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**EMERGING ISSUES AND DEVELOPMENTS AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL:
MANAGING GLOBALIZATION**

(Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda)

**REPORT ON THE REGIONAL FOLLOW-UP TO THE JOHANNESBURG PLAN
OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORLD SUMMIT ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Note by the secretariat

SUMMARY

At its eleventh session, held in New York from 28 April to 9 May 2003, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) deliberated on its functions and work plan. Among others, it reviewed the initiatives and steps taken by the regional commissions, as presented at the regional implementation forums organized within the framework of the high-level segment of CSD. Among its various decisions, CSD recommended the active involvement of the regional commissions in organizing regional implementation meetings and providing inputs to the CSD process. The recommendation confirms the spirit of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and CSD's affirmation of its support for the implementation of that Plan and the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific.

The purpose of this secretariat note is to inform the Commission of the latest developments on the follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and seek its guidance on the active involvement of the secretariat in the CSD process, including the organization of regional implementation meetings as well as preparing and contributing regional inputs to CSD sessions in partnership with Governments, other United Nations bodies and agencies, subregional organizations and other stakeholders.

Introduction

1. The Commission may wish to recall that the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in 2002, adopted two key documents: the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. With regard to the practical modalities and programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the Plan of Implementation called for specific decisions to be taken by its next session.
2. The eleventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD-11) was the first session of the Commission after the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Its main task was therefore to decide on modalities and a future work programme for CSD. The high-level segment had ministerial statements in the mornings followed by ministerial round tables in the afternoons. A session was devoted to a multi-stakeholders dialogue. The five regional commissions organized regional implementation forums within the framework of CSD on 29 and 30 April 2003 in the form of panel discussions.
3. CSD-11 adopted a number of decisions and recommendations, including a draft resolution for consideration by the Economic and Social Council. Some of these decisions have direct and indirect relevance to and implications for the programmes of work and priorities of the regional commissions, including ESCAP.

A. Outcome of CSD-11

Substantive matters

4. CSD-11 decided that the Summit theme of sustainable development for poverty eradication should remain the overriding theme for the Johannesburg decade and guide the work of all sessions of CSD in that period. Participants reaffirmed the importance of addressing sustainable consumption and production patterns, the means of implementation, sustainable use of natural resources, and health, as cross-cutting issues throughout the future programme of CSD, and in relation to each issue and focal area discussed. Special attention must also be paid to the issues of Africa, small island developing States and least developed countries in each cycle.
5. An overarching focus for each two-year cycle would be important to make the work of CSD meaningful to all relevant ministers, as well as to ensure the most effective results at CSD meetings. The overarching focus should not be a narrow sectoral approach, but rather deal with a cluster of related issues. This would enable CSD to deal with the focus for each cycle in an in-depth manner, addressing all cross-cutting issues and linkages with other themes that are relevant to the theme under discussion in order to achieve tangible results. A multi-year

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programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development has been agreed upon as shown in the table below.

6. During first cycle (2004-2005), it was recommended that the overarching theme of water, sanitation and human settlements be considered. It was also recommended that that incorporate a cluster of water and sanitation issues including water resource management and the target for integrated water resource management plans by 2005, the targets on access to water and sanitation, water and agriculture, water and health and water and land issues. Another cluster of issues concerning energy (energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere and climate change) has been chosen as the overarching focus for the second cycle (2006-2007) of the CSD work programme. The cluster of energy-related issues could include access to energy, energy efficiency, enhancing industrial productivity, climate change, diversification of energy supply, natural resource management and renewable energy.

7. The above two focus areas underpin poverty eradication and sustainable production and consumption of natural resources.

Institutional arrangements

8. The draft resolution¹ recommended by CSD for adoption by the Economic and Social Council states, inter alia:

“2. *Decides* that, in order to fulfill its mandate, the work of the Commission will be organised as a series of two-year action-oriented ‘Implementation Cycles’ which will include a ‘Review Session’ and a ‘Policy Session’. The cycle will function as follows:

“(a) The Commission’s Review Sessions, to be held in April/May for a period of 2 to 3 weeks in the first year of the cycle, will undertake an evaluation of progress in implementing Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, while focusing on identifying constraints and obstacles in the process of implementation with regard to the selected thematic cluster of issues for the cycle.

“(b) The Commission’s Review Sessions would include a High-Level Segment, exchange of regional experiences, dialogues with experts, including scientific experts, sharing of best practices and lessons learned, with a view to facilitating implementation, as well as capacity-building activities such as learning centres and partnership fairs.

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¹ “The implementation track for Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation: future programme, organization and methods of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development”, advance unedited text as adopted by CSD-11, 14 May 2003, United Nations web site.

