

eco

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Down to the
Wire

World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, Issue 6

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It Ain't Over Til It's Over

Congratulations to Norway, Switzerland, Hungary, St. Lucia (CARICOM), Tuvalu, and, especially, Ethiopia (and, yes, the G77 + China and the EU too) for eliminating that abhorrent "WTO consistency" text!!! No need to apologise for re-opening agreed text... let's have a lil' more of that along the lines of what Eco is calling for in the Bali Test Cases, up-dated below:

Consumption and Production

The verdict is neither fail nor pass. The text concerning the much-disputed 10-year framework programme has been altered to "encourage and promote a 10-year framework of programmes" - a change that obviously weakens this area, as there is no longer a firm commitment to the development of a programme. (14) On the other hand, reference to the requirement to develop production and consumption policies to improve products and services provided is positive. (14c)

In relation to information, the text is not clear—and the references to eco-labels have been lost. However, the references to effective, transparent, verifiable, non-misleading and non-discriminatory consumer information tools are still in there. (14d)

Energy

The text is still being negotiated as Eco goes to press. So far, ministers have utterly failed to come up with any agreement, and none of the options that are being discussed are worth the paper

they're printed on in terms of poverty alleviation, climate protection, or stimulating the renewable energy revolution that is required for a sustainable future. Eco recommends that Heads of State and Government resolve this issue; Schroeder and Cardozo need to ensure that other leaders do not let OPEC dic-

tate the realm of possibilities available to change the course of the petroleum-dependent global economy.

Water

As *Eco* went to print, the news from the hallowed committee room where
Please turn to page 2.

Dear Heads of State

Welcome to Johannesburg! *Eco* has been eagerly awaiting your arrival, because the Summit is in dire need of political leadership.

At best, the negotiations have led to an impressive number of new, creative ways of expressing agreement already reached elsewhere. While we admire this inventiveness, we have to say that we don't think repetition is the route to sustainable development.

Even worse, your negotiators have agreed to undermine numerous international agreements and efforts to protect people and the environment in many of the provisions of the Plan of Implementation. Energy, Rio principles, poverty... the list goes on.

The shadow of the WTO looms large over these negotiations. The final text on Trade and Globalisation in the Plan of Implementation—still under negotiation at the time of writing these lines—should be entirely deleted—scrapped—from the Summit agreement.

We hope that you have not come here merely to enjoy the hospitality of our South African hosts, but that you will show the political leadership needed to move the world towards sus-

tainable development. Last night, Ethiopia showed what political leadership can achieve by sparking the debate which ultimately removed the phrase "ensuring WTO consistency" from the text. We hope that their example will inspire you to tackle the other offending provisions that Eco has highlighted in this issue. And we urge you to ensure that the Political Declaration points clearly to the specific political steps that you will take to move the sustainability agenda further than its present pitiful state.

You are ultimately responsible for the activities of your governments. You must rescue this process, or you will fail the entire world. The legacy that you will leave our children and future generations will be greater poverty and a biologically impoverished planet. Unlike many of the negotiators here, you are not anonymous. You are visible, and your signatures will be written all over this document in the history books. The world knows who you are, and it is watching. This is your chance to stand tall, or at least to keep your heads above water (provided you start to act on climate change).

And for those of you who have snubbed the Summit, guiding your delegations (with the invisible hand of Adam Smith?) from the comfort of your ranches and retreats in Texas and elsewhere, history will almost certainly judge you more harshly still.

Ministers were gathering is that compromise text for a combined water access and sanitation target is on the table. The text would retain a 2015 date in return for filling the target with weasel words, the sort of "aiming to achieve" language that gives the world's political leaders a reputation for indecisiveness and lack of commitment. While our governments "aim to achieve" the provision of millions of taps and toilets, they fail to explain where the water to fill them will come from. It appears we will have to wait for the next Summit to make a commitment to protect nature, source of water, source of life.

