Outreach Issues

CSD in the Eye of a Storm

With the agriculture cycle amid the global food crisis, CSD-16 has the potential of being the most important CSD to date.

By: Neth Dano, Third World Network

The CSD thematic cycle on Agriculture, Land, Rural Development, Drought, Desertification and Africa could not have happened at a more relevant and urgent point in history. Today, the honourable ladies and gentlemen attending CSD-16 will start reviewing the status of their governments’ commitments to sustainable development in the area of Agriculture at a time when the world is experiencing one of the most daunting food crises in modern history.

Hungry havoc

Food prices have risen phenomenally over the last year, prompting analysts to state that the era of cheap food is gone. Cereal prices have hit record levels, wheat prices are 130 percent higher than last year, soybeans have risen by 83 percent, rice by 73 percent and corn by 31 percent. The food price index has jumped by 47 percent overall, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) projects that the food crisis is here to stay for the next 5-10 years, at least. As CSD-16 starts, the world is already feeling the havoc that hungry stomachs can bring to society. Rioting caused by soaring food prices has broken out recently in Egypt, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Senegal and Ethiopia. Last year, similar riots broke out in Mexico over the price of tortilla as a result of competition with gas-guzzling SUVs in the US. In the Philippines, heavily-armed soldiers stand guard over long queues of urban poor lining up for cheap government-subsidized rice supply. The World Bank warned that 33 countries are at risk of social upheavals because of rising food prices.

Decades of neglect

What the world is experiencing is a product of decades of neglect of the agricultural sector. Public investments in agricultural research, development and infrastructures in general have been declining in the past two decades. According to the FAO, developing countries in general spend less than 1 percent of their agricultural GDP on agricultural research, while developed countries spend more than 5 percent. Overseas

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Outreach Issues is a new and improved civil society newsletter produced by the SDIN Group and Stakeholder Forum. Bringing together the best of the two previous CSD conference dailies, Taking Issue and Outreach, Outreach Issues aims to report with an attitude, from the global scene of sustainability.

“In the Philippines, heavily-armed soldiers stand guard over long queues of urban poor lining up for cheap government-subsidized rice supply.”
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The impacts of the food crisis are felt most by the worlds poorest, as usual. Poor households spend as much as 70 percent of their income to buy food, and any increase in food prices means more people dying from hunger. The simplistic belief that higher prices of agricultural commodities will lift the majority of the world’s poor from poverty is not correct. A great mass of small-scale farmers in the developing world do not own the land that they till, do not have access to the most basic agricultural infrastructures and support services, and do not have control over the market of their products. Even the FAO concedes that “high commodity prices cannot substitute for badly needed public goods and services that are essential for agricultural production and productivity gains”.

Time to face reality

We may look at the current food crisis that we are experiencing globally as a dramatic culmination of the highly controversial and divisive issues that have been debated over the years in the halls of the UN, at the CSD and beyond. Delegates should bear in mind the importance of linking the current thematic cluster to the previous cycles on Energy for Sustainable Development, Industrial Development, Air Pollution and Climate Change which ended in a disastrous breakdown of negotiations last year, and the earlier one on Water, Sanitation and Human Settlement. All three clusters involve issues that are closely interlinked and highly interlocking.

There is urgency in honestly facing the challenges and weaknesses of governments and the international community in delivering the most basic human right that every citizen has - the right to affordable food. The reality is undoubtedly ugly, but the cost of not facing that reality is even uglier, in fact, unacceptable. Facing the problems squarely will make it easier for the global community to come up with collective solutions. The recently concluded International Assessment of Agricultural Science and Technology for Development (IAASTD) strongly delivered the message that the world has to change the unsustainable agricultural practices that have brought us into this crisis.

