

## The Practice: Examples of Multi-stakeholder Processes

Related to an increased interest in public participation and to the implementation of Agenda 21, numerous examples of multi-stakeholder processes have been conducted over the last few decades. Not surprisingly, since the 1990s there has been a significant increase of such processes within the area of environment and sustainable development. We have looked at a number of examples of various issues, objectives, diversity of participants, scope and time lines.

We developed a set of questions which were used to obtain a systematic overview of the various processes (see Appendix 1). In order to analyse these examples we sought answers to these questions by:

- Using publicly available material (documents, websites). Much of the process-design related information which we were looking for was available on the respective websites and in printed reports.
- Interviewing people from different stakeholder groups who were/are involved in the respective processes. In most cases, some relevant information was not available in publications. We therefore conducted interviews either in person, over the telephone or via email.

In most of the cases presented, we used a combination of literature research and interviewing. Studying the examples was not intended to analyse a representative sample or to give a full assessment or evaluation via a representative group of people being interviewed. The goal of studying literature and interviewing people was to obtain a descriptive analysis of the respective MSPs.<sup>1</sup>

## OVERVIEW

Among the large number of possible examples, we picked primarily ones that are directly related to sustainable development and Agenda 21, and/or are conducted around intergovernmental processes. We also included examples that are initiated by a group or organizations as well as those initiated and carried out by one single organization. There are numerous varieties with regard to many of the questions we looked at – ways of designing the MSP, identifying relevant stakeholders and participants, preparing meetings, documents, and so on. The variety of examples also demonstrates the variety of projects and processes which are being called multi-stakeholder dialogues or processes (hence Chapter 2 covering terms and variety).

The following is meant to provide an overview of the examples studied, based on the questions we looked at.

### General Information

**Issues** The MSP examples we looked at address a wide range of issues: environment, development, sustainable development, human rights, labour and gender equality.

**Goals** A variety of goals are listed in publications and by interviewees which can be grouped as follows:

*Opening the space for stakeholder interaction:* bring people together to develop constructive dialogue in an area of conflict; improve the understanding of stakeholders, governments and donors; enter into a dialogue with government representatives; open up a closed process; generate stakeholder involvement (eg Brent Spar process; Global Environment Facility, Country Dialogue Work (GEF CDW) OECD Conference).

*Informing policy-making:* inform and impact a policy-making process; inform an intergovernmental body; inform stakeholders (eg Beijing+5 online discussions; CSD stakeholder dialogues; Financing for Development (FfD) Hearings; WHO Conference; GEF CDW).

*Produce information from an independent source:* produce an independent assessment; conduct a rigorous review and develop recommendations and guidelines for future decision-making; develop and disseminate guidelines (eg for reporting), (eg Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (MMSD); Paper Initiative; the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI); the World Commission on Dams (WCD)).

*MSPs as a political strategy:* create a counterpoint to a planning proposal; support a global initiative and campaign (eg Lower Columbia River Basin process; MMSD).

*Towards implementation:* generate commitment by stakeholders to enact principles through joint activities or individually (eg UN Global Compact; GRI).

*Specific goals of businesses:* provide reputation management for companies; support alignment of businesses' internal/global policy; enable further identification of employees with a company (eg UN Global Compact, Novartis Forum).

**Participating stakeholders** MSP examples include a variety of stakeholders. In the examples studied, processes included three or more stakeholder groups. Definitions of stakeholder groups vary, from being based on the Major Groups identified in Agenda 21 (Chapters 24–33) to being identified specifically for an MSP, depending on the issues and scope. The following were listed: various UN entities (DESA units, SG's office, among others); various UN agencies; other intergovernmental bodies; governments; NGOs (in various definitions: environmental NGOs, community groups, development NGOs, etc); academics/scientists; women's groups; farmers; business and industry; trade unions; local authorities; Indigenous Peoples; technical experts; ethics specialists; professional associations; media; water and forestry districts; affected people.

**Time-frame** Time-frames vary considerably, depending on the scope, level and goals of a process. Many are one-off events for which there is a preparatory period before the actual event and a period afterwards to produce reports and publications.

Most of the example processes which are related to one-off events take five to ten months to carry out, eg CSD stakeholder dialogues; Bergen ministerial dialogue; FfD Hearings; Online Discussion of the World Bank Report 2000; Beijing+5 Online Discussions.

Some one-off events develop into follow-up processes which may be scheduled for one or two years, such as follow-up processes of CSD stakeholder dialogues (voluntary initiatives; tourism; agriculture).

Processes which include several meetings at various levels, commissioned research, separate working groups, reviewed background papers and other input, run for about two years or more, such as the World Commission on Dams; the Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development process; Local Agenda 21 processes.

Finally, there are ongoing processes which do not have a planned closure date (or an extended one) but annual agenda items and other steps within the process, such as UN Global Compact, Global Reporting Initiative.

## **Classification**

We have aimed to describe processes by issues, objectives, participants, scope and time lines.

**Issues** We listed the issues the MSP was addressing.

**Objectives** Most of the examples focus on informing a policy-making process, a particular intergovernmental body, and the like. These can be either 'only' dialogues or they can aim at consensus-building and agreement on positions, strategies, and/or output documents. In that case they are still informing but include mechanisms of reaching agreements and making decisions. The processes which involve some kind of consensus-building and/or decision-making also show a great variety: some are part of policy-making (Aarhus Convention), some are (partly) planning processes (LA21), others take an advising role (Brent Spar process). Others are developing tools (GRI), or independent analyses (MMSD; WCD) to be agreed within the process.

**Participants** Participants and the diversity of stakeholders involved in the examples vary greatly; numbers of participating stakeholders (including governments and intergovernmental bodies) range from at least three up to ten and more. Some processes work on the basis of the definition of Major Groups in Agenda 21 (for example CSD stakeholder dialogues, UN Global Compact).

**Scope** Most of the example processes are international (12); some are regional (5), national (8), subnational (3) and local (3). Some examples include subentities and processes at several levels (such as regional processes which feed into international ones).

**Time lines** Many processes are single events which, however, are sometimes extensively prepared over the course of several months (CSD Dialogues); others involve commissioning research, hearings and meetings at several levels (WCD; MMSD). Generally, it seems that ongoing processes allow the groups to build more trust and closer relationships, which should be associated with greater success (a judgement that we did not aim to make).

## **Procedural aspects**

*Designing the MSP: How was the process designed? And by whom? Were there consultations with stakeholders on the design?*

Various strategies are employed in the MSP examples. These can be grouped according to the level of stakeholder involvement; some employ a multi-stakeholder approach to the design.

One organization initiates, designs, facilitates and carries out the whole process; this can be a UN body or agency, such as the United Nations Economic Council for Europe (UNECE), the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) and the Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), FfD, another intergovernmental body (eg WHO), an individual company (eg Novartis), or another single institution (eg local authorities).

In some cases, the initiating body designs the process in consultation with stakeholders – one, two or more groups can be involved, either in separate consultations or via group consultation.

Sometimes, NGOs, multi-stakeholder organizations or professional facilitating organizations are contracted to carry out the process. In these cases, the process is often designed in consultation between the contracting partners. This can be carried out including further stakeholder consultation or not. For example, the initiative can come from a host country government who contracts an organization (Norway contracted the UNED Forum for the Bergen Ministerial Dialogues); or a company may contract a professional facilitator (Shell and The Environment Council).

Many processes have taken a step-by-step approach to designing and facilitating: initial scoping or planning meetings are initiated by one or more organizations. These meetings result in the founding of some kind of a steering committee (or task force, facilitating group, coordinating group, advisory group) which is usually made up of various stakeholder groups' representatives. This group then engages in further designing the process and often adding new members on the way in order to ensure diversity and inclusiveness. Often coordinating groups also develop the terms and principles of the process, appropriate levels, working groups, criteria for inclusion and balanced participation, and so on.

In some cases, NGOs approach a decision-making body and suggest an MSP. This can then be negotiated further with the body in question, involving or not involving more stakeholder groups (for example World Bank report online discussions).

As our sample of examples is not a representative one, we cannot identify a most common approach. It seems, however, that efforts to design a process together, as an MSP itself, have recently become more common. This could be based on the often reported experience that participants' commitment to a process largely depends on their involvement in the process from the outset, including the design.

*Identifying the issues to be addressed in an MSP: Who identifies the issues and how?*

The issues addressed by many of the examples are set by an international agreement (Beijing+5) or determined by the decision of an inter-

governmental body (such as the UN General Assembly, UNECE, DAW), or by a single initiating organization (say a company or intergovernmental body). However, often issues are further defined and differentiated through the process. This can lead to a need to pose more precise questions instead of putting a broadly defined issue to a group process. This is being done by the initiating body alone or in more or less transparent consultation with stakeholder groups.