Biodiversity

The agreed text on biodiversity is weaker than the language "have instruments in place to stop and reverse the current alarming biodiversity loss... by the year 2010" adopted by the same ministers in April 2002 at the 6th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. At a minimum, governments should re-commit to what they agreed to only six months ago. However, the text still refers to a target, and with the US accepting this, it would seem a logical next step for them to ratify the convention. The paragraph on access and benefit-sharing may represent a positive step as long as the role of the WTO in the "Means of implementation" does not interfere with the negotiations called for in this paragraph

The agreement on rebuilding fish stocks (paragraph 30 (a)) may well undermine the past 10 years of international agreements on sustainable fisheries and the protection of marine biodiversity, in particular the 1995 UN Fish Stocks Agreement. It also appears to treat the minimal obligations for fisheries conservation in the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea as being merely voluntary, and only to be implemented by 2015 "where possible". The setting of a date to rebuild the world's fisheries and marine ecosystems is a laudable goal, but the target chosen to rebuild fish stocks, "maximum sustainable yield", almost guarantees the continued depletion of the world's fisheries and marine biodiversity.

At the same time there is good text calling for the elimination of subsidies that contribute to illegal and unregulated fishing and excess fishing capacity and for the development and use of the ecosystem approach and networks of



Cartoon courtesy CSE India

marine protected areas to protect biodiversity in the marine environment.

Agriculture

While the agreed text acknowledges that agriculture is inextricably linked to poverty eradication, that's where it ends. It does not sufficiently recognize the scope and scale of challenges facing current agricultural production systems, either environmental or social. It contains no action plan to ensure that agricultural production systems are transformed to become vehicles for food security, environmental sustainability, or poverty reduction. It contains no commitments to provide new resources to combat declining levels of public support for agriculture transformation. Finally, the Summit has dropped positive references from Bali to support new and emerging opportunities to diversify and develop agricultural niche markets (i.e. fair trade and organic) - arguably the best examples of sustainable agriculture around. Finally, the text does not define sustainable agriculture so as to address the question of GM crops, leaving open the possibility that the precautionary principle is undermined, and GM crops considered "sustainable" solutions for poverty and environmental degradation... All in all, a poor showing, and hardly Summitworthy.

Small Island Developing States (SIDS)

All the language has been resolved reasonably favorably, but governments must ensure that the measures promised in the text are implemented.

Africa

The text is very close to the text from Bali, which spells out clear international support for the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as well as an expressed will on behalf of African governments to act more responsibly regarding poverty eradication and governance. However, civil society participation is not explicitly stated in the text. Consequently, it is a matter of concern that African governments have so far involved African NGOs and popular organizations very little in the development of NEPAD and the African Union. In addition, many commentators question whether NEPAD will promote sustainable development, or whether it aims instead to reinforce the current unsustainable trade paradigm in Africa. The agreed text is insufficient in terms of paying special attention to the least developed countries in Africa, which have failed to benefit from globalization. At any rate, close monitoring will be needed from African NGOs in order to follow-up on NEPAD implementation.

Trade and Sustainable Development

Scrap the text and start again! Eco has consistently held that governments must recognise that globalised market liberalisation does not lead to equitable, just or environmentally sustainable development. Economies must be managed as a tool to achieve sustainable development. Sustainable development must circumscribe trade and WTO rules - not the other way around. Unless this relationship is clearly set out by the Summit, the legal precedent set will spell the demise of the Kyoto Protocol, the Cartagena Biosafety Protocol, the Stockholm POPs convention, and virtually

Human Rights Hang by a Thread

Negotiations over whether the political declaration and the plan of implementation would retain any mention of human rights hung in the balance Sunday night as Costa Rica and other countries tried to find a compromise that could survive. One formulation being supported by the EU and some others would tack “provided that [whatever it is] is consistent with WTO mandates” or words to that effect onto any human rights language adopted, a further darkening of the WTO’s shadow over this summit.

Meanwhile, out at Nasrec, Mary Robinson, the outgoing UN High Commissioner on Human Rights, was reporting on the outcome of a seminar of experts her office organized in January. There, a panel of experts found that there has been steady progress since Rio in linking the environment to human rights protections in national constitutions (more than 100!) and in a growing body of jurisprudence, nationally and internationally. Failing to acknowledge that link in the documents that eventually will emerge from this summit would be a step backward. How serious? Yves Lador, who represents an NGO at the Human Rights commission in Geneva, insists it would be quite serious, giving governments an excuse for evading responsibilities and taking pressure off the UN Human Rights Commission and its nascent duty to consider environmental quality a basic human right. Mme Fatma-Zhora Vesely, the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights and the Environment and lately on the transport of toxic wastes, told *Eco* it would be a “major frustration” if such language is not preserved. At the end of her keynote address, *Eco* asked Mrs Robinson why, if there has been so much progress in linking human rights and the environment, are countries unwilling to adopt language at least as strong as that in the Rio declaration, and perhaps to walk away from the idea altogether.

