations system.

13. **Mr. Masuku** (Swaziland), speaking on behalf of the African Group of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), said it was regrettable that not all development partners had attended the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention (COP6) at the same political level as most of the developing countries. Partnership in the Convention process still needed to be demonstrated. However, UNCCD had made significant strides in recent years. In view of the financial problems facing the Convention, the Conference of the Parties had decided to make the Global Environment Facility (GEF) a financial mechanism of the Convention. Land degradation was now one of the focal areas of the Facility, which had earmarked US\$ 500 million for implementation of the Convention. He would like to take the opportunity to thank those who had shown their support for Africa.

14. At the Conference of the Parties, the African Group had welcomed the European Union initiative on the implementation of the Convention. However, the African Group of the Convention did not share the views expressed by the European Union in the Second Committee regarding the use of time and resources and lack of transparency. The African Group believed that all activities during COP6 and its preparatory process had been meant to further the implementation of the Convention. Those activities were cost-effective and had been conducted in a timely manner. The secretariat of the Convention had acted in a very responsible and transparent way; COP6 could be labelled as one of the most successful meetings the Convention had ever held.

15. Another important partner had claimed, at a recent meeting of the Committee, that there was a lack of transparency in the governance and management of the Convention which "continued to divide the Parties". The African Group would simply state that there was no reason to suspect any move to divide the Parties. Possibly that Party was attempting to divide a very united and resolute international community committed to the cause of the Convention. The African Group had always refrained from any tactics aimed at diverting attention from that cause. The Group called on all partners to adopt a more positive and constructive attitude. The Group also called on the secretariat to continue its excellent work in facilitating the implementation of the Convention and congratulated it and the Executive Secretary, in

particular, for working in a spirit of accountability and transparency.

16. The report of the Secretary-General on the Convention proposed a series of actions to be taken by the General Assembly. The African Group fully subscribed to those proposals and requested the General Assembly to adopt them.

17. **Mr. Ould Abeih** (Mauritania) paid tribute to the UNCCD secretariat for its tireless work in tackling the challenge of desertification. Mauritania welcomed the adoption of GEF as a financing mechanism for the Convention. The incorporation of GEF into the UNCCD process had helped countries such as Mauritania to provide the necessary resources to implement the Convention, and confirmed the multilateral nature of the process. The international community had now given tangible recognition of the global nature of UNCCD, on an equal footing with the Conventions on climate change and biological diversity.

18. **Archbishop Migliore** (Observer for the Holy See) said that, through the adoption of various instruments, the international community had recognized that education was an essential part of development. There was a deeper understanding of the role of education in promoting and protecting human rights, social and economic development, and protecting the environment. The Holy See had long been convinced of that role and, in particular, of the importance of education in ecological responsibility.

19. The plans and goals for the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development must go beyond primary schooling to include, the problems faced by children who, for various reasons, were not in school. Such children, deprived of educational opportunities, were likely to be excluded from development and would most likely remain illiterate for the rest of their lives. Gender disparities at all levels of education and adult literacy were also areas of concern. The provision of educational opportunities to all would have an immediate, verifiable and measurable impact on the well-being of the people of the world and on their sustainable development.

20. **Mr. Baatar** (Mongolia) said that Mongolia was party to all major United Nations conventions on environmental issues and had adopted more than 20 national legal instruments on environment protection.

It welcomed the multi-year programme of work of CSD, and would remain actively engaged in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Governments should continue to support CSD and the preparatory activities related to the review and policy sessions. United Nations organizations, particularly regional commissions, should continue to reorient their relevant programme activities towards focused implementation. In that context, Mongolia supported the work of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in promoting regional and subregional cooperation and the development of networks for information exchange and mobilization of resources.

21. His Government had initiated an ambitious long-term programme based on interdependent and the mutually reinforcing pillars of sustainable development. Despite efforts to formulate laws and policies to effectively manage natural resources, the recent transition to a market economy had aggravated environmental hazards. According to a United Nations Environment Programme assessment, 70 per cent of Mongolia's pasture lands had been degraded and more than 40 per cent of its territory had become arid.