Sometimes, potential participants are presented with a number of issues or questions and they can choose which ones they want to address in their contribution (eg FfD Hearings). In other cases, issues have been defined by an initial draft document but have been broadened through the multi-stakeholder debate.

Where a process is designed to feed into an official, for example intergovernmental event, issues and agenda tend to be set by the agenda of that event. The multi-stakeholder participation process is then designed in accordance with that official process.

In cases where a coordinating group or similar body takes on the task of designing the process, it also works on defining the issues to be addressed (eg WCD, MMSD). Again, this can be done, including further consultation with non-members. Diverse coordinating groups seem to be more inclusive when the issues are being defined. This is, however, also a question of available time (see below). Yet other processes are based on a process framework and issues vary by country (eg GEF CDW) or year (eg CSD stakeholder dialogues).

*Identifying relevant stakeholders: Who identifies relevant stakeholders? And how?*

Sometimes stakeholder groups are predefined by international agreements (as Major Groups in Agenda 21), but there is still a choice to be made among them. And in many cases, stakeholder groups which are relevant to the issue at hand need to be identified. Some processes are by invitation only, others are semi-open, based on set numbers and definitions of stakeholder groups, while others are completely open.

Many MSPs with a single initiating body (intergovernmental body or company), it will also be the one identifying relevant stakeholder groups for participation (eg CSD stakeholder dialogues; Novartis Forum). This can be done in consultation with stakeholder groups' representatives, a contracted NGO or other body (eg MMSD), or via an initial coordinating group which can result in a wide outreach (eg GRI, WCD). Sometimes, particular efforts are undertaken to ensure participation by some stakeholder groups. Some processes engage in ongoing outreach throughout the process, sometimes supported by outreach and background material. In other cases, a kick-off event organized by one body or an initial coordinating group is used to increase stakeholder

involvement. Such events reportedly benefit from some well-known people attending (eg LA21).

In longer term processes which involve various activities at several levels or in several working groups, very often the stakeholder base will increase over time as activities develop and more groups become interested (eg GRI). Stakeholder participation is sometimes limited by a governmental or intergovernmental body's decision; the reason given is that only a small number of participants can be accommodated in a limited space or time (eg CSD stakeholder dialogues, Bergen ministerial dialogues).

The activities related to identifying stakeholder groups often seem rather ad hoc and the criteria employed are sometimes not available. In contrast, some processes operate on the basis of publicized criteria which have been developed within a coordinating group of high stakeholder diversity.

*Identifying MSP participants: Who identifies participants and how? It is possibly different for the various participating stakeholder groups*

In most examples that we looked at, identifying the participants within a stakeholder group is up to the group itself; they elect or appoint their representatives to the process. Processes of election or appointment can be more or less transparent. Often, identification processes are most transparent among NGOs involved (eg CSD stakeholder dialogues).

In other cases, the participation of stakeholder representatives is by invitation by the initiating body only (eg OECD Conference). However, this is often done in consultation with stakeholder groups in order to ensure some level of representativeness. Or the process does not aim at stakeholder groups being represented by their chosen representatives and organizers invite members of stakeholder groups at their own discretion (eg Novartis Forum).

Particularly, online discussions tend to keep access completely open and there are no access controls. However, in these cases people are participating in an individual capacity and not on behalf of an organization or stakeholder group, and are asked to identify themselves so that the group position can be identified (eg Beijing+5 online discussions; WB Report online discussion; GRI). These processes also involve massive outreach efforts which can be specifically targeted to ensure regional or gender balance.

Many processes employ some kind of monitoring of numbers to ensure balanced participation by the various stakeholder groups involved (eg Brent Spar process).

Sometimes it seems necessary to reach out actively to potential participants (eg FfD regarding business representatives). Small stakeholder groups can share one representative to a process (Lower

Columbia River Basin process). Aiming at a very broad process but an overseeable group size, the WCD opted for a two-tiered approach of a small Commission (12 members) and a large Forum which served as a 'sounding board'.

*Setting the goals of an MSP: Who sets the goals and how? Can goals develop over the course of the MSP, say from an informing process into a dialogue/consensus-building process; from mere exchange of views to implementation?*

Goals can be set from the outset by one initiating organization with or without consultation with stakeholders or a coordinating group (eg Beijing+5 online discussions, Novartis Forum, FfD Hearings, OECD Conference). In processes around intergovernmental bodies, these are often based on existing international agreements. Goals can also develop over time through the MSP itself (eg GRI, WCD, MMSD, Local Agenda 21, Paper Initiative). Some MSPs have a mix of preset goals and goals developing over time, beyond the given set (eg UN Global Compact).

Choices with regard to goal development can be due to time limits, such as when a process has to deliver a certain input according to an official agenda and timetable (eg WHO Conference, WB Report online discussion). Sometimes the way that goals develop will depend on the way a chair chooses to facilitate a dialogue meeting – towards identifying common ground or contentious issues (eg CSD stakeholder dialogues).

*Do participants have opportunities to check back with their constituencies when changes are being proposed?*

This seems to depend mostly on the time-frame and the resources available. Checking back with constituencies is usually possible in MSPs involving several meetings or allowing for input and comments into draft documents within a reasonable time period. At one-off events, involving constituencies is only possible in the preparatory period. With regard to resources, groups with easy access to the internet, resources for communication and meetings find it much easier to check back with their constituencies than those lacking those resources.

*Setting the agenda: Who sets the agenda? And how? Do participants have opportunities to check back with their constituencies when changes are being proposed?*

The agenda – preparations for a one-off event or a long-term process – can be set by an initiating body alone or in consultation with stakeholder groups. Sometimes it is not quite clear how that was done or various sources contradict each other.



Agenda-setting can be facilitated through a contracted body organizing the process (eg Brent Spar process) and/or a more or less diverse coordinating group (eg GRI). In some cases, the process of developing the agenda is not predictable – it might or might not be carried out with stakeholder consultation or it has initially been developed in consultation and recurs in regular intervals based on the same scheme (eg CSD stakeholder dialogues).

In MSPs around intergovernmental meetings, agenda is largely dependent on the official agenda (preparatory meetings, deadlines for background papers, and so on). In processes steered by a diverse group and going on over a longer period of time, agenda-setting is part of that group process, and in many cases can change, adapt and develop over time, which makes the agenda of the process itself the result of an MSP (eg GRI, WCD). Where MSPs comprise various strands of work in different working groups, these often develop their agenda themselves (eg MMSD). In the UN Global Compact, for example, we find a mixture of a preset agenda (eg annual requirements) and an agenda developing through the process (eg issue dialogues).

*Setting the timetable: Who sets the timetable and how?*

In MSPs around intergovernmental meetings, timetables are determined by the official schedule (eg UNECE, Beijing+5, FfD, CSD). Independent processes that aim at impacting policy-making in a particular political process set their timetable accordingly (such as MMSD for Earth Summit 2002; WB Report online discussions). MSPs organized by a single entity mostly have their timetables set by that entity (eg Novartis Forum, OECD Conference).

In some cases, facilitating bodies propose a timetable which is then discussed and in some form adopted by the group (eg Brent Spar process, Bergen Ministerial Dialogues). Ongoing processes with a (diverse) coordinating group sometimes see timetables developing over time, mostly within a given overall deadline (eg WCD).

*Preparatory process: How is the dialogue prepared (consultations within constituencies; papers; initial positions, etc)? Are preparations within stakeholder groups monitored somehow?*

There is a great variety of preparatory processes within the sample we looked at. Choices largely depend on the objectives, size, scope and time lines, and on whether the processes involve consensus-building and decision-making or not.

One-off event MSPs are often prepared via various kinds of communications, bilateral or involving representatives of all participant groups. Some MSPs involve the preparation of initial stakeholder background or position papers (eg FfD Hearings). Such preparatory

papers are submitted in advance to a dialogue meeting which sometimes works and sometimes does not. In some cases, these are analysed and compared to prepare further for a meeting (eg CSD stakeholder dialogues, Bergen Ministerial Dialogues). Preparatory material can also be produced to help stakeholders decide if they want to participate (eg Brent Spar process: CD-ROM, user-friendly documents).

MSPs that aim to produce a common agreed document require different procedures. Drafts can be prepared by a coordinating group, a secretariat or facilitating body (eg WCD; Brent Spar) and put out for comments to all participants. Upon redrafting, documents can be put to a plenary meeting for final discussion and adoption, either by consensus or voting mechanisms. Such procedures can involve several layers, perhaps moving bottom-up from country to global level (eg MMSD, National Strategies for Sustainable Development (NSSD)).

In MSPs initiated and organized by one body, preparations often involve informal discussions about issues and schedules, between the inviting body, consultants, invited speakers and other stakeholder representatives (eg Novartis Forum, OECD Conference).