“There’s an unholy alliance” at work here, she said.

“Composed of which countries?”

“I think you know.”

We turned to Lador. “It’s the hard-liners,” he said, “Venezuela, Nigeria, China, Egypt, Algeria—aided and abetted by the US.”

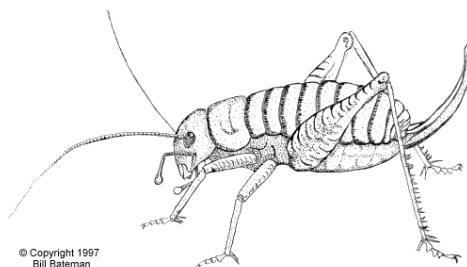
The US again.

Thousands Decry Corporate Takeover of Summit

Thousands of protesters marched 9 km on Sunday from the poverty-stricken Alexandra Township to the plush WSSD headquarters in Sandton to signal their frustration and disillusionment with the WSSD and governments’ lack of initiative in tackling the issues being discussed. The peaceful protest demanded “Land, Food and Jobs” and included South Africa’s Landless People’s Movement and Anti-Privatisation Forum as well as thousands of international summiteers with banners reading, among many other slogans, “No Patents on Life”, “Get the WTO out of WSSD”, “Shame on Bush”, “Debt Cancellation” and “Water: A Common Right”.

Continued from page one.

every other environmental agreement in future. Not to mention the fact that WTO rules would continue to take precedence over sustainable livelihoods and human development.



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Bill Gateman

Parktown Prawn

Overheard in Nino’s across the street from the summit, a fellow with a UN badge: “I don’t know what planet those people live on,” gesturing across the street. “This earth is what you saw yesterday, [at the march and rally].”

Call for anagrams on WSSD: Here’s one—WTO’S M.O: UNVEIL AMMO PLAN; REST BLEED IN DUST. You can do better than the prawn, who, after all, doesn’t have fingers to type with. Send entries: ecoeditor@yahoo.com. If anyone can make an anagram that’s a haiku, it’s

worth a free, lifetime subscription to *Eco*.

In an open meeting with NGOs yesterday, Republican Congress-men Shays and Greenwood asked the audience what they thought was behind the US government’s reluctance to engage in multilateral agreements on issues discussed at the WSSD. This followed a comment at the very same meeting from one of the Congressmen stating that corporate accountability was something Congress could never go along with. Well then, why did you ask?

New sanitation target

Subsidies

As above, the commitment to eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal and unreported fishing and excess fishing capacity are good and needs to be effectively implemented...

On agricultural subsidies: A key commitment the Summit can’t seem to commit to... Scrap the text and start again!

Corporate Accountability

The current language on current accountability, while containing no reference to a specific international framework, does constitute a step forward, even including the reservation that George Bush inserted from the comfort of his ranch in Crawford this afternoon. The US reservation on this paragraph is outrageous, but entirely, consistent with US unilateral behaviour. One law for the rest of the world and no law for the US. No doubt Enron, World Com, and the refugees from Arthur Anderson are applauding this move as they await indictment. A legally binding framework

set! After protracted negotiations, NGOs achieved a major victory. Contrary to previous information, sanitation will not be a problem for accredited NGOs while Heads of State take over the Convention centre. Access to toilets WILL be available to NGOs on the ground floor by Monday afternoon “if possible”. We have no doubt that no NGO representatives could have done anything more useful than discussing this target at length with officials all weekend.

Who would’ve thought that the world’s population and its environment would find a savior in Ethiopia? Yet this is what happened last night on the discussion on paragraph 17 on whether or not to include a reference to the WTO. Norway and Tuvalu said No, whereupon Ethiopia intervened, passionately, to agree. Even though this paragraph had been parked, Ethiopia carried the day. Bravo, Ethiopia!

on corporate accountability (including liability) must be in place no later than 2005. That this demand is popular was proven at the "Hear Our Voice" art action, which took place just outside the Convention Centre yesterday. Delegates (and Heads of State) are welcome to visit their friend the corporate giant on the corner of 5th and Maude Street.