CSD should seize the opportunity

Let this crisis be an opportunity for the world community to work together for solutions for and with the great majority of the population that has suffered from poverty and inequity, rather than an opportunity for some predatory forces to profit from. May this crisis not be an excuse for governments to justify failures in meeting globally-agreed targets such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), or sacrificing goals for food self-sufficiency and empowering poor farmers to have control over land and productive resources.

Let this crisis be an opportunity for governments to go back to basics and realize the importance of grassroots solutions such as sustainable organic agriculture and appropriate agricultural technologies that are based on the needs and capacities of local communities and their traditional knowledge systems. Let this crisis serve as a turning point for governments to recognize the fundamental rights of the tillers over the land that they nurture. Let this challenge give birth to genuine rural development that promotes cultural diversity and nurtures biological diversity.

Back home, in the Philippines, whenever a strong typhoon passes, people living in areas near the eye of the storm prepare for the worst - reinforce your roofs, stock up enough water and food, stay inside your house, be ready to evacuate when needed.

To governments attending the CSD-16, we say this: Seize the day. Carpe diem.
Experienced, involved, ignored

Young people are the most untapped resource in the World.

By: Selene Biffi, Youth Major Group Coordinator

The Rio Earth Summit made monumental progress in the acknowledgement of young people as part of the global equation for sustainable development. While in 1992, young people accounted for approximately 30% of the world’s population, today they account for 50% of the world’s population. Many years and resolutions after the adoption of Agenda 21 in 1992, real change in the inclusion of young people’s participation in the decisions that affect their communities and their lives is something young people continue to hope for.

Today’s young people have inherited a world they did not contribute in shaping:

- More than 1 billion people live on less than a dollar a day – 238 million of them are young people
- 8,000 people die every day from AIDS
- 2.4 billion people lack access to clean water

The environment is no exception, with young people not able to voice their concerns and speak up for themselves and future generations.

Include the next generation!

Young people are the most untapped resource on earth, but more often than not our age and experience – or lack thereof, according to adults - is the main criteria by which we are judged, and therefore excluded from many consultations, processes and actions. Even here at the CSD, no young person has been selected as a panelist, thus reflecting the global trend of disregarding young people as experts in their own right.

These reasons for ignoring young people in the global efforts for a sustainable and just world seem irrelevant and irresponsible when: youth-run programmes have longer-term sustainability by including the next generation; and greater inclusion and participation allows for stakeholders ownership, thus preventing disengagement and ensuring a safer, more equitable future for all.

All over the world, at any given time, there are scores of young people responding to the development challenges of their communities. In spite of their lack of recognition, their message remains the same: Youth want to be involved. The social, environmental and political imperative of young people's participation needs to be acted on by serious development actors nationally and globally.

Strong voices and important ideas

The opportunity presents itself yet again at CSD - 16. While we battle the scourges of global poverty, climate change and deadly pandemics, let us not forget the role that young people have to play – and have been playing – towards building our collective future.

This year especially, we would like to speak up for ourselves and our peers around the world so as to voice our concerns and share our ideas even more than during past CSDs. Our ‘Commitment Desk’, located in the so-called ‘Neck Exhibit Area’, will give government delegates and other stakeholders the chance to show their willingness to involve young people by writing pledges and other commitments, on which we will duly follow up after the CSD. We are providing information to our peers and ways to contribute to the Youth Caucus in five different languages, through our new website www.youen.org, where as part of our desire to empower young people coming from less-represented regions of the world, we will offer blogs, podcasts and articles daily, in five languages possibly.

As youth, we have inherited not just the misfortune of a warming planet we did not contribute in shaping but also the responsibility toward future generations to make this world a better place for all. There are no excuses not to listen to us.

With the desire to build a more sustainable world, youth prepare for CSD 16 at Columbia University.
The Issue of Africa

Is the continent as hopeless as the bleak image presented in the SG’s report, or is there perhaps more to it? Nnimmo Bassey takes a stab at dissecting his continent before the CSD sinks its teeth in.