Larger processes tend to engage in a multitude of multi-stakeholder meetings and sub-processes at different levels and on specific issues. Each of these can have a separate preparatory process. Some long-term processes involve the commissioning of background or research papers, sometimes including their submission for comments to all participants. MSPs that involve small group work often hold large strategy meetings and produce newsletters to keep everybody informed about the different strands of ongoing work (eg WHO Conference).

Preparations of different participants of online discussions can vary significantly – some might not prepare at all, some might hold national meetings to prepare (eg Beijing+5, WB Report).

The amount of consultation within stakeholder groups which are preparing for a dialogue varies; in some cases or for some groups, there is a lot of consultation. Preparations within stakeholder groups do not seem to be monitored in any 'official' way, although NGOs in some cases carry out a consultation in a publicly accessible manner (eg via list serves).

#### *Communication process: How is the communication conducted?*

Nearly all examples make intensive use of web-based communication, some report 'huge email traffic', and most publish their (draft) material on websites which are often developed for the process itself. Web-based communication also allows a large number of people to be involved, is relatively cheap for many people and very quick. It allows transparency through open list servers and publicly accessible websites and archives. The downside, which is mentioned by many interviewees,

is the large gaps in internet access, particularly between South and North.

Only online discussions operate without any face-to-face meetings, and thus completely exclude people who do not have internet access. The lack of face-to-face feedback can also make communication more difficult.

MSPs involving a one-off event are often prepared via email, but also use telephone or video conferencing or pre-meetings. One-off events mostly involve a mixture of formal and informal meetings in preparation.

Longer-term or multi-layered MSPs often involve a mix of national or regional meetings and fewer international ones. These are often flanked by (electronic or printed) newsletters, brochures and other publications. Some make use of CD-ROMs.

Small working groups within larger processes, particularly international ones, also tend primarily to use email. Local processes involve many face-to-face meetings but also use a whole array of other communication channels.

Face-to-face dialogues are often conducted with a mixture of presentations, question and answers and discussion. They can also involve a mixture of plenary and small working groups meetings, presentations, panel discussions, side events with more information communications, and the like. More elaborate working group techniques such as phases of brainstorming and discussion, and meta-plan, are also used.

*Dealing with power gaps: Are there power gaps between participating stakeholder groups? How are they being addressed/dealt with?*

These questions are rarely addressed in published material and do not necessarily come out in written interviews. Where they are addressed, most people asserted that there are indeed power gaps, for example between governments and NGOs, between NGOs and business, between the MSP group and the decision-making body it was aiming to inform or impact. Power gaps are also due to differences in internet access - checking back with constituencies, consultations within stakeholder groups and keeping track of developments is much more difficult if you don't have regular and easy internet access.

People perceive that power gaps are rarely openly addressed. In some cases, they are dealt with explicitly by giving each group the same number of seats and support those in need with funding for travel, the production of preparatory material or communication (eg CSD stakeholder dialogues). Some MSPs aim to balance power by balancing the numbers of participants who are presumably in favour, against or neutral towards the issue or question at hand (eg OECD Conference).

People also noted that different groups have different bases of power, such as access to information, decision-making power, presumption of good intentions ('moral advantage'), access to building coalitions, the ability to take quick decisions. It was said that these different power sources might create a balance, which is less obvious than when looking at only one power base such as decision-making power or financial resources. Interestingly, some interviewees said that power gaps were balanced through lack of interest, preparation or coordination on the side of a potentially very powerful group.

*Are there mechanisms of meta-communication during the process? What kind?*

Mechanisms for meta-communication – communicating about the way we communicate and the process we are involved in – are rare components of MSPs. In some cases, people reported that there was spontaneous meta-communication in an informal manner. Many interviewees asserted that it would have been beneficial for the process if there had been encouragement and some kind of formal and transparent mechanism for meta-communication. This question also goes back to the initial design issue. If there is a coordinating group designing the process, it is more likely that this group also addresses the communication process, how to deal with power gaps, how to deal with dead-ends in decision-making and so on.

*Decision-making process: Procedures of agreement (depending on the type of MSP). Is agreement being sought? If so, how is that conducted and by whom?*

In many examples, no agreement was sought so the question was not applicable. MSPs can, however, spontaneously develop into consensus-building. This question also shows the importance of facilitating: even dialogue-only processes can be facilitated towards identifying common ground and possible (eg future) agreement, or they can be facilitated towards identifying areas of conflict (eg CSD stakeholder dialogues on agriculture in 2000).

Larger processes that aim to develop a consensus document often involve a multi-layered approach to consensus-building. Some agreement is often built within small working groups who then submit their outcomes to all participants for further comments and final agreement. Often, such agreement is sought at a final plenary meeting. Some processes intentionally avoid voting procedures and work to find consensus (eg GRI), some involve voting procedures or allow minority positions to be reflected in an outcome document (eg NGO preparations for CSD stakeholder dialogues; to some extent the WCD report).

Some MSPs rely on a professional facilitator or an experienced chair to identify the appropriate time for seeking agreement by the whole group (eg Brent Spar process).

*Implementation process: Depending on the type of MSP, how is implementation decided/planned/conducted and by whom?*

In most of the examples, no implementation was sought, at least not at the time. In the case of informing processes around intergovernmental bodies, the implementation of any consensus depends on the intergovernmental process taking MSP outcomes into account and into the official decision, and subsequently the appropriate bodies to initiate implementation (eg MMSD).

Some ongoing processes which emerged from CSD stakeholder dialogues are supposed to look at implementation (such as in the form of joint implementation projects) and to report back to the CSD within a given time-frame. In the case of the Aarhus Convention, implementation is now, after its adoption, a case for national governments, and NGOs are expected to play a key role in the implementation process as well as to monitor national implementation efforts. In the Brent Spar process, potential implementers (such as potential contractors of Shell) were part of the process. In the GRI process, implementation will depend on the companies' activities, a process which is also expected to initiate redesigning of the reporting guidelines which have been developed. With regard to Local Agenda 21 (LA21) processes, it was observed that there are no objective studies to assess their implementation. In the case of the UN Global Compact, there is disagreement about whether the process involves implementation or not – critics claim that it does not, while some business partners report that it does produce changes within their companies.

*Closing the MSP: How and when does the process conclude? Who makes the decision and how?*

MSPs around intergovernmental processes and/or aiming at a particular event close within the schedule of that official process or given event (eg Beijing+5 and WB Report online discussions, WHO and OECD Conferences, Novartis Forum events). Interviewees sometimes report that an MSP was planned as a one-off event but may inspire more such processes subsequently, or has led to ongoing processes (eg WHO Conference, Bergen Ministerial Dialogue, CSD stakeholder dialogues). Other processes close with a final meeting which has been scheduled when setting the timetable within the process (eg WCD, MMSD) but often involve follow-up processes at various levels, mostly aimed at feeding the outcomes into official decision-making. Ongoing processes

do not report a closure but expect to develop over time, into such processes as monitoring and implementation (eg GRI).

## **Structural aspects**

*Structures/institutions of the MSP: Secretariat? Facilitating body? Board/Forum?*

Many processes are supported by a secretariat or similar body (eg WomenWatch for the Beijing+5 online discussions, CSD Secretariat, FfD Secretariat, OECD, WHO, Novartis). In other cases, an initiating body contracts an NGO, a professional facilitator, or a multi-stakeholder organization to organize and back up an MSP.

Some longer term processes have given themselves their own base (eg WCD, GRI). Such bodies can develop their own constitution or function in an ad hoc manner with bylaws. Diverse governing boards or executive committees are meant to ensure adequate representation of all participants' views in the governance of the body and the process. Multi-layered processes might work with various bodies at local, regional and international levels. Some processes include diverse coordinating groups guiding the affairs which are primarily organized by one or a small number of organizations.

UNECE had a working group for the Aarhus Convention process, plus a 'Friends of the Secretariat' group. WCD worked with a special Secretariat, a small Commission and a large Forum. Local authorities will mostly organize LA21 but sometimes create a body for that purpose which can also be a mix of local government and independent or multi-stakeholder institution.

Within stakeholder groups, coordination is provided by associations (eg the ICC, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and the ICFTU), networks and steering committees (eg NGO Steering Committee, caucuses), and umbrella institutions active in the area of interest (eg the ICLEI for local authorities).

*Facilitation: Who facilitates the MSP? What is the exact role of a facilitating body? How does the facilitating organization work with stakeholders? Does that include secretariat services?*

These questions were understood as inquiring about the actual facilitation or chairing of meetings. Online discussions are regularly moderated, with messages being screened for length and relevance. Moderators communicate directly with participants whose messages need to be reformulated; they are often taken on as external consultants.

