



Newsletter No6: July 2002

The WSSD and Poverty: From Bali to Johannesburg

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Overview

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) is a United Nations (UN) event but as the host nation South Africa has an important role in helping to set the agenda. South Africa, along with other African countries, has emphasised poverty related issues in its preparations for the summit.

We start this SARPN newsletter with a look at the core areas the South Africa government has focused on in the preparatory meetings and will continue to focus on during the summit. However, South Africa has to engage with the other nations in the UN system to promote its agenda. The UN is a multilateral body that works on a consensus seeking model. This helps to ensure that countries have the commitment to implement agreements. In practice South Africa, along with other African countries works through a bloc of developing countries called the G77/China. Securing consensus on positions at an Africa level and then negotiating them in the G77/China bloc means that they carry more weight than proposals from a single country. We look at how this works in more detail in the section on International Governance. Returning to the agenda, we broaden our focus to look at the SADC position, which shares many features with the Africa position.

From there we examine how the process has played out in practice, assessing the progress achieved at the final PrepCom for the WSSD in Bali. Here we focus on the *Draft Implementation Plan*. In its final form this plan will be the most important output of the WSSD. Although some 73 per cent of the text was agreed at Bali, the 27 per cent of unresolved text includes issues like trade and finance which are fundamental to its implementation. Text on unilateral actions is also unresolved. This was a response to the growing tendency of the United States, in particular, to seek international solutions outside of multilateral institutions. This gives it greater latitude to use its political, economic and military power to secure its objectives without going through consensus building processes. Although not part of the plan itself, the issue of partnerships is also unresolved. Partnerships between governments and the private sector have been promoted, particularly by the United States, as a key mechanism for addressing the implementation deficit that has dogged the objectives set out

in Agenda 21 at the Rio Earth Summit ten years ago. However, developing countries are concerned that developed country governments will use them to avoid commitments. The failure to resolve these fundamental issues places greater urgency on the process at the WSSD from 24 August to 9 September in Johannesburg. Success will be key to securing an outcome that will effectively promote sustainable development, and contribute to poverty eradication. However, it is unlikely that the WSSD will arrive at definitive positions on all the issues. It is only one in a complex series of highly politicised interactions between nations, and in some areas like trade and finance, agreements reached at the WTO take precedence over those in other international forums.

The SA Government and the WSSD

Desighen Naidoo from the South African Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism outlined the South African Government's preparations for the WSSD, which are shaped around the core objectives of eradicating poverty and redressing global inequality, at a recent SARP debate

Amongst other things the government wants to ensure that the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) secures progress on the commitments to halve poverty by 2015 expressed in the Millennium Development Goals by various heads of state, including South Africa's.

A Global Deal

Through internal deliberations and consultations with stakeholders, including civil society, business and labour, the South African government has put together a list of 22 priority areas to secure a global deal at the WSSD. The list represents six core areas focusing on basic needs and on furthering sustainable development through efficient use of resources.

Six Core Areas for International Negotiations on Sustainable Development

Area	Targets / action	Focus / issues
Water	Specific targets for the 1.5 billion people who don't have adequate access at present Halve the number of people without access to hygienic sanitation by 2015	Integrated water resource management Protocols around shared basins
Energy	Halve the number of people who don't have access by 2015	International: energy efficiency and renewable sources South Africa: access to energy, in particular modern energy services
Food security	Reverse the mal-distribution of food resources around the world Access to agricultural markets	Africa: double food production
Health	Communicable diseases and HIV/AIDS Water borne diseases	Holistic approach based on WHO's <i>Health for All</i> strategy
Education	Expanding access to education Skills development and literacy	Millennium Development Goals need to be more concrete
Technology	Technology transfers through technology partnerships	Develop and customise technology to avoid inappropriate transfers

Through this initiative the South African government aims to bring greater balance to the discussion on sustainable development by giving the social and economic pillars the same weight as the environmental pillar. The Monterrey Conference on Finance for Development and the Doha round of the World Trade Organisation established that many of the solutions for sustainable development on the economic front lie in redressing current global economic inequalities. These include debt cancellation and relief, access to markets and transformation of the global financial system.

The government believes that to have a real impact on poverty the WSSD needs to produce ten-year

action programmes in each of these priority areas. It also wants to see a political declaration on a global deal for sustainable development. In addition to governments the deal must include the other partners, namely business, civil society, the development finance institutions and the international financial institutions. Making the deal work calls for a more effective international forum for sustainable development governance.