Public Participation

At the Eco deadline, Chapter 10 had been unofficially agreed and closed. It contains a proposed G77 "package" with modifications, which include the deletion of paragraph 151 containing the citizen's rights to access to information and participation in decision-making (Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration). The EU has been left isolated in defending paragraph 151, while the US has supported G77 in removing this reference to a crucial Rio principle. G77 seems happy to escape any commitment to further promoting civil-society access to information and involvement in decision-making. And it is disgraceful that the US combines opposi-

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tion to this paragraph with the announcement of a host of type-2 partnerships. Moreover, the general outline of Chapter 10 disappoints by not providing significant means and institutional reforms to increase implementation capacity. NGOs call for capacity-building at local, national, regional, and international levels, in order to increase good governance, democracy, stronger institutions, and popular participation.

(UN)worthy Mentions

Aid

The text steps back from the Agenda 21 commitment by developed countries "to reach" the target of providing 0.7% of their GNP in aid. Instead, it merely urges the developed countries that have not done so "to make concrete commitments towards" the 0.7% target. Although the text commits governments to make available the increased ODA commitments announced by several developed countries in Monterrey, it commits no new resources, and fails to acknowledge the massive shortfall in aid levels needed to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, even after delivery of the Monterrey commitments. The Bali text proposal for the UN to monitor aid commitments has been dropped.

Debt

Although the text reaffirms the commitments made in Monterrey, it commits no new resources to debt relief. The Bali text (paragraph 80) proposed an explicit commitment to take speedy action to ensure debt sustainability consistent with the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration. This explicit reference has been dropped.

Health and Women's Rights

The addition of the qualification "consistent with national laws and cultural and religious values" to paragraph 47 of the text on health poses a serious threat to women's position and rights in many countries and regions. This addition should be deleted: the fundamental human right to health needs no qualification.

Chemicals

The current draft has no reference to the precautionary principle, and the target date of 2020 refers to risk management, rather than the phase-out and elimination of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). This is clearly weaker than the POPs Treaty agreed in Stockholm last year.



Thirty Years Ago in Eco

Implicit in the Conference's many proposals for much-needed monitoring and data collection. . . is the comfortable notion that if countries monitor their pollution they can safely keep on emitting it—that pollution will go away if measured. . . .

Are we proposing to monitor so that we can be sure we're wrong and then go ahead? Is monitoring a way of ensuring that if we're going to do something disastrous, at least we should do it on purpose?

Nations' readiness to agree on collecting data about what they are doing (rather than stopping doing it) is symptomatic of a general failing to the Conference—blind faith in empiricism. No doubt the desire to sit back upon soporific reams of data will make future catastrophes of pollution, famine, and population crash the best documented in our short history—but it will not make the history any longer.

Eco 1, Number 7, Stockholm,

seeking

A special Eco insert from the groups listed below

LAST CALL

"It may be getting late, but we will continue meeting delegates through Sunday night," pledged Filipino NGO coordinator Roy Cabonegro, speaking on behalf of some 35 civil-society organisations and networks from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, whose representatives had just set out to assail government officials. "This is our last call to influence the Summit's outcome."

It had already been a busy day for civil-society delegates from the South. Seeking attention from top-level negotiators, they approached the ministers of environment from a host of countries, the Danish Prime Minister holding the EU presidency, the South African government, and the world press.

In preparation for the arrival of top negotiators, the same civil-society delegates had been deliberating throughout Friday and Saturday. On Sunday morning, the Asians, Africans, and Latin Americans issued a joint press statement spelling out positions on the Summit's major issues. This paper was handed out to negotiators (and will be published at: www.rio10.dk), followed up by verbal insistence on specific issues.

The stress was on the paragraphs in the Plan of Implementation that appeared to remain unresolved in the negotiations. Regrettably, this included the basic Rio principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities," which is

of crucial concern to developing countries, and is a rather depressing point to have to argue about all over again. Apparently, the US negotiators believe that their country's world-record emissions so far have earned them the right to pollute further, rather than conferring special responsibilities. Negotiators were also urged not to give in on the precautionary principle.