Around official intergovernmental processes, officials such as chairs of the Bureau tend to facilitate stakeholder dialogue meetings (eg CSD, FfD). Joint chairing by government representatives and NGOs also takes place (eg Bergen Ministerial Dialogues). Within LA21s, local authority representatives usually chair meetings. One-off events organized by a single body usually appoint chairpersons from among various stakeholder groups (eg OECD Conference) or other professions (eg journalists at Novartis Forum events). Pre-meetings tend to be prepared and facilitated by the body coordinating the process. Interviewees reported that using professional facilitators was beneficial but that having a charismatic, respected chair was equally successful.

*Documentation: Rapporteurship from meetings; summarizing outcomes; publication of documentation – by whom, when and how?*

Many MSPs report that a large number of documents are produced over time as drafts are commented on and redrafted; meetings are minuted; additional background and research material is submitted, and so on. In many processes, pre-final documents or meeting minutes are only distributed electronically via email and/or website.

Online discussions are often fully archived on the internet and publicly accessible. Summary documents of such discussions are produced by the organizing body and made available in electronic and printed format.

There are various mechanisms for rapporteurship: in most processes, minutes are taken by members of the organizing body (eg Brent Spar process, FfD hearings, CSD dialogues), and draft reports might be forwarded to participants for amendments and comments. Minutes can also be taken by different stakeholders on a rotating basis and publications produced by one of the facilitating bodies involved on a rotating basis (eg Lower Columbia River Basin process).

Depending on agreement being sought or not, MSPs might work towards a consensus, an endorsed document which usually goes through several stages of drafting and redrafting (eg GRI, LA21). Another option is chair's summaries which can be presented for comments but don't need endorsement (eg CSD stakeholder dialogues, Bergen ministerial meeting). In MSPs initiated and organized by one body, summaries and reports are often produced by that body alone (eg Novartis Forum, OECD Conference).

The question of rapporteurship and documentation is also linked to the question of linkage into official decision-making. The ways in which documents are produced and fed into the process can make them effectively impact the official process, or not (see below).

MSPs might also produce extensive material that is publicly available, preparatory or reflecting the outcome – interactive websites,

CD-ROMs, background and issue papers, and knowledge management systems are such options (eg Brent Spar process, MMSD).

*Relating to non-participating stakeholders: Do other stakeholders know about the process? Can they feed into the process and how?*

Answers to these questions depend on the objectives, the resources and time available, and the limitations sometimes set by governments or intergovernmental bodies.

In many cases, interviewees regret that there is not enough information available for other stakeholders except those who are aware of the process because of general or previous involvement (eg the Aarhus Convention).

Many processes rely more or less on publishing their material on the internet; sometimes they engage in outreach activities to make other stakeholders aware of the process. Open processes often continuously work to involve more stakeholders through proactive outreach activities (eg GRD). Media-related activities are mostly used to inform the general public (see below). The extensive use of specialist language or UN jargon reportedly often hinders involvement of stakeholder groups.

Most processes, however, do not have formal mechanisms for non-participating stakeholders to be informed and/or to get involved – it depends on them showing interest and approaching the facilitating body. Non-participating stakeholders can sometimes feed into the process through linking up with participating stakeholders. This can be difficult due to tight time lines (eg Bergen Ministerial Dialogues). Online discussions are mostly not limited to particular stakeholder groups, but of course access depends on access to the technology.

Most of the examples studied here have been held in English – a reflection of the reality of many international processes but also of the authors' common language being English. The online discussions on the draft WB Report allowed contributions in French and Spanish which were, however, not translated due to lack of resources.

*Relating to the general public: What kind of information about the MSP is available to the public? Via which channels? Who provides that information? Can the public comment/ask questions/feed in and how?*

Many interviewees stressed the need to convey the message of the respective MSP to the public in plain language, and often reported the difficulties in doing so. Limited time, highly specialized issues and financial constraints further limit public outreach.

Many processes rely on their material being publicly available on a website. However, this is reportedly not being seen as ensuring public



access due to the lack of information about the site and jargon-loaded language. This is most often the case with MSPs dealing with specialized or highly technical issues. Some MSPs produce various materials for public dissemination. Press releases and conferences are the most common. School packs, brochures, CD-ROMs and videos are less commonplace. Reports are often widely disseminated but feeding into the process remains difficult for the general public. Local Agenda processes often use local media such as newspapers and radio to inform and to generate increased involvement. LA21s also seem to be the processes that are most easily accessible by the general public. Press coverage of one-off events is often ensured by inviting journalists to attend (eg WCD, GRD) or to participate actively at an event, perhaps as facilitators (eg Novartis Forum).

Some processes engage in public media-related activities, most frequently towards the end of the process, launching an outcome document. Launch events can be big public events involving celebrities (eg WCD). Media work is most often done by the coordinating organization. If there is a lot of public interest in an issue, it will be in the news. This is most often the case when contentious issues are being addressed (eg Brent Spar process).

*Linkage into official decision-making process: Is the MSP linked to an official decision-making process? Of governments, intergovernmental bodies, other stakeholders? Via which mechanisms? How transparent and predictable are these mechanisms? Can stakeholders impact the mechanisms and how?*

These are particularly important questions as most MSP examples aim to impact policy-making and implementation. Around official decision-making processes, MSPs can have various forms of linkage mechanisms. Principally, it is up to governments or intergovernmental bodies to take up outcomes of an MSP meant to inform their deliberations (eg MMSD, WB Report online discussion, WHO Conference). For the Beijing+5 online discussions, a summary was prepared as a background document for the next PrepComm. For the FfD Hearings, summaries were submitted to the 2nd PrepComm as official reports to the meeting. At the Bergen ministerial meeting, a chair's summary of the Dialogues was taken to the closed official meeting the next morning. For the CSD stakeholder dialogues, the CSD Secretariat has in recent years produced a summary in the chair's name which is then handed to negotiators for the CSD decision, along with the summary of the CSD High Level Segment. In the preparations for the Aarhus Convention, the multi-stakeholder involvement was part of the official process. In the NSSD process, outcomes feed into OECD preparations for 2002 and a OECD

High Level meeting. With regard to the UN Global Compact, interviewees disagreed as regards linkage into official decision-making.

Independent processes work with their participants to take on the outcomes and implement them. However, such processes may spark government interest which may lead to impacting official decision-making (eg GRI). The WCD uses the outcome report to impact governments reviewing their policies on large dams.

Some interviewees report that processes were not sufficiently linked into official decision-making and that this could have been designed better to increase impact. Some MSPs have to rely on ad hoc linkage mechanisms. They can be impacted by stakeholders but governments are not formally agreeing a regular procedure. Others rely on lobbying based on their outcomes and seek government involvement to facilitate linkage into official decision-making.

*Funding: Is the process being funded? By whom? Who is fundraising? How much does it cost? What impact do funders have on process, structures and outcomes?*

Some processes being facilitated by the UN or other bodies are funded through their core budget (which can be a trust fund for a particular process, eg FfD) and additional travel funding, particularly for NGOs and representatives from developing countries (eg FfD Hearings, CSD stakeholder dialogues). Funds are often generated short-term from individual governments. Other participating stakeholder groups fund their participation themselves, particularly business. One-off events initiated and organized by one body are often completely funded by that same body (eg Novartis Forum, Bergen Ministerial Dialogues, OECD Conference, LA21s by local authorities).

Many processes rely on various funding sources from the UN Foundation, other private foundations, UN agencies, individual governments, donor organizations, multilateral development banks, private sector associations or individual companies, NGOs and/or research institutions.

Funding without contributions from the private sector tends to be perceived as lending an MSP more credibility, and arranging for multiple funding sources is regarded as allowing for independence. Within our sample, there is only one example where the process itself agreed a fund-raising strategy and carried it out via its facilitating body, the WCD.

Many MSPs report that insufficient funds are impeding the process and its impact. Overall costs vary significantly.

## **Additional comments and recommendations by interviewees**

Interviewees and MSP reports raised a number of additional issues and comments which are relevant to the task at hand.

*Types of MSPs* Ongoing processes are seen by some people as more successful than one-off events. However, one-off events can reportedly serve as starting points and build the necessary trust to continue engagement.

*Defining the issues* Over-simplifying the issue in the beginning of an MSP can create problems of addressing the questions which would need further development. A sufficient problem identification phase in the beginning is the key. In a similar vein, keeping the agenda-setting process open allows further crucial issues to be identified through the process. Sometimes it takes time for these to emerge, such as social, economic and equity questions within primarily environmentally focused processes.

*Stakeholder participation* Some MSPs reportedly benefited in terms of decreased power gaps because of the lack of participation, preparation or coordination by a potentially powerful stakeholder group. MSPs need to take care not to lose those who cannot easily become involved in further discussions, working groups, and so on due to a lack of time and resources. The early involvement of those who need to be involved is beneficial, otherwise the process can lack credibility and have less impact. As a general rule, one should note that participation processes take more time than expected. Many processes seem to have key people who acted as drivers and persisted in pushing the envelope and keeping others involved.