A regional model for sustainable development

The South African government is also working with other African governments to present NEPAD as a regional model of the approach needed to implement a global deal on sustainable development. The government hoped to get strong support for this from the fourth PrepCom in Bali and to carry this momentum forward to Johannesburg.

Full text at www.sarpn.org.za

The International Governance System

Saliem Fakir, Director of the IUCN's South Africa Office, describes some of the workings of international governance institutions and the issues they pose for transforming the system

The Bloc System

In the UN system each country has an equal vote so decisions are made by consensus, but in reality countries have economic ties and aid relationships with more powerful countries. Although you have consensus based decision-making and a one-vote system, you have blocs of countries that try to make decisions, like the G77, which is most of the developing countries and China, trying to reach consensus on issues to drive within the UN system. Part of the strategy is to try to get maximum consensus within the different blocs and then to engage the other blocs so that any outcome that is decided on will also influence the flow of resources.

If South Africa tables a programme on energy and water, as part of a global deal, it would have to work within first SADC, the Africa bloc, and then the G77 and try to get consensus within that. The louder and more consolidated the voice within the G77, the more likely it is to influence the agenda.

The programme of action that the WSSD agrees on is important because if a programme on water and sanitation that meets the Millennium Development Goals is secured, countries can tap into resources to support national programmes. This is crucial for countries like Mozambique that depend on foreign revenue for up to 80 per cent of their government budget.

Is Change Possible?

The question is whether comprehensive change is possible in the international system without comprehensive structural change in the global or national economies. Shifting resources from rich to poor affects the interests of the rich and powerful and will encounter resistance. This raises the question of how to engage with the inequality of power between different countries in the global economy in national economies.

For example, Monterrey was successful in securing increased donor assistance but made limited progress on addressing fundamental structural issues around trade and the global financial system. One reason is that different issues are discussed in different intergovernmental forums where different power relations prevail. Powerful countries with a major stake in the global economy will avoid discussing substantial trade issues in a forum like Monterey. The World Summit is likely to encounter similar resistance to making commitments on a range of issues including aid, trade and debt.

Free Markets Are Not Enough

There is now broad agreement in international circles that free markets and deregulation are not enough to secure development and that governments need to intervene to stimulate certain aspects of the economy. The work of economist Amartya Sen shows that these macro level interventions need to be complemented by individual initiatives to secure development, underlining the importance of improving human capabilities in developing countries. Giving individual members of a nation greater freedom to explore their full potential and worth requires better governance, less corruption and better democratic systems that will allow them to access resources to develop their own welfare and that of their families.

While these insights have encouraged a more participatory and holistic approach to development policy and strategy there are still important areas of concern. One of these is the role that transnational or multinational corporations play in influencing the policies, particularly the economic policies, of many developing countries. To date there is no global governance system that sufficiently regulates their behaviour, and forums like Monterrey and the World Summit have not paid enough attention to their impact on the global economy and on the ability of many countries to deal with development issues.

Full text at www.sarpn.org.za

Empowering Communities

Sandile Ndawonde of the Green Network, an association of community based organisations, describes some community expectations of the WSSD

Searching For Solutions That Work

From a community perspective there are many environmental problems that relate to poverty including waste management, land use, flood control and water supply and sanitation. Communities are looking to the summit to provide examples and case histories of approaches that work and those that don't. They also need better information and communication, technology transfer and support to build their capacity to undertake development initiatives.

Communities would like to see the WSSD leading to closer working relationships between government, communities and NGOs. A fundamental need is to improve decision making processes so that people on the ground whose activities have positive or negative impacts on the environment and on poverty become part of the decision making process. Information flows between stakeholders, and CBO capacity to inform people also need improving. In general CBOs and NGOs need training in environmental issues and in leadership and management skills to improve the good work they are already doing.

Networks like the Green Network play an important role in helping people to avoid repeating mistakes. They help to identify needs so that programmes and projects can be initiated to meet those needs. CBOs will need funding to continue their work after the WSSD as they fill an important gap left by the lack of communication between government at local, district and national level. This is also something that needs attention.

Full text at www.sarpn.org.za

Issues Raised in Discussion at the Public Debate on the WSSD

- The use of inaccessible language in the international and national environmental debate limits participation. Lack of action on Agenda 21 was partly because people could not understand it.