22. Mongolia welcomed the outcomes of recent meetings and was committed to the strengthening of inter-agency cooperation and coordination in promoting national efforts and to supporting the achievement of specific targets.

23. **Mr. Mizukami** (Japan) said that Japan attached great importance to the implementation of the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in all its aspects. It had adopted legislation to promote environmental education, launched initiatives on follow-up to the World Summit and on water, including the formulation of the plan of action at the G8 summit meeting in Evian. Participants at the third World Water Forum, hosted by Japan, had devised an action plan to identify a number of projects worldwide and to establish a network of web sites to accelerate water-related activities.

24. Turning to agenda item 96, he conveyed his Government's appreciation to UNESCO for preparing the draft for an international implementation scheme to promote the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, and for its work in preparing for the launch of the Decade in January 2005. Japan intended to sponsor another draft resolution on the

commemoration of the Decade, and hoped the draft resolution would again be adopted by consensus with broad support from all countries, regional groups and international agencies in the field.

25. **Mr. Lolo** (Nigeria) affirmed that follow-up to the World Summit should focus on implementation, constraints and challenges to the realization of the Plan of Implementation. The international community would face a major test at the next session of the CSD, when it would need to demonstrate its commitment to the implementation of Agenda 21. Following a 1989 incident involving the dumping of toxic waste from a developed country in Nigeria, his Government had established the Federal Environment Protection Agency to oversee environmental management and had championed a global campaign to curb such dumping outside countries of origin.

26. Nigeria was working, through a United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) initiative, to improve the management of its water services and resources. It was also working with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to achieve food security, and had undertaken similar initiatives with other institutions in the areas of health, education and rural development.

27. He noted with appreciation the series of activities carried out by the organizations of the United Nations system and commented on a number of current United Nations mechanisms. He further urged the General Assembly to give positive consideration to the request of the CSD with respect to the participation of representatives from developing countries in the regional meetings during the implementation cycle.

28. Nigeria looked forward to the operationalization of the World Solidarity Fund and also wished to restate its commitment to partnerships among African countries and with the international community through the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Partnerships nevertheless should continue to complement and not substitute for inter-governmental commitments. In Nigeria's view, the value and quality of partnerships should be such as to contribute meaningfully to the achievement of sustainable development.

29. **Mr. Toscano** (Switzerland) said that the Johannesburg World Summit should be part of a broad multilateral process for sustainable development. The eleventh session of CSD had been an important first

step in the implementation of the institutional elements of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. In particular, the decision taken at that session to focus the CSD work cycle on a main theme and to give regions an increased role in its preparatory work would ensure a more in-depth debate.

30. Switzerland remained firmly committed to bolstering the role of UNEP, achieving universal participation, and improving the financial base of the UNEP Environment Fund. Great care should be taken to ensure that international trade promoted and stimulated sustainable development. Coherence between the commercial and environmental systems was crucial in that regard. Switzerland would continue to contribute constructively to the promotion of mutual support, equality and respect between commercial and environmental systems.

31. **Mr. Jenie** (Indonesia), speaking on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the international community should focus on the implementation of all agreed development goals and on the provisions of political guidance in the promotion of universal well-being. Indonesia supported the request for a report on the thematic cluster of issues to be considered by CSD at its next session. Recent efforts to provide the means of implementation to support sustainable development should be examined, utilizing inputs from relevant United Nations bodies and intergovernmental organizations. It was crucial to underscore the role of regional and international organizations in elaborating programmes and activities to help implement the sustainable development agenda, in accordance with the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Indonesia therefore hoped that inputs from regional implementation meetings would take into account the relevant thematic clusters in the Commission's programme of work.

32. ASEAN member States appreciated the benefits of cooperation linking their region to others through partnership schemes. To that end, ASEAN ministers of environment had agreed, among other things, to spearhead programmes of highest priority. The Association had also established a working group on urban environmental management and governance.

33. A recent summit meeting had further consolidated the position of ASEAN on environment and sustainable development. Leaders had agreed that an ASEAN Community should be established comprising the

pillars of political and security, economic and socio-cultural cooperation to promote durable peace, stability and shared prosperity in the region.