*Power gaps* It is recommended that people should keep in mind that power can be based on various kinds of resources. Power gaps do exist but different groups have different advantages (access to information, decision-making power, presumption of good intentions, access to building coalitions, ability to take quick decisions). The challenge is to identify one's power base and work with that - for example, community organizations and NGOs often succeed in bringing the media on their side which reduces the actual power of business and governments. MSPs tend to make those in power feel threatened, an issue which needs to be addressed by carefully defining the desired role of the MSP.

*Chairing and facilitation* Independent facilitation is regarded as better than facilitation being provided by a stakeholder or body which is not seen as independent.

*Outcome documents* MSP output should be summarized in short documents to ensure wider readership.

*Meta-communication* Many processes do not have such mechanisms and would reportedly benefit from them.

*Consensus-building and decision-making* Is consensus compromise by another name? Many people would not want to see an MSP leading to compromise but to consensus which integrates various views. Agreeing ground rules for decision-making is crucial.

*Rapporteurship* It is important that every stakeholder has an opportunity to record decisions taken – for example, minutes can be taken on a rotating basis.

*Implementation* If one sector leads an MSP, there is a danger that all others will look to the leading sector for implementation.

*Closure/follow-up* As decisions not to do something are almost always revisited, the advantage goes to those organizations who have staying-power.

*MSP effects* MSPs can help to build trust between participating stakeholders, for example between government or local governments and communities. This is perceived as very important as there is reportedly often a lack of trust.

*Costs and funding* MSPs are expensive and need a solid, well-prepared funding base to function properly and according to the ideals of inclusiveness, equity and transparency.

## **REPORTED PROBLEMS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Some of the examples studied might not be MSPs in the strict sense according to our definition, because they a) did only involve two stakeholder groups plus governments and b) did not involve direct interaction of several stakeholder groups (eg FfD Hearings).

It appears that in some cases, there are different views on a process, its strengths and weaknesses. This is only natural as MSPs are about working in an area where there is a wide range of views and diverse actors. Differences arise, for example, with regard to the perception of power gaps (more on the side of weaker groups), of transparency (higher on the side of organizers), and so on. This also reflects different basic values or hierarchies of values. Whereas for many NGOs, for example, transparency and equity are high priorities, some businesses and governments can place more importance on quickening processes and producing outcome in a short time period. Our analyses have been

limited as regards the numbers of people interviewed and more representative samples would most certainly generate an even wider range of views.

*Multi-stakeholder nature of processes* that have involved a diverse group of stakeholders from the start (say as an initial coordinating group) can better take into account the different viewpoints throughout the process. This is understandable as they are likely to have been designed with a strong view to inclusiveness, transparency, equity, and so on. But this is also an issue of increased commitment (and active input) of participants who have been involved right from the start. Where stakeholders have not been involved from the beginning, they sometimes question whether much effort has been made to be inclusive.

*Issues and goals* MSPs need specific objectives. Investing sufficient time into problem identification and agreeing issues and goals is key. A lack of agreed, specific objectives can impede an MSP's effectiveness, or at least can make it be perceived as less effective. It was recommended that MSPs should always tackle the easiest objectives and common ground first in order to build trust and pull out some real initial achievements; then it can start to face the more contentious areas. Focusing on the issues and creating a problem-solving group culture is an important prerequisite for success.

*Capacity* One commentator observed that lack of capacity is the first major problem of MSPs – lack of human and financial resources, time, and information and knowledge to enable meaningful participation. There is a need to ensure equitable capacity for participation. This has to be taken into account when designing an MSP, including its fundraising strategies and targets. The question of who is to design and provide human capacity-building also needs to be addressed.

*Stakeholder participation* MSPs seem often to be in a 'chicken and egg situation': 'So you start the work and then expose the work to a wider group of people or do you start with a very open process and get pulled in 20 directions immediately?' (Church, 2001). Step-by-step ways of increasing stakeholder involvement in the design process seem to be commonplace in cases where design is done through a body or process which involves several stakeholders. New participants joining the process always require additional attention as they will have a less strong sense of ownership of the principle elements that already exist. In general, many processes lack gender balance and many lack regional balance.

*Linkage to constituencies* Over the course of an MSP, some participants reportedly do not work well with their constituencies which creates problems for the process. They might tend to check with their organiza-

tions but not the broader constituency. Checking back with constituencies also depends on enough time and resources being available – differences can create power gaps. Another problem is what The Environment Council has called ‘constituency drift’: it may occur when stakeholder representatives take part in a process and learn through it, while their constituencies have not had that experience and do not necessarily agree with changes regarding views or strategies. This demonstrates the need for participants to work closely with their constituencies, particularly in MSPs which aim at agreements and implementation. The need to check back with constituencies can, however, reportedly also be (mis-)used as a veto-power or at least to stall a process of consensus-building and decision-making.

*Preparations* MSPs seem to benefit from preparatory material such as stakeholder position papers being available well in advance. It helps to make best use of the usually limited time available for multi-stakeholder meetings. This needs to be part of the design process and commitment to meet deadlines for submissions will be increased if participants have been part of the design process.

*Formal procedures or communication, consensus-building and decision-making* In general, it can be said that such formal ground rules seem to help an MSP. They also help to create transparency about processes which is sometimes lacking – whether because information is not publicized or is not easily accessible.

*Consensus-building and decision-making* Agreeing the ground rules for communication, particularly for seeking consensus and making decisions, is a crucial component of processes which aim at some kind of agreements. Concealing conflict can be used to achieve consensus-building which is not worthy of the name. An MSP can be rendered meaningless if the diversity of views and requirements leads to rather vague language in the outcome documents rather than acknowledging differences and working on them (at least towards agreement on disagreement). Open, honest, respectful and equitable communication and sufficient time will help to avoid concealing conflict for the benefit of the process.

*Power gaps* This issue seems in many processes not to be sufficiently addressed. It is certainly among the most difficult questions. In some examples, it is mentioned that lack of participation, preparation or coordination of governments, intergovernmental bodies or business has benefited the process through making a potentially dominating group less powerful. Some NGOs feel that strong and well-coordinated business involvement, for example, tends to dominate an MSP and lead to biased outcomes.

Dealing with power gaps needs to be given serious attention when designing an MSP and throughout the process (see also meta-communication, below). Some processes deal with the problem by assigning the same number of seats to all groups. Yet this is not the only aspect – differences in resources, capacities, education, eloquence, language skills, and so on impact on power balances.

*Meta-communication*, in other words communication by a group about its own processes, is reportedly lacking in most cases, and people say that more meta-communication would have been beneficial. Informal meta-communications can impede (perceived) transparency; therefore, some formal or plenary mechanism should be developed to help the group communicate about the way it communicates.

*Linkage into official decision-making processes* is another crucial point. In many cases, there is a lack of transparency in this regard, and governments and intergovernmental bodies are often reluctant to outline in more detail how processes feed into their decision-making. Creating transparent linkages is an important question in the design phase. The early involvement of decision-makers and potential implementers is recommended.

*Coordinating organizations* It is questionable whether processes that are entirely designed by one body can be developed into true dialogue processes which the participants can take some ownership of. (Sometimes, this is of course not the priority goal.) They are more likely to be perceived as lacking transparency and legitimacy. Particularly in cases where companies or government bodies create dialogue processes in such a way, they can easily be discredited as mere public relations jobs.

NGOs are (increasingly?) being taken on to facilitate processes – by businesses, business associations, governments, intergovernmental bodies. In such cases, the contracted organization tends to aim at openness, inclusiveness, transparency, equity and other key characteristics of MSPs which ensure increased credibility. It might be feasible to promote such practice. However, contracted organizations which become fully dependent on funding through MSP facilitation eventually become consultancies. It might not be a bad thing for NGOs to develop a consultancy part of their operation but this needs to be taken into account.

*Time lines* A number of problems arise from time constraints. However, people also assert the need to work within time lines to keep an MSP focused. Compressing MSPs into the timetables of official decision-making processes can be frustrating and a barrier to establishing a transparent, democratic and inclusive process. Often, decisions to include some kind of MSP in the preparations for an official meeting

come late in the process. The reported fear of many (inter)governmental bodies towards developing 'never-ending', expensive processes also needs to be dealt with by making realistic suggestions and agreeing dates of closure and reporting-back mechanisms. Time limits are also a barrier towards increased involvement by other stakeholders and the public and/or consultation within constituencies. Stakeholder groups have different cultures and different requirements due to their different structures and mechanisms of decision-making, access to information and communication, and human and financial resources. Learning and acknowledging each other's positions, looking for a way to integrate them and building trust take time; hence time limits are a barrier to real dialogue.