Workers and Communities

- Communities were not adequately consulted on the WSSD and it was not clear that they would receive any real benefits apart from promises of access to international markets.
- Workers will choose to work for a polluting industry rather than see it closed down.
- Recent environmental issues go beyond issues like biodiversity to direct impacts on the health of communities and workers.
- Communities as well as workers are affected by pollution. Self-regulation will not work as we have seen in the case of asbestos mining. Communities and workers should put pressure industries to invest and change the technology. Then we can all live a better life.

The Global Governance System

- To get a deal you need the power to make countries change, what are the levers to do this?
- The only way to change North-South relations is to find common South-South issues.
- September 11th has made the United States recognise that it is very dependent on external security, making it more open to discussions on international monitoring systems if not global governance.
- Recognition of the impact of current unsustainable consumption and production patterns in the north, particularly in the EU is forcing people to engage with the developing world.
- Although each country in the UN system has an equal vote, in practice countries work in blocs to get maximum consensus and then engage the other blocs so that any outcome will influence resource flows. Changing things depends on how one plays politics in those constituencies.
- The progressive agenda in this era of globalisation should be striving towards democratically constituted global government. The UN should be strengthened and organisations like the WTO and the IMF should be subordinated to it.

Sustainable Development

- Unless people have food in their stomachs and have their survival needs addressed they won't hear about issues like earth justice, and sustainability, and biodiversity, and climate change. But if they don't hear about these issues it will be harder for them to find food.
- Although this is mainly about how to mobilise a global deal, government is talking about restructuring South Africa's policies to govern sustainable development in the country and for the first time there is a cabinet committee on sustainable development
- We cannot enforce our own Environmental Management Act (NEMA) yet we are trying to resolve international issues.

Poverty Strategy In South Africa

- Government is preparing four Bills to provide the legislative authority to deal with these issues.
- South Africa has no formal anti-poverty strategy and no budget for poverty reduction. Some held that the RDP provides a guiding vision that is promoted through a range of national strategies and through integrated development plans (IDP) at local level. Others held that the RDP has been dropped and that lack of co-ordination, capacity and commitment to addressing planning for basic needs means that there is no effective strategy for poverty reduction.

Gender

- Most of the people who are grappling with poverty issues are women and they are just statistics. People need to be involved in developing strategies that will take them from project level to where they can sustain themselves.
- Getting the women's issue into WSSD text was very hard even within our negotiating bloc, the G77, and we relied on other blocs, like the EU, to bring it into the text.

Demilitarisation

- The WSSD agenda says nothing about the demilitarisation process, which affects people across the African continent. It comes into the clauses around peace, stability and security but there was resistance from many about being definitive.

SADC

- SADC preparations have been consolidated with the Africa process, when the five regions came together, and more recently through continuous engagement at SADC and Africa level in between the PrepComs. South Africa is hosting an Africa seminar in early May. More than anything else NEPAD is bringing the region and Africa together.

Full text at www.sarpn.org.za

Commentary

The SA government position covers a wide range from international negotiations on trade through technology transfers to national programmes to combat disease, improved access to education and increased food production. Underlying these elements are the themes of governance and financial resource flows that have featured prominently in NEPAD. There are three areas in the flow of financial resources; improved terms of trade and particularly better access to markets in developed countries, debt relief and debt cancellation, and increased development assistance. Progress is unlikely to be straightforward in any of them. The recent farming subsidies announced in the United States point to the difficulties of getting developed countries to give equal access to their markets. On debt relief and debt cancellation there has been some progress though not enough to satisfy those demanding the wholesale cancellation of debt. The Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) offers the hope of relief to some poorer countries, although it has been criticised for being little more than structural adjustment dressed up in participatory clothes. The Monterrey Conference on finance for development brought promises of increased assistance from the United States and the European Union, but not at levels to satisfy all stakeholders, and it did not make the progress hoped for by developing countries on issues like trade and changes to the international financial system.

At a continental level NEPAD can offer the initiatives around its peer review mechanism as proof of its intentions to improve standards of governance on the continent, although they are still in the development phase and have yet to be tested in practice. NEPAD's claim to serve as a regional model for implementing sustainable development at the WSSD has been boosted by the growing acceptance and support it is getting from the countries that dominate the global economy. Against this NEPAD is facing increasing criticism from civil society on two counts; that African people have not been adequately involved and that NEPAD's programme relies too heavily on free markets and privatisation and lacks the direct engagement with the social, economic and environmental pillars needed to address the problems facing ordinary Africans and promote sustainable development. These issues point to some of the problems that surfaced at PrepCom 4 in Bali.