When images of hunger are needed, the media do not look anywhere but Africa. When pictures of poverty are needed, Africa is the destination to satisfy that need. When disease, violence, economic stagnation and governance problems are being dissected, Africa is a gold mine for illustrations. To crown it all, Africa has turned up as the first continent to be made a special issue at the CSD.

The branding of Africa as a chronically hungry, disaster prone and conflict ridden continent demands that something should be done about this troublesome and troubling continent. For this reason, Africa has become a test ground for all sorts of ideas, exploitations and “investments”. More workshops and talk-shops are held on the African situation outside of Africa than actually on the continent. You can become an expert on Africa at the drop of a hat. Agents of states, corporations and other strong powers can suggest and impose a fix at a moment’s notice.

Will the discussion of Africa at the CSD elicit paternalistic pontifications? Will the CSD reinforce those ubiquitous pictures of kids with distended bellies, extended hands, gaping mouths, empty eyes and empty bowls? Will the chambers of the UN ring and echo with the question: what can be done to feed these hungry Africans?

Missed the train?

It is not surprising that alliances are being forged ostensibly to address the perceived problems of the continent. Today we hear of alliances such as the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) as well as the Business Alliance Against Chronic Hunger. While AGRA is sponsored by the Rockefeller and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Business Alliance Against Chronic Hunger is made up of the food giant Unilever, sportswear manufacturer Nike and express delivery firm TNT (More must be in the wings). These two alliances seek to bring about a Green Revolution in Africa and their inspiration is the “increased agricultural production observed in Mexico and India between the 1940s and 1960s”. The often paraded idea is that Africa missed the first Green Revolution train and must not miss the train this time around. But someone once said that it is not always such a bad thing to have missed a train, especially when no one knows if the train ever got to its destination.

Silver bullet solutions

Everyone agrees that African agricultural production must be enhanced. The point of disagreement is how this should be done. A lot of investment is being made by organisations and institutions with vested interest to build weak biosafety regulatory frameworks across the continent, with the aim of opening the African continent to contamination and depletion of genetic resources, and of colonising the continent through control of seeds and food chains.

The industry claims that modern crop biotechnology holds the silver bullet to solve all African agricultural problems. AGRA has equivocated on this subject. Genetically engineered crops allegedly require less herbicide and pesticides; give higher yields than ‘conventional’ crops and are the solution to the hunger question. All these have been shown to be false claims, documented in publications such as the Friends of the Earth International’s report Who Benefits from GMOs? That GE crops do not yield better than conventional crops has been attested to in studies conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Subtle yet clear suggestions from the SG

The arguments still persist. The report of the Secretary-General on Africa for CSD-16, for example, says in paragraph 52

Subtle yet clear suggestions from the SG

“The top of the list is the well-orchestrated neoliberal policies that preach free market philosophies while the supposed market forces are only allowed to operate selectively.”

“African soils are diverse but characterized by limited fertility. Only 45 per cent of the lands are arable, 16 per cent has soil of high quality and about 13 per cent has soil of medium quality. Likewise, new high-yielding crop varieties are scarce, though the diffusion of available ones has begun to accelerate. Genetically modified crops are currently grown commercially only in South Africa.”

There is a subtle but clear attempt to suggest here that GM crops would provide a solution if widely planted in Africa. It is problematic for the Secretary General to make such a suggestion at a time when it is evident that after more than a decade of
GM crops they have failed on every count to deliver on the promises made by the industry.

The current food crisis has shown clearly that people are not usually hungry because of a lack of food but because of the lack of access to food. In an article in Nigeria’s Vanguard newspaper on 02 May 2008, labour activist and commentator Owei Lakemfa noted that the year Bangladesh had a bumper harvest was the same year that the country experienced a severe food crisis that cost over a million lives.