“(f) In the Policy Year the Commission will convene an Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, for one week in New York in February/March to discuss policy options and possible actions to address the constraints and obstacles in the process of implementation identified during the Review Year.

“(g) The discussions of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting will be based on the outcome of the Review Session, SGs reports as well as other relevant inputs. Based on these discussions the Chair will prepare a draft negotiating document for consideration at the Policy Session.

“(h) The Commission’s Policy Sessions, to be held in April/May of the second year of the cycle, will take policy decisions on practical measures and options to expedite implementation in the selected thematic cluster of issues, taking account of the discussions of the Intergovernmental Preparatory Meeting, the Secretary-General’s reports and other relevant inputs.”

B. Regional implementation of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation

9. Paragraph 3 of the draft resolution reads:

“3. *Decides*, in order to allow effective consideration of regional and sub-regional inputs throughout the Implementation Cycle and to ensure maximum flexibility:

“(a) To invite the United Nations regional commissions to consider organizing, in collaboration with the secretariat of the Commission on Sustainable Development, regional implementation meetings in order to contribute to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and in collaboration with other regional and sub-regional organizations and bodies, as appropriate, as well as regional offices of funds, programmes, international finance and trade institutions and other organisations of the United Nations system. Such meetings should preferably take place before the Review Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and should:

“(i) Contribute to advancing implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

“(ii) Focus on the thematic cluster of issues to be addressed in the on-going Implementation Cycle.

“(iii) Provide input to the Secretary-General’s reports and the Sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. These inputs may include identification of obstacles

and constraints, new challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, and sharing of lessons learned and best practices.

“(iv) Provide for contributions from major groups, taking into account paragraphs 139(g) and 149(c) and (d) of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.”

C. Implications for ESCAP

10. From the perspective of the regional commissions, the final outcome of CSD-11, as reflected in the above-mentioned draft resolution, recognized the importance of regional implementation and the essential role and capability of the regional commissions to lead the regional process. This is also in line with the spirit of the Johannesburg Summit in that regard.² It may be recalled that the regional commissions played a very active and effective role in the preparatory process leading to the Summit, which has been duly acknowledged.

11. The major tasks for the regional commissions will include preparing for and organizing regional implementation meetings and providing inputs to CSD in partnership with regional and subregional entities. CSD took note of the current efforts of the regional commissions and other partners, as reported to the regional implementation forums organized within the framework of CSD-11, to achieve an integrated follow-up to global conferences and summits. This integrated approach can be achieved at the regional level through the existing regional institutional architecture facilitated by the regional commissions. For example, as part of the regional preparations leading to the World Summit, the secretariat in partnership with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Development Programme and the Asian Development Bank and in collaboration with Governments and subregional organizations, successfully formulated the Phnom Penh Regional Platform on Sustainable Development for Asia and the Pacific, which articulated the priority concerns of the region. Regional implementation, including the implementation meetings, should therefore bring about greater integration and coherence through policy dialogues and review processes.

12. Past experience has shown that the regional-level bottom-up process provides an effective mechanism to facilitate interfaces among various national authorities/institutions, United Nations agencies, financing institutions and other stakeholders, including civil society organizations. This inherent strength of the regional commissions, which regularly promote intersectoral dialogues

² “Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the Summit should be effectively pursued at the regional and subregional levels, through the regional commissions and other regional and subregional institutional institutions and bodies.” – paragraph 158 of the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

and integrated policy analysis on key development issues, can be more effectively utilized for achieving the desired objectives of Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, including integrating the three dimensions of sustainable development and reflecting the specificities of each region and subregion.

13. In paragraph 11 of its draft resolution, CSD-11 emphasized that effective reporting is essential for reviewing, evaluating and monitoring progress in implementation, sharing of lessons learned and best practice, as well as identifying actions taken, opportunities for and obstacles and constraints to implementation. The considerations that will guide the reporting include: (a) reporting should reflect the overall progress made on the three dimensions of sustainable development, focusing on the thematic cluster of issues of the cycle, and include inputs from all levels, as appropriate, including the national, subregional, regional and global levels; and (b) reporting should focus on concrete progress in implementation, taking into account the three dimensions of sustainable development and their integration. One of the sources of information would be the outcomes of any regional and subregional meetings and activities, as appropriate.