34. **Mr. Suparat** (Thailand) said that his country's approach to sustainable development was based on the philosophy of a "sufficiency economy", which guided the Ninth National Economic and Social Development Plan 2002-2006. The National Committee on Sustainable Development had been established to ensure full implementation of the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, while the Subcommittee on the Supervision of the Implementation of Agenda 21 focused on the implementation of the outcome of the eleventh session of CSD. Despite the constraints facing the country, Thailand had made good progress in a number of areas relating to sustainable development. It was currently working to change consumption and production patterns and had declared 2004 as the Year of Food Safety.

35. Close cooperation among all members of the international community was imperative for the realization of their commitments to sustainable development on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, as embodied in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development. Thailand supported global and regional partnerships for the attainment of the objectives of sustainable development as envisaged at the World Summit on Sustainable Development. To that end, his country had cooperated with countries within the region, including through the creation of the Asia Cooperation Dialogue and the Economic Cooperation Strategy, which included Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand. Moreover, Thailand fully supported the multi-year programme of work of CSD. Among the thematic clusters and cross-cutting issues, special emphasis should be placed on education, public health and water.

36. Education, both formal and non-formal, was critical for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of people to address environment and development issues. The recommendations made at the World Conference on Education for All: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, held at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990, should be fully implemented. More emphasis should also be placed on universal access to basic education. The Ministry of Education of Thailand had undertaken educational

programmes for sustainable development by raising the awareness of Thai youths regarding environmental conservation and problem solving in related fields. It had also encouraged educational institutions at all levels to cooperate in that endeavour. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had since 2001 organized a number of seminars on environment and sustainable development, human rights and peace and security. Thailand fully supported the proclamation of the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development.

37. **Ms. Ndhlovu** (South Africa), speaking on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), said it was gratifying to note that the World Summit on Sustainable Development had lived up to the expectations of the international community with its focus on implementation. It had also stressed the pivotal role of multilateralism in the pursuit of sustainable development and the importance of providing means of implementation to enable developing countries to meet their goals. The legacy of the Summit should be not only the agreements reached but also, and more importantly, the visible implementation of its outcomes. The Southern African Development Community urged the international community to enhance its efforts in that regard and to make the vision of the Johannesburg Summit a reality.

38. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation had also highlighted the special concerns of Africa, which remained the most underdeveloped region in the world, and urged support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the key sustainable development framework for Africa. She urged the international community to provide concrete support to Africa, as agreed in Johannesburg, so as to enable it to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

39. The new methods of work of CSD would allow the international community to review progress in the implementation of specific thematic areas while also providing for a regular review of the overall implementation of Agenda 21 and the Summit outcomes. That approach would be critical to enhancing the monitoring of the goals and targets agreed in Johannesburg. The General Assembly should agree to transfer the resources of the former ad hoc working groups and those of the Committee on Natural Resources to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

40. The regional implementation meetings, as agreed at the eleventh session of the Commission, would play a critical role in the review of implementation of the Summit outcomes. The countries belonging to SADC urged the regional economic commissions of the United Nations to take into account the Commission's multi-year work programme in the preparation of regional meetings. Members of SADC looked forward to the African regional implementation meeting to be held in Addis Ababa in December 2003.

41. The twelfth session of the Commission would be an important opportunity for assessing progress in the implementation of the targets set at the Millennium Summit and the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The Commission should mobilize new actions by the international community for the realization of the agreed goals. The session was important for the member States of SADC, as the Commission would be considering three issues that were an integral part of their development strategies, namely, water, sanitation and human settlements.

42. The General Assembly had decided to adopt sustainable development as a key element of the overarching framework for the activities of the United Nations, particularly for achieving the internationally agreed development goals. In that regard, SADC looked forward to the report to be provided by the Secretary-General on an integrated approach of the United Nations system to the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, as requested by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its eleventh session. Members of SADC welcomed the focus by several United Nations agencies and programmes on the follow-up to the World Summit.