**Not so free market**

The factors that make available food inaccessible to vast numbers of people can also be tracked in the matrix that affects agricultural production and delivery of products. The top of the list is the well-orchestrated neoliberal policies that preach free market philosophies while the supposed market forces are only allowed to operate selectively. Africa has experienced wholesale alteration of beneficial agricultural policies because of wrong-headed stipulations of international financial institutions such as the IMF and World Bank through their so-called structural adjustment programmes (SAP). While European and USA governments subsidise their farmers and create favourable conditions to aid production, African governments are debarred from taking such steps. Trade rules and agreements are set up to destabilise already weakened economies and open them to dependency on aid and other acts of benevolence from the same systems that crippled them. Another truth is that food aid is not free food. It is big business.

**Devastating impacts**

Examples of how these policies have played out on African agriculture can be seen in the examples of Cameroon, Senegal and Ghana. Lowering tariff protection to 25% in Cameroon saw poultry imports increase by about six-fold. In Senegal, 70 percent of the poultry industry has been wiped out in recent years because of EU’s domestic poultry policy in support of their local poultry farmers.

Rice imports doubled in Ghana when the nation reduced its rice tariffs from 100 to 20 percent as a result of the structural adjustment policies enforced by the World Bank. Domestic rice accounted for 43 percent of the domestic market in 2000 but only managed to capture 29 percent of the domestic market in 2003. Rice imports increased from 250,000 tonnes in 1998 to 415,150 tonnes in 2003. It is also reported that 66 percent of rice producers recorded negative returns, leading to loss of employment.

With regard to tomato paste, imports from the EU increased by 650% from 3,300 tons in 1998 to 24,740 tons in 2003 with farmers losing 40% of the share of the domestic market besides lowered local prices.

**Time for frank conversation**

After all has been said, having placed Africa on the CSD dissecting slab, it is important for us to see an opportunity for a frank discourse. It is time for all to note that the perpetuation of Africa (through odious debts and other mechanisms) as a continent that is continually exploited to satisfy wanton consumption in the West will not help mankind in the long run. We are holding Africa to the mirror, but it is our collective faces that are being reflected. Let us take a frank look at ourselves and ask what part we have played in the dislocations in Africa; what part we can play in her liberation. Charity is not the solution. The continent has paid her dues to build the world. It is now time to requite her for her labours. One way to make this happen is by removing the yoke of unjust debt, uneven trade rules and unhealthy economic policies off her neck. 

*Nnimmo Bassey, Environmental Rights Action*
Draft resolution puts UNEP on the agenda: Strengthening the environment pillar in the UN

On Friday May 2nd the Swiss and Mexican Ambassadors presented a draft resolution to follow up paragraph 169 from the World Summit 2005. This is a culmination of the work that the Ambassadors have undertaken over the past two years to see where consensus might lie for strengthening the pillar of the environment in the UN system.

By: Felix Dodds, Stakeholder Forum

The paper draws heavily from their Options Paper which was presented to the Informal GA session in September 2007. In response to that paper FBOMS, Stakeholder Forum, NGLS and UN NGLS collected stakeholder views in a paper presented to that meeting called ‘Options for strengthening the environmental pillar of sustainable development’.

The draft resolution had some very clear recommendations that are now being considered before an informal session on May 21st. The resolution covered eight areas:

1. Strengthening Assessment, monitoring and early warning capacity

The resolution reiterates that UNEP is the leading agency within the UN for the analysis of the global environment and assessment of global and regional environmental trends. It invites the UNEP Governing Council to create a Chief Scientific Capacity to be responsible for convening leading scientists from within and outside the UN system. This is not going as far as was being suggested last September when the position of a Chief Scientist was being considered. It is also unclear how at this point this differs from the DEWA within UNEP at present. Perhaps an opportunity of looking for a Chief Risk Analyst has been missed.

There is also the support for Environment Watch Strategy, which would bring together the scientific work of the MEAs with UNEP under an MOU. Something stakeholders supported in September last year.