The SADC Prepares for the WSSD

Delegates from SADC countries representing government, civil society and business met in Mauritius from 17th to 19th September 2001 for sub-regional consultations in preparation for the WSSD. In a statement issued after the meeting they noted that achievements since Rio included:

- Ratification of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Convention to Combat Desertification and the adoption of appropriate mechanisms to implement the conventions.
- Increased regional economic cooperation and integration, the development of a number of protocols including those on trade and shared watercourses in the sub-region, and mainstreaming gender development.
- Improved environment awareness, with many countries strengthening policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks to support sustainable development.

The conference outlined the following challenges:

- Although globalisation provides opportunity and prospects for future sustainable development, including combating poverty, most countries in the sub-region continue to be marginalised and impacted negatively by it. Globalisation has increased the capacity of developed countries, particularly in the areas of trade, finance and information communication technology (ICT).
- Africa still does not have adequate access to markets in developed countries for its products. This limits the resources available for sustainable development on the continent.
- Countries in the sub-region continue to receive extremely low levels of foreign private capital investment and official development assistance (ODA). They use a substantial proportion of their export earnings for debt servicing making it impossible to achieve sustainable development.
- Inequality in the international trade environment continues as a result of subsidisation of certain sectors in the developed world.

SADC Key Priorities for WSSD

Key Priority	Focus
Poverty	Poverty eradication is the key to sustainable development
Peace Security and stability	Peace, security and stability are the basic requirements for sustainable development
Financing for sustainable development	Improved resources for sustainable development through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ better access to the Global Environment Facility ▪ improved market access for developing countries ▪ reconsideration of debt relief, in particular review of HIPC criteria and wider access
Health	Investment by the international community in affordable curative and preventative health care to reduce the disabling burden of diseases like HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria that worsen poverty
Waste	Re-commitment to international and regional agreements to manage waste, including hazardous waste, and improve management and monitoring
International Environmental Governance	Improved participation by less resourced countries in international environmental governance (IEG) through <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A single centralised political council ▪ A single coordinating organisation for environmental issues ▪ Clustering of multi-lateral environmental agreements ▪ Sustainable resources and funding to maintain the system
Food Security	Increased food production and access to food, improved support and appropriate training in agriculture and agro processing, and protection against dumping, particularly of genetically modified food.
Energy,	Biomass remains the main energy source in rural areas. Research and development is needed for clean coal technologies, efficient energy supply and use, and affordable renewables adapted to African conditions.
Climate change	Concern over the potential rise in sea level and increase of extreme weather conditions calls for rapid agreement on the UN Convention on climate change and the Kyoto Protocol
Biodiversity	The sub-region must benefit from the scientific and economic opportunities represented by its wealth of biodiversity. The OAU model laws on access to biological resources and biosafety should be implemented and the world should support an accelerated effort for the sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity.
Water	Scarcity, poor distribution, and frequent droughts and floods are problems, particularly for the poor. Millions still lack access to basic water and sanitation. The WSSD should agree on and resource a global strategy to deliver the Millennium targets on safe water and sanitation.

Key Priority	Focus
Land degradation and desertification	Most people in the sub-region depend on the land. Poor management and inappropriate practices persist in some areas. The WSSD should accelerate implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification.
Marine and coastal management	Coastal communities and some national economies, particularly small island states depend on coastal and marine resources that are threatened by unsustainable development, over exploitation and climate change. WSSD should harmonise and coordinate regional and international laws and agreements on the seas and improve compliance and enforcement. The sub-region needs technology to monitor and protect fish stocks and more support for sustainable management and development of coastal areas.
Market access	The benefits of economic globalisation need to be shared fairly across nations with a shift in emphasis from aid to trade agreements that facilitate sustainable development in the region.
Capacity building and technology transfer	The widening technology gap needs to be addressed through technology transfer, information exchange and technology partnerships to improve access, build capacity and secure affordable sustainable development technologies. SADC countries are committed to developing and promoting Indigenous Knowledge Systems and technology.