43. The members of SADC were pleased that Mauritius, a member of SADC, would host the ten-year review of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). The review should result in concrete actions for the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action.

44. **Ms. Taylor-Roberts** (Jamaica) said that, if small island developing States were to meet the Millennium Development Goals and significantly reduce poverty, they would require special attention from the international community. Development assistance had declined steadily since the adoption of the Barbados Programme of Action and had been consistently below

the level required to facilitate implementation of the commitments made. With the continued declining trend in official development assistance, the ability of small island developing States to achieve adequate levels of sustainable development was severely constrained. A new impetus based on strong commitment by the international community was urgently required.

45. The international meeting to be held in Mauritius in August 2004 should accelerate the momentum for international engagement in support of the development of small island developing States. The ten-year review must stimulate further progress in generating additional resources and finance, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, capacity-building and institutional development. The importance of those issues had been clearly recognized at the World Summit, which had called for action at all levels to address those concerns in the implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. The small island developing States could not achieve that without broad-based participation. Her delegation looked forward to effective engagement with all stakeholders in systematically addressing those critical concerns.

46. The small island developing States urgently needed support for the finalization and early operationalization of economic, social and environmental vulnerability indices, support for efforts at poverty reduction, further implementation of sustainable fisheries management, development of programmes on marine and coastal biodiversity, support for improving access to information and communications technology and action to address the problems of climate change and sea-level rise. There was also an urgent need to ensure that the special needs of small island developing countries were taken into account in the WTO work programme on trade in small economies and that the world economy was managed in a manner supportive of the interests of developing countries, including small island developing States.

47. The preparatory process for the international meeting must highlight those imperatives. She noted with appreciation the active engagement of the international community in the process, including the participation of civil society. The regional meetings in Samoa, Cape Verde and Trinidad and Tobago had laid the groundwork for further negotiations at the inter-regional meeting to be held in the Bahamas in January 2004 and during the twelfth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. Those meetings would

identify the priorities of small island developing States and the further implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action and would form the basis for action to consolidate the gains made in promoting the sustainable development of small island developing States.

48. She also wished to commend the Small Island Developing States Unit on the excellent work it had done so far in cooperation with the Alliance of Small Island States to support the preparatory process. Both the Small Island Developing States Unit and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States would have an even more critical role to play in the follow-up to the Mauritius meeting.

49. Her delegation welcomed the establishment of the voluntary fund to assist small island developing States to participate fully and effectively in both the Mauritius international meeting and the regional and interregional preparatory meetings. She also wished to express appreciation to those partners, including governments and organizations, that had so far contributed to the fund.

50. **Mr. Alimov** (Tajikistan) said that, after the end of the 1997 civil conflict, Tajikistan had been able to introduce a national sustainable development strategy even though the aftermath of the conflict would be felt for a long time. Despite its difficulties, Tajikistan was taking practical steps to attain the goals set in Johannesburg. The world's problems of sustainable development could not be solved without collective action, and Tajikistan attached great importance to strengthening regional and global cooperation to that end. It welcomed the shift of emphasis towards practical implementation of the Johannesburg decisions, in particular the results of the eleventh session of CSD, whose multi-year programme of work spelled out the joint steps to be taken towards implementation of the decisions. It was important in that connection for the inter-agency mechanisms to ensure coordination of their programme initiatives.

51. Tajikistan was grateful to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, UNDP and UNEP for their assistance in the field of sustainable development, which was enabling his Government to develop its national potential. With Japan's leadership, the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable



Development would make a significant contribution to the attainment of the Johannesburg goals.

52. It was still too early to assess the results of the International Year of Freshwater, but an important step had been taken towards solving the global problem of the conservation of water resources. The Year had been marked by major events, including the Dushanbe International Freshwater Forum. At the global level, the security of water resources meant peace, development and stability. Tajikistan had about 60 per cent of Central Asia's water resources, but in recent years even its citizens had begun to feel "water stress". Despite international efforts, the problem of water resources was not diminishing; its solution would require a joint effort over the long term by all sectors. The forthcoming CSD session on water was therefore important. At the Dushanbe Forum, the participants had proposed proclaiming 2005-2015 the International Decade of "Water for Life" (document A/58/362). The adoption of a resolution to that end would be a logical development of the International Year of Freshwater and would be consistent with the Millennium Declaration, which had called for the halving by 2015 of the number of the people lacking access to clean drinking water and sanitation.