2. Coordination and cooperation at the level of agencies

This section attempts to strengthen UNEP’s role in relation to other bodies within the UN system and outside. Stakeholders in September called for the strengthening of the Environmental Management Group with a new mandate, which the resolution clearly does. Placing the ‘EMG’ under the management of the UNEP Executive Director strengthens the role of the Environmental Management Group with a new mandate, which the resolution clearly does. Placing the ‘EMG’ under the management of the UNEP Executive Director strengthens the role of the UNEP as coordinator and facilitator of environment within the UN system. The suggestion that the EMG meet twice a year under the UN Secretary General highlights the critical need for the system to operate as one in a set of growing environmental problems. This addresses the question asked by stakeholders in September in relationship to the role EMG might have to the Chief Executives Board (the UN Cabinet). What is not addressed in the resolution is the relationship between the EMG and UN Water, UN Oceans and UN Energy. Perhaps the former three would be better coordinated through a reestablishing of the Interagency Committee on Sustainable Development.

The underlining of a more active role for UNEP with UNDP at the country level under the Bali Strategic Plan is something that stakeholders supported in September as critical to ensure that developing countries have access to the appropriate capacity to address the critical issues facing us today and in the future. Perhaps this will mean much more sustainable development within poverty reduction strategies in the future. Stakeholders suggested in September that perhaps a merging in the long term of the EMG and the UN Development Group into a sustainable development group might be worth considering.

The draft UN resolution also stresses the need for an enhanced role of UNEP in international economic, trade and financial institutions. The recommendation that UNEP and the MEAs ask to be formal observers on all the relevant Committees of the WTO is to be welcomed.

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rules or criteria that might restrict the use of national implementation of any trade measures agreed to in MEAs.

Ultimately the CSD should request that WTO assess the impact of WTO rules on the promotion of sustainable development policies.

(3) Multilateral Environmental Agreements

The draft UN resolution builds on work already underway in the area of clustering UN Conventions. It asks UNEP to identify clusters for future strengthening of cooperation and coordination. There are some good examples of this already published within input to the Cartagena process and in NGO and academic papers.

Perhaps one of the most far reaching suggestions in the resolution is that of the ED of UNEP to manage Secretariats of the Conventions under his authority in the most cost effective manner, and to take a proactive role in enabling synergies among the conventions. This will enable the ED of UNEP to start to bring back together the Environmental family in one house.

(4) Regional presence and activities at the regional level

The call for straightening the regional presence of UNEP and the cooperation with other key regional players is to be supported as it gives UNEP a clear base to offer capacity building in the regions.

(5) Bali Strategic Plan

The resolution urges much more of a common UN approach to building capacity within countries under the Bali Plan and therefore recognizes that not only can UNEP not do everything on the environment, it shouldn’t, as it is not an operational agency. Drawing on UNDP, WHO, FAO and others will only strengthen the implementation of the Bali Plan at a national or local level.

(6) Information technologies, partnerships and advocacy

The resolution urges the use of state of the art information technology within UNEP and its regional offices. This should surely be a no brainer; an effective organization needs to upgrade every few years to utilize the new tools that are available.

(7) Financing

When three NGOs combined (Greenpeace, WWF and IUCN) have more money than UNEP there is something seriously wrong about the global agency for the environment as far as funding is concerned. The suggestion of doubling the contribution from the regular budget is to be welcomed but is not enough. The suggestion that all MEAs should have funding within the GEF, and that the GEF should expand its scope of activity to include this within the fifth replenishment, is an issue for discussion. Perhaps a review of the GEF and the use of funds it has at the moment, and in particular their geographical distribution, should be carried out before moving forward on this.