*Implementation* There is general criticism of voluntary initiatives such as MSPs, particularly from NGOs. MSPs can be criticized as 'talk-shops' and for being misused as legitimization while not having to do anything. Monitoring MSP follow-up is important, otherwise the process may not lead to much result. There is a question, however, regarding who should take on the role of monitoring an MSP outcome/implementation process.

*Building on previous experiences* This seems to be done in some processes and not in others. Little information is available with regard to how processes build on or learn from previous experiences. It is more likely if the same initiating or coordinating bodies are involved. There is need for more networking and exchange between processes and documenting lessons learnt for future MSPs.

*Funding* Many MSPs report funding problems; process constraints and weaknesses can develop due to a lack of funding. It is important that MSPs are sufficiently funded and that developing fund-raising strategies and targets are part of the design process, taking into account the requirements of various stakeholder groups. The WCD seems to be an exceptional case in this regard and is being flagged by many as a leading example.

## TWENTY EXAMPLES

The following presents a brief summary of the examples. Points where no information was available were left out. The literature we used is listed in the References section; interviewees were not named with the examples for reasons of confidentiality.

Although we aimed at a purely descriptive analysis, interviewees tended to make evaluations and comments and draw conclusions. Some of them have been included in the presentations, not because we share



them but because they added to the picture. Where they present conclusions, as based on analysis undertaken by the interviewee, we have noted them. Where they are assessments which contradict other people's opinions, we have aimed to include several of those opposing views.

Also note that the information provided is dated April 2001; the ongoing processes will have developed further by the time of publication, and some of the finished processes will have had further impact and follow-up. For up-to-date information, please refer to the contact details and URLs given for each example:

- 1 Aarhus Convention Process
- 2 Beijing+5 Global Forum / Online Discussions (1999/2000)
- 3 CSD Multi-stakeholder Dialogues (1997–2000)
- 4 Environment Council: Brent Spar Dialogue Process (1996–1997)
- 5 Finance for Development Civil Society Hearings (2000)
- 6 Global Reporting Initiative (since 1997)
- 7 Local Agenda 21 Process A: Cooperation for Sustainable Development in the Lower Columbia River Basin (since 1999)
- 8 Local Agenda 21 Process B: Local Agenda 21 Processes (in the UK and elsewhere) (since 1992)
- 9 Multi-stakeholder Dialogues at the 8th Informal Environment Ministers Meeting, Bergen (2000)
- 10 Novartis Forum Events (1997–1999)
- 11 OECD/Biotechnology (1999–2000)
- 12 Processes Developing National Strategies on Sustainable Development A: National Strategies for Sustainable Development/International Institute for Environmental Development (IIED)
- 13 Processes Developing National Strategies on Sustainable Development B: Creation of National Councils for Sustainable Development/Earth Council
- 14 UN Global Compact (since 1999)
- 15 WBCSD/IIED Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development (1999–2001)
- 16 WBCSD/IIED Paper Initiative (1997)
- 17 WHO European Health and Environment Conference (1999)
- 18 WB World Development Report/Online Discussion of Draft Report (2000)
- 19 WB GEF Country Dialogue Workshops Program
- 20 WCD (1998–2000)

## AARHUS CONVENTION PROCESS

### **The UNECE regional convention on access to information, public participation in decision-making, and access to justice in environmental matters**

'The Aarhus Convention is a new kind of environmental agreement. It links environmental right and human rights. It acknowledges that we owe an obligation to future generations. It establishes that sustainable development can be achieved only through the involvement of all stakeholders. It links government accountability and environmental protection. It focuses on the interactions between the public and public authorities in a democratic context and it is forging a new process for public participation in the negotiation and implementation of international agreements' (UNECE, 2000).

*Issues* Public right to know, right to participate in environmental decision-making, right to justice in environmental matters. It links environment right and human rights.

*Objectives* Enhancing government accountability, transparency and responsiveness. Assisting civil society participation and helping to create participatory democracy for sustainable development in Europe.

*Participants* UNECE (forum of 55 countries of North America, Western, Central and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia); bodies involved in 'Environment for Europe' process (a framework bringing together environment ministers, institutions and organizations, including environmental citizens' groups); other relevant international organizations; environmental NGOs; other NGOs.

*Scope* Although legalities will only apply within the UNECE region, it has global implications and potentially could serve as a framework for strengthening citizens' environmental rights. Kofi Annan described it as the 'most impressive elaboration of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, which stresses the need for citizens' participation in environmental issues and for access to information on the environment held by public authorities'.

*Time lines* Full preparatory process culminating in adoption at the Fourth Ministerial Conference 'Environment for Europe' in Aarhus, Denmark, 25 June 1998; ongoing time-frame to implement.

*Contact, URL* Official process UNECE, Geneva; [www.unece.org](http://www.unece.org)

## Procedural aspects

**Designing the MSP** It evolved partly as a result of being one of the first major programmes to significantly involve NGOs at that stage. Design was done by UNECE, with three staff members. NGOs provided process advice, too. The governing body, the Committee on Environmental Policy, established a Working Group for the preparation of the Convention (January 1996) and also formed a 'Friends of the Secretariat' group to assist the process, based on the Sofia Guidelines (see below).

**Identifying the issues** Issues were concerned with the development of the Aarhus Convention, an idea that emerged from the 'Environment for Europe' process. The Convention has provoked interest when compared to other environment conventions because it focuses on the processes by which environmental decisions are made. The emphasis on process rather than on outcome provides an innovative model of multilateral policy-making. Specific issues flagged as requiring further attention under the auspices of the Convention are: genetically modified organisms (GMOs); the development of pollution registers; new forms of information, including electronic, and compliance issues.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** Questions remain over whether there was any real attempt to identify relevant stakeholders. NGOs were invited to participate and went on to play a central and unprecedented role in negotiations drafting the Convention itself. This raises questions about the role of NGOs as opposed to the general public, as opposed to the broader voluntary sector. The Convention process differed from other official processes as NGOs assumed the practical status of full and equal partners. It was a government process with NGO involvement.

The UNECE process was well established, with a history of NGO involvement, for example parallel forums at the Sophia and Lucerne meetings, and a record of involving NGOs from Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States (NIS). There was a good base for the Aarhus process. Timing was interesting, too, as UNECE were involving Eastern Europeans at a time when people was talking about engaging civil society. One problem was that it was clearly a ministerial 'Environment for Europe' conference, so there was a big emphasis on environment groups, with less on the social or economic development side. The Convention covers these broader interests, however.

**Identifying participants** An expert group of NGOs was involved and then a major strategy planning meeting took place attended by 100 NGOs. It was dominated, however, by a handful of Western NGOs with a very clear agenda. They dominated but could justify this by saying that the smaller organizations lacked the capacity. It is also

questionable how far the process went beyond governments and NGOs. It is unclear what discussions UNECE had with business. There was academic involvement, with the lawyers/academics being mostly on the side of the NGOs.

**Setting the goals** The Aarhus Convention involves a long-term goal. The whole Environment for Europe process aims to strengthen environmental institutions, legislation, and so on. Aarhus was just the development of a convention. Comment: the elite of the NGOs did have opportunities to check back with their constituencies and to consult electronically via list servers and in other ways.

**Setting the agenda** There was a strong preparatory process, far stronger than anything in Europe up until that time, which in its way was groundbreaking. Also notable was the fact that during the ministerial conference, the NGOs had an afternoon where they set the agenda and booked the speakers. It was an important symbolic moment, with ministers sitting down and talking on an NGO agenda.

**Setting the timetable** The timetable was defined by setting the Aarhus meeting. The Convention was to be discussed there so all preparations had to be completed within the timetable. Two years of negotiations with inputs from countries and NGOs throughout the UNECE region.

**Preparatory process** The preparatory process included a large strategy meeting and some newsletters. It was mostly small group work which, considering it was a fairly arcane area of policy-making, is not surprising. The Convention is now completed.

**Communication** There is a question over how much consensus-building actually took place, although there was plenty of dialogue. Communication was conducted mostly in small groups and people were involved in these. Small group discussions were facilitated. Power gaps did exist but because the process was about the politics of participation, it would have benefited from more discussion about the process itself. The situation was dominated by a small group of NGOs working within a tight time-frame. Although there was time for reflection in between meetings, the process was heading towards one particular point.

**Implementation** As a policy-making process, implementation is now happening at a national level, with some monitoring and feedback to the international level, for example the Dubrovnik Review Conference (July 2000), attended by ministers and NGOs. The UK Government has held a workshop on national and local implementation. NGOs are expected to play a major role in implementation processes.