53. **Ms. Rivero** (Uruguay), speaking on behalf of the South American Common Market (MERCOSUR), Bolivia and Chile, said that the members of MERCOSUR had made tremendous strides in promoting sustainable development and implementing Agenda 21. A development of which they were proud, especially as 2003 was the International Year of Freshwater, was the establishment in Uruguay of a subregional commission for the joint management of the Guarani aquifer system, the second largest freshwater reserve in the world. The MERCOSUR countries recognized that, while water was a natural resource in the service of mankind, States or regions where those water resources were located were responsible for their care and management.

54. On the subject of deforestation, a negative image had emerged at various non-governmental meetings intended to shape public opinion. A picture of deforestation had been put forward that took into account only recent data, thereby seeking to absolve from responsibility those countries that for decades had abused their forestry resources. That view ignored the agreed principles of historical responsibility and the

responsibility of leadership. Deforestation should be defined in a more balanced manner.

55. On the question of chemical safety and organic pollutants, the MERCOSUR countries were committed to the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade and the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants. They were committed to promoting the principles of safe management of chemical substances by working together to achieve the objectives of Rio+10. Once the Protocol to the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants came into force, the MERCOSUR countries were in agreement that the first Conference of the Parties should be held in Uruguay.

56. **Ms. Clarke** (Barbados) said that, since the adoption in 1994 of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, those States had carried out approximately 70 per cent of the Programme's required actions and measures, demonstrating their appreciation of the relevance of the Programme, the urgency of its implementation and the imperative of establishing appropriate mechanisms to ensure that they derived the greatest possible benefit from its implementation. However, the lack of effective and sustained support at the international level continued to frustrate national and regional implementation efforts. She hoped that the Mauritius review in 2004 would result in renewed political commitment and support at the global level for implementation. The success of the review exercise in Mauritius would depend not only on the efforts of the small island developing States but also on the level of engagement of the wider international community in the process, in the spirit of cooperation and partnership.

57. Emerging economic and social obstacles to the sustainable development of small island developing States, such as globalization and trade liberalization, should be incorporated into the Barbados Programme of Action. Indeed, globalization and trade liberalization had further increased the vulnerability of small island developing States and increased their marginalization in the international economic, financial and trading systems. Globalization had resulted, inter alia, in the reduction and elimination of preferential and secure

market access on which many small States depended to maintain incomes and employment, including the creation of asymmetric conditions affecting factor movements and unfair pressure from developed countries on the incentive regimes that many small island developing States had used to attract foreign investment and diversify their economic base. The international economic, trading and financial systems must be made more transparent and inclusive in order for small island developing States and all developing countries to put in place sound macroeconomic policy frameworks and achieve their sustainable development objectives. States should not be excluded from decision-making and norm-setting forums because of their size or relative economic power. Furthermore, there was a need for a more accommodating international environment that recognized and took into account the inherent vulnerability of small island developing States when considering their development, financial and trade needs.

58. **Mr. Htoo** (Myanmar), referring to the 2004-2005 implementation cycle of CSD on the themes of water, sanitation and human settlements, said that, as an agricultural country, Myanmar considered water a critical resource for food and agricultural production as well as for health and sanitation. The measures taken by the Government to increase the availability of water included building new reservoirs and dams, renovating irrigation systems and efficiently using groundwater. As a result, irrigated land in Myanmar had significantly increased over the past decade from 1.3 million acres to more than 2 million acres of agricultural land. Since only 70 per cent and 80 per cent of the rural and urban populations respectively had access to clean water, his Government had established a national health plan aimed at achieving universal access to safe drinking water. In that regard, he welcomed the assistance provided by agencies such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency in the rural clean water projects. Sanitation was another main component of the national health plan. In order to heighten awareness of the need for access to safe drinking water, sanitary toilets and the need to improve personal hygiene practices, the Government had in every year since 1998 been designating a national sanitation week.