(8) Finally

The Building Blocks paper that the Swiss and Mexican Ambassadors tabled last August was one of the best documents that has been produced on reform of the UN in the area of environment. The draft resolution that was tabled on Friday is to be welcomed. Many of the ideas put forward by stakeholders can be seen within the paper, as can more importantly those of governments. If the explanation of the paper by the Ambassadors on Friday turns out to be correct, that they have tried to table a draft resolution that is as close as they can see to what governments would accept, then UNEP will be in a much stronger position this time next year and will have the possibility to retake its role as the custodian of the environment envisioned in 1972 when it was set up.

“When three NGOs combined (Greenpeace, WWF and IUCN) have more money than UNEP there is something seriously wrong about the global agency for the environment as far as funding is concerned.”
Raising the Profile of Water and Sanitation at the CSD

With a lack of clarity regarding the process of reviewing the CSD-13 commitments on water and sanitation, The Global Public Policy Network stepped up to the task.

By: Hannah Stoddart, Stakeholder Forum

At the 13th session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the themes water, sanitation and human settlements were discussed. After two weeks of intense negotiation, the CSD-13 outcome document was released with overall 72 commitments relating to water and sanitation. These commitments were divided into five areas: Access to basic water services; Integrated water resources management; Access to basic sanitation; Waste-water collection, treatment and re-use. The attention given to integrated water resources management was welcomed by many parties, though it was also felt that some significant areas of concern, such as climate change, transboundary issues and the right to access to water and sanitation were either conspicuously absent from the document, or not dealt with explicitly enough.

An overwhelmingly positive outcome, however, was the commitment to review commitments made around water and sanitation at the 16th session of the CSD. This was the first time a review of this kind had been endorsed by the CSD, and offered governments and civil society alike the opportunity to take stock, report and evaluate progress towards achieving targets and commitments, and identify obstacles and constraints. The details of how such a review was to be conducted, however, were not forthcoming – the process of gathering reports from countries, the length of the review, whether there would be regional meetings - all these questions remained unanswered. It was as a result of this lack of clarity that the Global Public Policy Network on Water Management evolved (GPPN). A meeting at Stockholm World Water Week in 2006 with a range of water and sanitation stakeholders concluded that the review would be enhanced by creating a space ahead of CSD-16 where all stakeholders could provide inputs on how far commitments had been met. The GPPN would also provide a mechanism for ensuring that the profile of water and sanitation remained high during the thematic discussions at CSD-16 on Africa and Agriculture. It was with the overwhelming support from stakeholders at this meeting that Stakeholder Forum and the Stockholm International Water Institute decided to join forces to establish the GPPN. The Steering Committee consists of three Northern and 2 Southern governments, WBCSD, World Water Council, WWF and the Freshwater Action Network.

In preparation for the review at CSD-16, the GPPN secretariat identified key global stakeholders with experience and expertise in the water and sanitation sector, and sought their feedback on how far they felt CSD-13 commitments had been met. The GPPN called for water and sanitation stakeholders to provide their feedback on:
- Progress towards CSD-13 commitments, including examples of best practice and lessons learnt.
- Obstacles and constraints in implementation.
- Recommendations or ‘next steps’ for the CSD
- Emerging issues not covered by CSD-13 Decision

The guidelines directed stakeholders to the means of implementation for water and sanitation commitments, focusing specifically on: Governance and Capacity Building; Stakeholder Engagement and Finance. We received inputs from almost 30 stakeholders, many of whom had in turn consulted their networks. From our findings we have produced papers looking at Obstacles, Constraints and Next Steps, and Emerging Issues and Future Challenges. We have distilled these papers into some Key Recommendations for CSD. We also conducted a separate consultation process with key African stakeholders with relevant expertise and experience of Africa and Africa World Water Week, and have drafted a separate paper focusing specifically on Water Management in relation to Africa.
The GPPN will be outlining its findings in Outreach Issues over the coming two weeks, focusing on key areas in more detail, conducting interviews with water management stakeholders, and inviting many of those who contributed to the review to outline some issues highlighted by the GPPN in more detail.