The meeting reaffirmed the New African Initiative (NAI) (a precursor to NEPAD) as the cornerstone of sustainable development in Africa and noted that sustainable development is dependent on a vibrant social, economic and environmental strategy for the planet. It called for stronger dialogue between North and South at the WSSD, and for meaningful participation and outcomes that would further the sustainable development objectives of the South and halt its marginalisation through globalisation. The North should work in partnership with the South to restructure the global sustainable development governance regime and agree on a plan of action to meet sustainable development targets.

From Bali to Johannesburg

For two weeks in June representatives met for PrepCom 4, the final official round of negotiations before the World Summit in Johannesburg. The aim of the preparatory process before the summit is for the major groups involved to debate and arrive at substantial agreement on the outcomes of the summit.

Given the widespread feeling that Agenda 21 has not been adequately implemented in the decade since the Rio Earth summit, the call has been for a clear implementation plan with specific targets and time schedules and for a supporting political declaration.

At a briefing on the WSSD process on Tuesday morning, 18 June 2002, WSSD Secretary General, Nitin Desai, said that the text of the *Draft Plan of Implementation for the WSSD* as it was on 7 June will go forward to Johannesburg with no changes. Delegates will have to present any work done in between once the WSSD begins in August.

Most of the 27 per cent of the text that is unresolved is in the chapters on globalisation and means of implementation, and deals mainly with trade and finance. Most commentators agree that the challenge for Johannesburg will be finding common ground, rather than time, to resolve these issues, with some arguing that failure to agree on these issues will undermine the ability to implement agreements in many other areas

PrepCom 4 agreed to entrust Chair Salim with preparing elements for a political declaration based on its discussions. This will be posted on the UN's official Johannesburg website by the end of June 2002 (www.johannesburgsummit.org).

The Implementation Plan

This plan will be the main outcome of the summit. While all of its ten sections have general relevance to people in the SADC region and Africa, Section VII deals specifically with Sustainable Development for Africa. Here we focus on this section and on the sections that deal with implementation and resources, because they have a direct bearing on effective implementation of Section VII. For more information on the other sections refer to the Earth News Bulletin 4 at (www.iisd.ca/2002/pc4/).

In Section VII on *Sustainable Development for Africa* agreement was reached on actions at all levels to:

- create an enabling environment;
- support the implementation of NEPAD
- enhance the industrial productivity, diversity and competitiveness of African countries;
- enhance the contribution of the industrial sector, in particular mining, minerals and metal;
- provide financial and technical support:
 - to strengthen the capacity of African countries to undertake environmental legislative policy and institutional reform for sustainable development
 - for afforestation and reforestation in Africa and
 - for Africa's efforts to implement the UNCCD at the national level
- deal effectively with natural disasters and conflicts;
- promote integrated water resources development and optimise upstream and downstream benefits;
- achieve significantly improved sustainable agricultural productivity and food security; achieve sound management of chemicals;
- bridge the digital divide and create digital opportunity on access to infrastructure and technology transfer;
- support Africa's efforts to attain sustainable tourism; and
- support African countries in their efforts to implement the Habitat Agenda and the Istanbul Declaration.

Issues in the section that were unresolved included:

- 'limited benefits' from international trade;
- declining ODA;
- the Tokyo International Conference on African Development;
- protection of human rights;
- competitiveness in global markets;
- market access;
- energy initiatives; and
- climate change.

In addition to these unresolved areas in the Africa section, agreement on some of the other outstanding issues, particularly those affecting trade and finance, is essential for effective action on many areas in Section VII.