59. Referring to human settlements, which were vital for sustainable development, he noted that, following the switch to a market economy in 1998, the urban

population in Myanmar, especially in the major cities, had increased. The country had recently experienced urban congestion, traffic and waste disposal problems as well as water and electricity supply problems. The Government had established new towns in suburban areas to provide poor urban dwellers with decent housing, and had recently begun a project to green the 30-mile radius of Yangon, the capital city.

60. A balanced approach should be taken to achieving the three pillars of sustainable development. The Commission on Sustainable Development should play a critical role as a high-level forum for monitoring and reviewing progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and fostering coherence of implementation, initiatives and partnerships. He called for strengthened international cooperation, noting that capacity-building, transfer of technology, technical cooperation, increased ODA flows, foreign direct investment and the participation of major groups should complement national implementation efforts.

61. **Mr. Siv** (United States of America) said that the eleventh session of CSD had adopted a series of ground-breaking reforms to make the United Nations more responsive and relevant to the needs of all, particularly developing countries. The Commission had agreed, *inter alia*, to limit the number of negotiations and to focus on how the international community could work together to achieve its ambitious and critical objectives and to focus each two-year cycle on a set of priorities. In that regard, the thematic cluster for 2004-2005 — water, sanitation and human settlements — would afford the international community a key opportunity to build not only on the World Summit on Sustainable Development but also on the World Water Forum held in Kyoto. The Commission had also agreed to facilitate action and capacity-building, including through learning centres, and to build on its successful Partnerships Fairs by providing a forum for representatives of sustainable development partnerships to exchange experiences, enhance ongoing partnerships and forge new ones.

62. Those reforms were new and promising. The upcoming twelfth session of the Commission would be a crucial test of whether the United Nations could convene international experts to truly focus on how to solve some of the most critical problems in the world today, not through norm-setting but through real actions on the ground. The twelfth session should therefore be attended not only by diplomats, but also

by technical experts from a wide range of government agencies and by implementation actors from all sectors of society and should be dynamic and action-oriented. Indeed, the twelfth session of the Commission was a tremendous opportunity to make substantial progress on water, sanitation and human settlements.

63. **Ms. von Lilien-Waldau** (Observer for the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)) said that the livelihoods of 900 million rural dwellers throughout the world were basically linked to the natural environment and depended on natural resources. Often, such people were on the front lines of efforts to combat the loss of biodiversity, desertification and natural resource degradation. They held the key to the sustainable use of land, water and other natural resources. Yet, the rural poor were often locked into a vicious cycle of worsening environmental conditions and deepening poverty. Nowhere was the relationship between poverty and environmental degradation more apparent than in the case of land degradation and desertification. Having no alternative economic activities and resources, the extremely poor rural inhabitants, the majority of whom lived on dry lands particularly susceptible to land degradation, reverted to the only resource they had — land — to survive. The resulting deforestation, overgrazing and overcultivation only increased pressure on the land itself, whose productive capacity was further eroded, thereby deepening poverty and desperation. Land degradation and desertification thus remained as much a developmental challenge as an environmental problem. Therefore, by giving priority to the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification, the international community would contribute not only to the eradication of extreme poverty but also to sustainable development.

64. The Convention to Combat Desertification was an important instrument for the international community in its efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and both developing and developed countries must join forces in implementing it. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Convention, many developing countries had already established action plans which addressed the problem of land degradation and desertification, but they needed to further integrate those plans into national poverty reduction strategies. For their part, donor countries and multilateral institutions must fulfil their financial commitments under the Convention by focusing on implementation

as a programmatic and funding priority. The effective implementation of the Convention could have a lasting and meaningful impact on the lives of millions of people struggling daily to make a living from limited natural resources and depleted soils. IFAD stood ready to contribute to the implementation of the Convention and would continue to work with its partners to make sustainable development a reality for all.