**Closure** The process will not conclude for a long while yet. For example, the UK has only just (November, 2000) given royal assent to

its Freedom of Information Act which 'directly supports sustainable development by providing enhanced access to information held by public authorities about their responsibilities and activities. This will be used to produce a culture of greater openness so that decisions taken are more transparent and, as a consequence, public authorities are more accountable for their actions' (DETR, 2001).

When the process does close there will be a need for ongoing monitoring. Given the crisis in implementation in so many conventions, there is a lot of NGO scepticism over how much difference this can really make.

*NGO comment* It will probably, ultimately, need to be challenged in the courts – hardly an example of good MSP practice!

## Structural aspects

**Institutional back-up and facilitation** Secretariat – the UNECE is theoretically the facilitating body. The European Eco Forum (a coalition of environmental NGOs from across the UNECE region) coordinated the NGO response. It was a government process with NGOs there to some extent on sufferance, but recognizing that this was their chance. The whole process changed massively and is still going on, but the main body of work happened before the Aarhus conference.

**Documentation** There were huge amounts of documentation. Country reports were coordinated by the REC (Regional Environment Center for Central and Eastern Europe); small work groups produced reports, and so on. An Implementation Guide was published by the UNECE in 2000.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** Many stakeholders still don't know about the Convention, especially if stakeholders are defined as anyone who is going to be affected by it. For example, once the Convention is in force, any major developer putting in a planning application will, have to provide a lot more information to the public in a way that did not necessarily happen before. Post-Aarhus, European environmental citizens' organizations are calling for a pan-European campaign for transparency and participation to ensure that the Aarhus Convention and the UNECE Guidelines on Access to Environmental Information and Public Participation in Environmental Decision-making, endorsed in Sofia (October, 1995) by European Environment ministers, are fully implemented.

*NGO comment* The process would have benefited from more private sector involvement, but one reason that it did work was that the private sector paid it little attention.

**Relating to the general public** A great deal of information is available; the internet was widely used by stakeholders. However, very little is of relevance to the general public although the follow-up conference in 1999 tried to provide information that is relevant. It is now an information exercise and thus up to national governments.

For example, the UK DETR position is that as an agency it does not engage in specific MSPs; instead, it undertakes very general public consultation exercises in response to new proposals. It was suggested that the Environment Agency, working at a lower level, might do more innovative work. In its latest Annual Report reviewing progress towards sustainable development, the UK Government refers to the Aarhus Convention as 'strengthening the existing public access regime for environmental information and making it more liberal and more responsive'. The Report goes on to state that the Government 'is committed to improving public access to environmental information . . . New Regulations to bring the access regime up to this more demanding standard will be laid in most parts of the UK in 2001, well ahead of European Community legislation' (DETR, 2001).

**Linkage into official decision-making** The MSP was linked to the official decision-making process of developing a UNECE Regional Convention. The question now is how much implementation there will be. The Aarhus Convention is not yet ratified by enough countries for it to come into law (39 countries and the European Community have signed it). The original goal was for the Convention to come into force by the end of 2000.

**Funding** NGOs received funding from national governments (not all).

## **BEIJING+5 GLOBAL FORUM ONLINE DISCUSSIONS**

*Issues* 12 areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action.

*Objective* Informing the preparations for Beijing+5.

*Participants* Open to anyone - participation by NGOs, UN, governments, researchers.

*Scope* global.

*Time lines* Scheduled online discussions of four to six weeks each.

*Contact details, URL* UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UN DAW), New York; [www.un.org/womenwatch](http://www.un.org/womenwatch)

During 1999, WomenWatch held global online working groups to gather information on the implementation of the 12 critical areas of concern of the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA). The 'Global Forum'

was part of the UN Division for the Advancement of Women's (DAW) strategies to take women's NGOs contributions into account throughout the process of preparing for Beijing+5. It consisted of 12 scheduled online discussion groups addressing each of the PfA sections and open for all stakeholders to participate.

## Procedural aspects

**Identifying the issues** Issues were the Beijing PfA 12 Areas of Concern. Within these areas, DAW developed a set of questions for each of the dialogues which were fed in week by week. The working groups focused on identifying:

- 1 Policies, legislation, strategies and partnerships that have been successfully furthering women's equality.
- 2 Case studies, best practices and examples of successful government, business and civil society efforts as well as lessons learned.
- 3 Remaining obstacles to progress and how they can be overcome.

Some of the topics generated much interest in the discussions, while others did not.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** The UN DAW decided that they wanted participation from NGOs and others; invitations mostly targeted NGOs (DAW database, list servers, and so on).

**Identifying participants** Access was completely open. The 12 discussions had about 10,000 participants from over 120 countries altogether - mostly NGOs and government representatives, intergovernmental organizations and researchers. Participants were allowed to participate in as many debates as they wished.

**Setting the goals, agenda and timetable** DAW

**Preparatory process** Weekly questions were developed by experts within DAW.

There was no monitoring of preparations within stakeholder groups or by individual participants. Participants were not asked to speak for a particular group or body. Consultations among constituencies were possible, but no information is available summarizing such activities by participants.

**Communication** Email only. DAW were aware of power gaps arising from differences in Internet access but these were not addressed.

**Decision-making** No agreements sought.

**Closure** Set through the schedule by DAW.

## **Structural aspects**

**Institutional back-up** The online discussions were facilitated by WomenWatch. 'WomenWatch is the UN gateway to global information about women's concerns, progress and equality. It was initiated by the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW). WomenWatch is an inter-agency activity involving the participation of many United Nations organisations.' (WomenWatch, 2000)

**Facilitation** Facilitation by DAW. One external moderator for each group was to screen the messages, the criteria being the relevance of the questions on each topic per week, and clarifying messages with people if necessary. There was an ongoing dialogue within DAW and WomenWatch throughout the process, with experts within the organizations, between them and the moderators, and so on.

**Documentation** The online discussions have been archived on the WomenWatch website and are publicly accessible. DAW also produced a summary document as a background document to the 3rd PrepComm for Beijing+5, United Nations: E/CN.6/2000/CRP.1.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders and to the general public** Full archive and summaries available at [www.un.org/womenwatch](http://www.un.org/womenwatch).

**Linkage into official decision-making** The background document was not discussed as such but was mentioned in the outcome document several times. Many NGOs felt that this exercise had not informed the process or had any impact on the Beijing+5 outcome document because they were not aware that anyone had used it to develop their positions.

**Funding** Funding came out of the DAW budget for Beijing+5. This was about US\$600,000 from the UN Foundation, plus UNDP. The online discussions were part of the whole package.

**Additional remarks** This was an expensive process; hiring moderators required substantive funding. Holding online discussions for six weeks might be too long (and is expensive); reducing them to two to three weeks would be an option. It was commented that the online discussions were useful in terms of building and educating a constituency. It would be better to link in all stakeholders rather than only NGOs. Involved UN bodies such as UNIFEM were satisfied because it connected them with the public.

In general, online discussions should be summarized in a short report to be recommended, otherwise nobody will read it. The report should focus on the issues being highlighted – the important information



for governments and others (to learn who thinks what). It might be good to conduct such discussions on issues that people are not yet debating to generate interest and initiate exchange.

### **UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUES (MSD)**

*Issues* Various, depending on the UN CSD agenda (1998: industry; 1999: tourism; 2000: sustainable agriculture; 2001: energy and transport).

*Objectives* To Inform the UN CSD negotiations.

*Participants* Over the past four years (1997-2000) trade unions, industry, local government, NGOs (including women and Indigenous Peoples), farmers.

*Scope* International.

*Time lines* 4 dialogue sessions over 2-3 days on 4 issues each year with a 6-month preparatory period.

*Contact, URL* UN Division for Sustainable Development, New York; [www.un.org/dsd](http://www.un.org/dsd) and [www.un.org/esa/sustdev](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev). Each stakeholder group may put it on their website.

### **Procedural aspects**

**Designing the MSP** Done in consultation with stakeholder groups. NGOs' recommendations are the basis for the present design. The Secretariat presented it to the Bureau for agreement. Representatives of stakeholder groups (multi-stakeholder steering committee) before the first, second and third dialogues were involved in redesigning the process.

**Identifying the issues** The issues in the second multi-stakeholder dialogue (MSD) were defined by the stakeholders and agreed by the Bureau; the third was proposed by the Secretariat and comments by stakeholder groups; the fourth was defined by the Secretariat. In each case that means a broad description of issues but not the substance of subjects to be discussed. Generally, the Secretariat recommends to the Bureau.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** The Secretariat recommends to the Bureau - there is no consultation.

**Identifying participants** Participants are identified by the stakeholder groups under their own processes: NGOs through consultation, with criteria such as expertise, gender and regional balance; trade unions on the basis of case studies submitted and on gender and regional balance.