Summary Of Unresolved Issues In The Draft Implementation Plan

Section	Unresolved issues
2 Poverty Eradication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ developing a world solidarity fund ▫ indigenous people's access to economic opportunities ▫ targets and measures for access to improved sanitation and reliable, affordable energy ▫ increasing employment opportunities that conform to ILO standards
4 Protection and Managing of the Natural Resource Base of Economic and Social Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ improving market access ▫ reducing export subsidies and actions on illicit crops ▫ the proposed international regime on biodiversity and implementing instruments by 2015 to stem the loss of biodiversity.
5 Sustainable Development In A Globalising World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ opportunities and threats of globalisation ▫ good governance ▫ the contributions of the WTO ▫ the precautionary approach ▫ sustainable trade ▫ government support for private industry ▫ financial market regulation ▫ information from multi-lateral and regional financial institutions ▫ international agreements on human rights ▫ environment and labour standards and ▫ assistance to developing countries to promote impact assessments.
6 Health and Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ the WTO Agreement on Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and public health ▫ On strengthening the capacity of health care systems to deliver basic health services to all, there was disagreement over whether to qualifying this with the phrase 'consistent with national laws and cultural and religious values' or with 'in conformity with all human rights and fundamental freedoms'
8 Sustainable Development of Small Island States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ text on the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) ▫ sustainable fisheries management ▫ Defining and managing extended continental shelf areas.
9 Means of Implementation	<p>This section contains sub-sections on trade and finance; technology transfer; the role of the scientific community; education; capacity building; and information for decision making. All references to 'actions at all levels' in the chapeaux of each sub-section are bracketed, as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ references to the precautionary principle, new and additional resources, and global public goods in the scientific community sub-section; ▫ text on new and additional resources in the capacity building sub-section; and ▫ paragraphs on indicators, strategic environmental assessment, and sustainability assessments in the information for decision making sub-section. <p>The sub-sections on technology transfer, the role of the scientific community, education, capacity building, and information for decision-making contain few unresolved issues.</p> <p>The <i>Finance and Trade</i> sub-section includes issues of debt, implementation of the WTO Doha agreements, market access (including trade liberalisation and elimination of tariffs and subsidies), measures to address international terrorism and the removal of obstacles to people's rights to realise self-determination. Concerns raised include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ deviation from the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and arguments for other mechanisms to deal with debts; ▫ access to markets for developing country products, the potential to contravene the WTO agreements on non-discrimination; and selective use of excerpts from the Monterrey and Doha texts.

Section	Unresolved issues
10 Sustainable Development Governance	<p>This section contains the following sub-sections: an overview; objectives; the role of the General Assembly; the role of ECOSOC; the role and function of the CSD; the role of international institutions; strengthening institutional arrangements for sustainable development at international, regional and national levels; and participation of Major Groups.</p> <p>Unresolved issues include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities ▫ means of implementation ▫ the rule of law and human rights ▫ international finance and trade institutions and their links to sustainable development ▫ expanding the GEF mandate to cover domestic environmental benefits implementing the ILO conventions on core labour standards, and on completing the UN convention against corruption ▫ ECOSOC's role in the follow-up to WSSD and the Monterrey Consensus, and in monitoring the Monterrey commitments <p>Agreed text sets out measures to strengthen sustainable development institutions. It commits the international community to integrate the sustainable development goals in Agenda 21 and the WSSD in the work of the UN system and international financial and trade institutions, and to improve their collaboration.</p> <p>The section stresses the need to enhance the effectiveness and coordination of international institutions, within and outside the UN system, and to improve regional and national cooperation. Participation of Major Groups will be enhanced, including through partnerships between governmental and non-governmental actors.</p>

Source: *Earth News Bulletin*, www.iisd.ca/2002/pc4

Evaluating PrepCom 4

In a statement on PrepCom 4, South Africa's Minister of Environment and Tourism, Mohammad Valli Moosa, said, "The main areas of disagreement revolved around the trade and financing provisions of the Plan – the so-called 'economic platform' of the document. Developing countries insist that a poverty eradication strategy should not ignore the most important causes of poverty, among them unfair terms of trade and, in particular, the lack of market access for agricultural products from poor countries. Developing countries also differed with the rich countries on the resourcing of the implementation plan. Developed countries wanted the plan to indicate who and how the good intentions would be financed." He went on to say that South Africa is pleased with the global consensus on the main framework of the Summit and the focus on all three pillars of sustainable development, and with the agreement on the overall target of halving poverty by 2015. There was also agreement on the need for a concrete programme of action addressing water, sanitation, energy, health, agriculture and food security, education, and biodiversity, and on the need for a global partnership between rich and poor countries, and between governments, business and civil society for sustainable development (www.sarpn.org.za).

South African President Thabo Mbeki has indicated that he will be addressing the unresolved issues in a series of international forums such as the G8 meeting in Canada and at the launch of the African Union in South Africa in the run up to the WSSD.