**The GPPN has a number of key objectives**

for this CSD: it hopes to ensure the take-up of some of our findings and recommendations by the Chair of the two day review, and perhaps more significantly we hope to see some policy implications for CSD-17 as a result of this review. As already mentioned above, the CSD-13 report did not provide significant emphasis on a number of important issues for the achievement of water and sanitation commitments and the MDGs. The GPPN in its *Emerging Issues and Future Challenges* paper has highlighted those issues as prioritized by stakeholders, and would like to see CSD reflect the need for further discussion and more robust policy commitments in these areas.

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### Citizen Initiatives: El Faro

**Making access to water and sanitation rights demands meaningful civil society participation.**

By: J. Hoffmeister, ANPED

Aware of the importance of the contribution of civil society to improve access to drinking water and sanitation and their ability to create innovative solutions for sustainable development, Expo Zaragoza, June - September 2008, will create a pavilion and network to bring together civil society organizations: El Faro. Open to all civil society organizations, El Faro hopes to promote change in favour of sustainability among participants by showing alternative solutions to environmental challenges, especially water and ecosystems, through a multidisciplinary interactive space for dialogue. While condemning the lack of drinking water and sanitation for millions — a violation of human and environmental rights justified by economic interest — El Faro will present joint projects showcasing the daily work of social movements participating.

The guiding principles of the initiative are to raise awareness of the critical state of water in different ecosystems, and the need to take action, consistently, responsibly, and with a firm commitment to be part of the solution of present and future problems. With these principles in mind, El Faro will create eight messages on the basic human right to a clean drinking water supply and sanitation; degradation of aquatic systems; climate change; disaster risk management; large dams; Public water management; uses and abuses; and conflicts caused by water.

Visitors will have an opportunity to experience first hand some of the challenges faced every day by millions of people who for some reason or another have seen far-reaching changes to their traditional, natural and symbiotic relationship with water. They will also be invited to get involved in specific initiatives to improve this situation through co-operation or active struggle. To find out more, visit www.elfaro2008.org.
In 2005 Stakeholder Forum held a workshop for governments, UN Agencies and Programmes and stakeholders to review the CSD after its first cycle. That workshop made some recommendations that might have helped improve the process. This year, with two and a half cycles completed, would be a very good time to reflect on whether the CSD is going in the right direction. The issue brings forward some questions in my mind, which I would like to share with you.

Is the two-year cycle working?
Could the review and policy be completed in one year?
Do we need to review the role of the Chair and the role of the Bureau?
What could be done to help governments produce their national reports?
The mandate of the CSD includes reviewing 0.7% commitment of governments in relation to the issues under discussion. What could be done to make this meaningful?
Could the CSD provide information on what other resources are available?
Should the CSD support mainstreaming sustainable development within the UN system?
How could the CSD deal with emerging issues such as Biofuels, Energy Security, and water security?
Could the Regional Implementation Meetings focus more on implementation?
Could the CSD utilize the model that UNEP uses of parallel discussions of Ministers in small groups of 10-15 Ministers or High Level representatives?
Should the InterAgency Committee on Sustainable Development be reactivated to help build better coordination between the different UN Agencies and Programmes?
What could be done to enhance stakeholders’ role in implementing the CSD decisions?

What could be done to re-introduce stakeholder involvement at the national level?
What can the CSD do about partnerships?
Should the CSD have a section in the agenda to address organizational problems?
Should the CSD have the Ministerial section at the beginning of the CSD to ensure Ministers frame the policy discussion policy?
In regards politically sensitive issues, could governments offer to host intersessional meetings to give these issues more discussion space (similar to CSD 1994-2001)?
How can the former Chairs of the CSD be helpful after their term ends?
How could the CSD be made more media relevant?
What actually makes a successful CSD?
The CSD should play an important role as a ‘custodian’ and ‘watchdog’ of the vision and outcomes of the Rio and Johannesburg Summits. The big question is how to make this happen.