65. **Ms. Chenoweth** (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)) said that the elements of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation within the purview of her organization included the call for development of integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans by 2005 to meet future food production needs, especially in developing countries, and for greater emphasis on renewable energy development and use. The activities developed by FAO to promote sustainable development included its Anti-Hunger Programme; capacity-building programmes on bio-technology, food quality and safety; actions on education for rural people carried out in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and preparation of the first Report on the State of the World's Animal Genetic Resources. In that regard, FAO appealed for the rapid ratification of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture. Furthermore, FAO would launch on 31 October the International Year of Rice.

66. FAO was involved in a number of partnerships, including one with IFAD, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) to develop labour-saving technologies and crop varieties adapted to the needs of communities affected by HIV/AIDS; the Education for Rural Partnership with UNESCO, targeting the educational needs of rural people; and the International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, established in cooperation with Italy, Switzerland and UNEP.

67. **Ms. Van Glaanenweygel** (Suriname) welcomed the decision to proclaim a United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Indeed, investing in education was a crucial part of her country's development policy. Education was one of the most effective tools for making the necessary changes to achieve sustainable development. In that regard, one of her Government's main partners was Conservation International, which was currently

implementing several projects in Suriname, including providing technical and financial assistance to the Ministry of Education in order to develop new curricula for primary schools, which emphasized environmental preservation and sustainable development; developing and distributing educational material on the importance of the environment; and preparing a 10-year research programme to be implemented in the Central Suriname Nature Reserve. Educational approaches must take into account the experiences of indigenous cultures and minorities, acknowledging and facilitating their original and important contributions to sustainable development. Education for sustainable development would thus enable people to better understand the world in which they lived and how to make it more sustainable for future generations. It was therefore extremely important for the international community to take the necessary action to integrate education for sustainable development into national, regional and international policies.

68. **Ms. Jackson** (Bahamas) reiterated the call for action at all levels to accelerate national and regional implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action, particularly with respect to adequate financial resources and assistance in capacity-building. As tourism was her country's primary industry, as well as that of other small island developing States, the Bahamas was committed to ensuring environmental sustainability for its economic survival and social development. The Sustainable Tourism Unit of the Ministry of Tourism, acting in conjunction with the Bahamas Environment Science and Technology Commission, had developed a set of sustainable tourism policy guidelines which had helped to raise public awareness about the importance of a clean, healthy environment for citizens and tourists alike. With 80 per cent of its land at less than five feet above average sea level, the Bahamas was seriously concerned about climate change and sea-level rise. It was vital that policies should be developed to lessen those threats and assist with adaptation to climate change. Her delegation also considered coastal and marine resource management, natural and environmental disaster management, waste management, biodiversity and biosafety and the promotion of renewable energy as priority areas requiring urgent attention.

69. The effective implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action was crucial to the ability of small

island developing States to deal with environmental degradation and mitigate the impact of natural disasters. Increased attention must also be paid to poverty eradication, HIV/AIDS and crime, including the illicit drug trade and the use of drugs that impinged on sustainable development in the Caribbean. The increasing marginalization of small island developing States in the global economic and trading system must be stemmed if such States were to survive. There was a need for a well-defined and well-established dedicated regional mechanism for overall coordination of the implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action. She called on the United Nations to continue to support small island developing States in their efforts to effectively implement the Programme of Action. She welcomed the convening of the International Meeting to Review the Implementation of the Programme of Action, noting that concrete commitments to small island developing States through the promotion of partnership arrangements in strategic areas, between Governments, donor countries, the private sector and other major stakeholders would ensure a tangible and meaningful outcome to the International Meeting. Calling for renewed global commitment to the particular concerns of small island developing States, she expressed the hope that the International Meeting would take the international community a step closer to honouring its commitments under the Barbados Programme of Action and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

**Agenda item 98: Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (continued)** (A/C.2/58/L.4)

*Introduction of draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.4*

70. **Mr. Aboutahir** (Morocco) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/58/L.4 entitled "Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006)" on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. In paragraph 25, the words "which established a global framework for developing efficient transit transport systems in landlocked and transit developing countries," should be deleted and the words "the developed countries and the international financial institutions" should be replaced by "and their development partners;".

*The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.*