14. Although the primary responsibility for the reporting has been assigned to the secretariat of CSD working in close collaboration with other organizations of the United Nations system, the regional commissions will be required to provide relevant inputs to the CSD process. At the national level, the responsibility will remain with the Governments. However, voluntary peer reviews and exchange of information and best practices and development of methodologies can be effectively undertaken initially at the subregional level, feeding into the regional review and monitoring processes. This bottom-up process will enhance policy coherence and the development of comparable indicators and provide the platform for putting in place innovative mechanisms for strengthening intercountry cooperation and exchange of experience and best practices. Very importantly the desired linkages between the national, subregional and global levels could be fostered through a process owned by the Governments.

15. In terms of resource implications, it can be expected that the Economic and Social Council will take a decision on the budget while considering the resolution. However, there may be a need to mobilize additional resources for the ESCAP secretariat to respond effectively to the responsibility assigned for the follow-up and implementation of the Plan of Implementation. Regional implementation will also require strong collaboration with the CSD secretariat and continuing and enhanced partnerships with the United Nations and other organizations active in the region as well as with the regional and subregional organizations. The existence of the Thematic Working Group on Environment and Development, in which all concerned United Nations agencies are represented, provides an excellent forum for fostering inter-agency cooperation.

D. Linkage and synergies with global mechanisms

16. In the draft resolution, the Secretary-General has been requested to further promote system-wide inter-agency cooperation and coordination to enhance implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.

17. The regional contribution to the CSD global process should be substantive and fully integrated into the global process. An effective way to have a meaningful regional contribution to CSD would be for the two-year cycle to start with regional implementation meetings in September/October in the year preceding the CSD review and policy sessions and independently so that the results from the regional meetings can be fed into it in a timely manner. The possibility of holding the regional implementation meetings in conjunction with other relevant regional meetings could be explored.

18. The regional commissions could act as a bridge between the global process and the regional and subregional processes, including providing inputs to CSD and feeding the outcomes of the global processes back to regional and subregional entities. Given the diversity of the Asian and Pacific region, there is an imperative need to work closely with the subregional institutions.

E. Matters calling for the attention of the Commission

19. In the light of the above recommendations of CSD, the secretariat seeks the endorsement of the Commission for its active involvement in the CSD process, including the organization of regional implementation meetings.

20. In considering this matter, the Commission may wish to note that, in reviewing the preliminary analysis made by the secretariat on selected issues relating to regional follow-up to the Plan of Implementation adopted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, at its fourth session the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources Development recommended that a senior-level policy forum be convened to discuss the regional follow-up to the Summit in a holistic and comprehensive manner. The Committee also recommended that the secretariat's follow-up activities include promoting regional and subregional cooperation, supporting the development of networks for information exchange and the sharing of policies and experiences, mobilizing financial resources and disseminating best practices.

Multi-year programme of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development

Cycle	Thematic cluster	Cross-cutting issues
2004-2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water • Sanitation • Human settlements 	Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, sustainable development in a globalizing world, health and sustainable development, sustainable development of small island developing States (SIDS), sustainable development for Africa, other regional initiatives, means of implementation, institutional framework for sustainable development, gender equality, and education
2006-2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy for sustainable development • Industrial development • Air pollution/atmosphere • Climate change 	Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, sustainable development in a globalizing world, health and sustainable development, sustainable development of SIDS, sustainable development for Africa, other regional initiatives, means of implementation, institutional framework for sustainable development, gender equality, and education
2008-2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture • Rural development • Land • Drought • Desertification • Africa 	Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, sustainable development in a globalizing world, health and sustainable development, sustainable development of SIDS, sustainable development for Africa, other regional initiatives, means of implementation, institutional framework for sustainable development, gender equality, and education
2010-2011*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport • Chemicals • Waste management • Mining • A 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns 	Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, sustainable development in a globalizing world, health and sustainable development, sustainable development of SIDS, sustainable development for Africa, other regional initiatives, means of implementation, institutional framework for sustainable development, gender equality, and education
2012-2013*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forests • Biodiversity • Biotechnology • Tourism • Mountains 	Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, sustainable development in a globalizing world, health and sustainable development, sustainable development of SIDS, sustainable development for Africa, other regional initiatives, means of implementation, institutional framework for sustainable development, gender equality, and education
2014-2015*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oceans and seas • Marine resources • Small island developing States • Disaster management and vulnerability 	Poverty eradication, changing unsustainable patterns of consumption and production, protecting and managing the natural resource base of economic and social development, sustainable development in a globalizing world, health and sustainable development, sustainable development of SIDS, sustainable development for Africa, other regional initiatives, means of implementation, institutional framework for sustainable development, gender equality, and education
2016-2017	Overall appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation	

* This thematic cluster will remain as part of the multi-year programme of work as scheduled unless otherwise agreed by the Commission (applies to clusters for 2010-2011, 2012-2013 and 2014-2015).

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