In a comprehensive review of PrepCom 4, the *Earth News Bulletin* notes that the failure to reach full agreement on the *Draft Implementation Plan* was not unexpected (www.iisd.ca/2002/pc4/). The fundamental issues that were not resolved concern finance, terms of trade and globalisation, and the Rio principle of common but differentiated responsibilities (see box). Agreement on these issues

will lay the foundation for resolving other outstanding issues that deal mainly with the work programme. Underlying the lack of agreement on these fundamental issues is the widening gap between rich and poor, seen as reflecting the 'broken promise' of Rio. The resulting lack of trust has also been fed by developments in the international governance system, with the role of the WTO seen as having sidelined Rio. Trade liberalisation and corporate led globalisation are seen to be increasingly sidelining the role of UN agencies in global governance. The UNEP Global Environmental Outlook report argues that the choice is to pursue either a 'Markets First' scenario or a 'Sustainability First' scenario where global policy is no longer the servant of the trade regime.

Failure to reach agreement on all issues at PrepCom 4 means that there are crucial areas outstanding for the

Johannesburg summit. The Earth News Bulletin argues that until the 'hot political issues of finance, trade and means of implementation are resolved', many of the targets and programmes to address sanitation, biodiversity, depleted fish stocks, sustainable consumption and production and energy will be 'held hostage'. In addition the United States shift to a unilateralist agenda risks derailing the summit unless text dealing with unilateral coercive measures is agreed on.

Partnerships between the private sector and governments to implement agreements are also an area of contention. While the United States sees them as a major outcome of the summit, developing countries in the G-77/China bloc are wary that they may be used to impose conditionalities on developing countries and to avoid government commitments by developed countries. Amongst the major groups, business and industry are enthusiastic supporters along with local government, while NGOs are calling for criteria and frameworks to guide implementation. Amongst NGOs there are differing viewpoints, with NGOs involved in implementation seemingly less opposed than those involved in campaigning and advocacy work.

A series of international events including the G8 Summit in Canada, the meeting of EU leaders in Seville and the launch of the African Union in South Africa are likely to play an important role in determining the attitude of Heads of State and Government to the WSSD. NGOs will also be making their preparations, including the launch of a million signature petition at Bali under the anti-globalisation slogan 'We the peoples believe another world is possible'. Key to meeting the developing countries' demands will be the transformation of the Monterrey Consensus into an action agenda, and the delivery of political commitments set out in the Doha Declaration.

It seems likely that the road to securing some of the more fundamental changes will be a long and difficult one. At the G8 meeting African representatives were able to secure a commitment that a substantial portion of the ODA pledged at Monterrey would go to Africa, and some additional finance for the HIPC initiative, but so far there has been no progress on restructuring the international financial system. While the WSSD will be the biggest international event ever staged in Southern Africa, it is only one in a complex and highly political set of international interactions and is unlikely to deliver definitive answers to many of the fundamental issues that remain unresolved. As far as the trade and finance issues go, the WTO takes precedence over all other international agreements. Answers to some of these issues will only emerge in the WTO Doha round of developmental talks, which are scheduled to end in 2005. What this means for poverty eradication will be influenced by the way different stakeholders engage with the issues. For those who live with poverty it will not be soon enough.

Agenda 21: Principle 7

States shall cooperate in a spirit of global partnership to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem. In view of the different contributions to global environmental degradation, States have common but differentiated responsibilities. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.

For more information see:

www.sarpn.org.za (the best resource on poverty related issues in Southern Africa)

www.johannesburgsummit.org (UNEP site)

www.johannesburgsummit.co.za (mainly logistics)

www.johannesburgsummit.org.za (South African civil society)

www.rio10.dk (good coverage of African preparations)

www.iisd.ca/2002/pc4/ (Earth News Bulletin)

www.iisd.ca/wssd/portal.html

www.iucn.org/wssd/

www.g8.gc.ca

About SARPAN

SARPAN is a project of the Integrated Rural and Regional Development programme of the Human Sciences Research Council, based in Pretoria, South Africa. It is presently funded by DFID (SA). SARPAN's core objectives are to:

- stimulate public debate on poverty issues across Southern Africa, particularly by linking up different sectoral perspectives on poverty issues
- to work towards better analysis and understanding of poverty, its social and economic context, and of options for its reduction
- to distribute readily accessible information, research results and opinion on the multi-faceted dimensions of poverty to the widest range of actors and individuals across Southern Africa.

Our website contains a growing range of material on poverty issues across Southern Africa. Much of this material is generated by organisations active in different countries in Southern Africa: SARPAN is prepared to host such analysis and opinion on our website. Material can be sent to:

sarpn@hsrc.ac.za