Another point strongly agreed upon by the Southern civil-society delegates is the need for access to information (paragraph 151) and to link environmental protection with human rights (paragraph 152). This is particularly relevant in countries where democracy and human rights are absent or poorly established. There goes a message to certain members of the G77, no names mentioned, no one offended.

The joint statement by Southern civil society also demands that the 10 percent new-renewables target be adopted by 2010. Technological progress will lower the costs even further, if only industry gets a push in the right direction. On that note, it will be impossible for the world to understand if the Summit fails to agree on the Plan of Implementation's provision to "redirect fossil-fuel subsidies towards sustainable energy." Certainly, US President Bush will find no justification in his supposed free-market beliefs for state hand-outs to old, inefficient, dirty technologies. Meanwhile, oil-producing countries will have to start diversifying. Is this not

what the Venezuelan government, holding the G77 presidency, professes to be doing anyway? And how about, for instance, the Saudis investing some petrodollars in the solar-energy business, just to hedge their bets for the future? This piece of well-meaning advice is given free of charge.

Last but not least, a major unresolved issue in the Plan of Implementation concerns trade and subsidies, including the vital sentences "to eliminate tariffs and non-tariff barriers, in particular on products of export interest to developing countries" and "to eliminate environmentally harmful and trade-distorting subsidies that inhibit sustainable consumption and production patterns in developed countries."

The Southern civil-society organisations have been deeply disappointed by the EU and US failure to agree to lowering trade barriers. The rich countries have preferred to pander to special interests, sacrificing the interests of their own consumers and diminishing the South's chance of much-needed sustainable development. The industrialised world appears to have a split personality, pressing for liberalisation and abolition of subsidies in developing countries, while the US has just raised its own subsidies to big agro-business dramatically, and the EU has refrained from any concrete concessions here in Jo'burg. There is growing opposition to these subsidies within rich countries themselves, so there can be no subterfuge in national

interests on this point. At any rate, this is the last call to make the World Summit champion the world's interests.



Cartoon courtesy of CSE India

NEPAD and Sustainable Development in West Africa

By FODOA, West African NGO Front for Sustainable Development

Chapter 8 of the WSSD Plan of Implementation is exclusively dedicated to Africa. The need for this reveals that sustainable development has amounted to very little for many African countries since the Rio conference.

Although we appreciate all references to NEPAD in Chapter 8, as well as the significance of dedicating an entire chapter to Africa, when talking of partnerships, the international community should bear in mind the distinction

between business relations and racketeering, especially in public-private sector partnerships in countries with weak national counterparts. This raises the concern of good governance, and hence the urgent need to convene an international conference on globally accepted criteria with respect to good governance.

Such an event would be useful in stemming the impoverishing capital flight of funds earned through partnerships. Moreover, it would help prevent those African leaders who might be dishonest from abusing the spirit of partnership, i.e. cooperation between political regimes based on unjust laws and foreign financial powers eager to launder dirty money.

The WSSD must ensure strong and straightforward commitments to financing NEPAD. We would accept such commitments from the EU and from all partners in development interested in NEPAD.

Finally, we stand by the ABURI (Ghana) Declaration, drafted through workshops with the participation of civil-society organisations from 11 West African countries. This paper particularly stresses the need to involve African civil society in NEPAD's implementation.

We're in This Together

By José Galindo,
Fundación Natura, Ecuador

One theme repeated over and over again in the negotiations and throughout the Plan of Implementation is the need

for partnerships and alliances. Even the multi-stakeholder approaches and interdisciplinarity of the past ten years are not enough to face the complex challenges of sustainable development.

All over the world, we are seeing leadership crises and aversion to politicians. This is not an auspicious context for a rapprochement between different social actors. We need to overcome old partial and reductionist paradigms if we are to incorporate the environmental dimension into poverty eradication, implement the ecosystems approach, and come up with innovative strategies to finance development, just to mention some major issues here at the Summit.

The meeting of minds between Greenpeace and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) shows the coming of age of both parties, and sends a strong signal in the middle of negotiations in which the conflict between environmental and economic interests appears irreconcilable.

However, the essential process to incubate alliances and partnerships requires coordinated and coherent strategies, including facilitation and capacity-building. It is not enough to spell out the need for cooperation without launching mechanisms conducive to its realisation.

Let us hope that the Summit will be recorded in history as a landmark in the shift from "every man for himself" to partnerships as the long-term survival strategy.

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

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

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