**Setting the goals** In the third MSD the chair and his staff took a role in facilitating a process of stakeholders developing the goals together. They tried to find common ground and to build on this to make the MSD move into concrete areas of action beyond the dialogue. For the fourth dialogue the chair looked at disagreements and that impacted on the possibility of moving forward together.

Prior to the dialogues there is considerable consultation with constituencies. For the third dialogues the NGOs discussed whether to agree (or not) to the proposed basic outcomes the day before the dialogues started. Trade unions set their goals through an international working party.

**Setting the agenda** The agenda is set by the Bureau and the chair and also depends on the approach the chair takes. For the third dialogue there was considerable consultation with the stakeholders. Some stakeholders regularly submit suggestions.

**Setting the timetable** The timetable is set by the UN (the General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS), 1997, defined the ultimate timetable and everyone has worked to this).

**Preparatory process** When the topics are agreed stakeholders consult within their constituencies to prepare. Stakeholders employ various mechanisms of drafting and redrafting. By November/December groups complete draft papers for peer review before handing them into the UN Secretariat in mid-January (dialogues are in April). The coordinating bodies monitor what is happening within stakeholder groups. There is limited monitoring by the CSD Secretariat. The NGOs put material out into the public domain but they are the only group to do so.

**Communication** Various channels of communication are used – mostly email. Telephone conferences are held regularly to update on preparation. There are one or two face-to-face meetings per year. Power gaps are addressed by giving each group the same number of seats, and for NGOs and trade unions there is some travel funding.

**Decision-making** This depends on the chair. At the second and third MSDs agreement was sought. At the fourth meeting the chair was looking at disagreements, although finding agreement depends on the dialogues that take place among the stakeholders themselves.

The process is mostly geared towards influencing the chair, which in turn will affect the subsequent negotiations, and influencing participating governments.

**Implementation** If no follow-up is sought in the CSD decision, the process concludes at the CSD meeting itself. The CSD decisions following the MSDs in 1998–2000 did set up ongoing processes to implement parts of the agreements. Agreements to do this were taken by governments and the requirement is to report back to them. Coordination is given to particular UN agencies. There are different views as to the progress of the follow-up processes.

**Closure** Closure is fixed in advance but processes carry on informally. MSDs often form the beginning of an informal process. MSD follow-ups as of CSD decisions have formal reporting back mechanisms.

## Structural aspects

**Institutional back-up** The CSD Secretariat facilitates the dialogues in consultation with stakeholder groups, but as these can change each year it puts the Secretariat in a strong position.

**Facilitation** The CSD Secretariat facilitates the interface between the stakeholders and the CSD Bureau. It facilitates the stakeholder preparations with each other and the dialogues themselves with the CSD chair. The Secretariat produces a UN document with the stakeholders' background papers and distributes it. The minutes from the Dialogue Sessions are taken by the Secretariat and produced into a chair's text. In many cases, the chair also has someone who shadows this.

**Documentation** The CSD chairs facilitate the dialogues. The summaries come out in their name, usually for the high-level ministerial meeting; if not, then for the negotiations the following week, which should draw on the chair's summary and the CSD intersessional meeting outcome.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** Information about the MSDs is available to other stakeholders if they are aware of the CSD information on the UN website and other websites of stakeholders and sometimes the chair. The CSD Secretariat also produces a printed newsletter.

**Relating to the general public** As above. The NGOs have open access to listen on the list servers preparing for the dialogues. The public cannot comment as it is a dialogue between stakeholder groups.

**Linkage into official decision-making** The MDS are linked to the official CSD process, through the high-level ministerial meeting and/or the negotiations the following week, which should draw on the chair's summary and the CSD intersessional meeting outcome. These linkage mechanisms are not transparent and there is no note to stakeholder groups or the chair - it depends on the Secretariat to tell them. This puts stakeholder groups who are new to the process into a disadvantageous position. Stakeholders can impact if they understand the timetable and work on the government members of the Bureau. For example, this happened for the third dialogue session only (1999) and was successful.

**Funding** The CSD Secretariat bears the costs; there is limited funding for stakeholders to attend the dialogues.

### **THE ENVIRONMENT COUNCIL/SHELL – BRENT SPAR PROJECT**

*Issues* How to dispose of an oil storage buoy that was provoking international attention and incidents.

*Objectives* To find a suitable disposal option and contractor to implement the decommissioning of the Brent Spar, an agreed decommissioning plan that all stakeholders could support; advising Shell on a decision they had to present to the UK Government.

*Participants* Central and local government, NGOs and pressure groups, ethics specialists, academics, technical experts and contractors, Shell staff.

*Scope* Regional: Europe-wide. UK Government decision.

*Time lines* November 1996–December 1997 (actual decommissioning finished on schedule January 2000).

*Contact, URL* The Environment Council, UK; [www.the-environment-council.org.uk](http://www.the-environment-council.org.uk)

*The 'Brent Spar Project' was Shell's constructive and participative approach following its dispute with Greenpeace in 1995. Convened by the EC, the company sat down with a large number of its stakeholders and worked through a stakeholder dialogue process which enabled a new recommendation for the fate of the Spar as a quay extension in Norway. (The Environment Council, 2001)*

*A real dialogue must be a two-way conversation. We must listen, engage and respond to our stakeholders. We will be judged by our actions rather than our fine words.* (Harry Roels, Shell Services International, Shell Report, 2000; [www.shell.com/royal-en/content](http://www.shell.com/royal-en/content))

## Procedural aspects

**Designing the MSP** Initially a professional facilitator (The Environment Council) designed the process in consultation with the project manager from Shell, talking closely to some other stakeholders. Once the process was started, the stakeholders fed back on both content and process and they too shaped the design.

The facilitator had tried the process out on Shell staff and some other stakeholders to make sure she was prepared and that the process was robust.

**Identifying the issues** The stakeholders were given free rein with the issues which were generated at the workshop, in small, facilitated groups.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** The Environment Council, through its experience of dialogue, identifies organizations and sometimes individuals, then asks the question 'Is there anybody not on our list that you think really should be?' The list stays open. The rule for the Brent Spar was that every person who attended the dialogue workshops needed to represent a 'constituency' to which they must report back and feed any constituency thoughts into the dialogue process. That way many more people were reached than were able physically to be there. In The Environment Council's experience participants often needed help when dealing with their constituencies.

**Identifying participants** If, when the stakeholders have been invited and a disproportionate number of one particular type – say, industry representatives – respond, then The Environment Council will actively chase stakeholders from other sectors to balance the numbers.

**Setting the goals** Content goals were not set. A question was posed. It was not 'Where do you want to decommission the Brent Spar?' but 'How can we decommission the Brent Spar in a way that all stakeholders can support?'

Often the funder (in this case Shell) has a need (to dispose of the Brent Spar), and the goal is to keep the question as broad as possible. Many thought Shell still wanted to 'dump', as they called it, because it

was the cheapest option. Funders need to be aware that goals are likely to develop – they are likely to hear things in the dialogue that make them want to change their goals when a quicker or less conflictual path becomes apparent. It is often something nobody has thought of before, because the ‘intelligence’ has never been brought together in this way before. This happened with the Brent Spar. It went from being a piece of waste that Shell had to dispose of to a highly valued bit of steel which a number of development projects would dearly have loved to acquire.

**Setting the agenda** The agenda in terms of process is set by the Core Group (in this case The Environment Council facilitator and Shell staff). In terms of substance, it is up to the participants. The outline is provided by the facilitators; participants provide the filling and therefore the kind of outcome.

**Setting the timetable** Facilitators had an idea of a timetable, but this was open to change.

**Preparatory process** Many papers, a CD-ROM and other user-friendly documents were produced and distributed to the stakeholders to help them decide if they wanted to be part of the dialogue process. Central records of all meetings are kept by the Project Coordinator at The Environment Council. This is usually in the form of photographic reports of meetings which are written on flip-chart paper.

**Communication** In the beginning, a lot of one-to-one telephone work is required to build the list of stakeholders. Then invitations and information are sent out, followed by joining instructions and finally the workshop. This was the first time that some had met, while others had met in confrontational situations such as on television news programmes. If there is high conflict there are facilitators to facilitate small groups. They ensure that voices are heard, and thoughts and values are translated into words on the flip-chart. It is an essential part of planning a process that people of all types are able to contribute towards. For those who have a problem talking in large plenary groups, there are smaller group exercises.

**Decision-making** Consensus was sought by asking appropriate questions and choosing appropriate techniques to ensure that there was a level of understanding among the participants, enabling them to make decisions based on technical information, and the values and needs of their constituencies. The facilitator designed this process and intervened to ask questions that aimed to get to consensus agreements. The key to this was to get the participants at workshops in London, Copenhagen, Holland and Germany to come up with criteria that any

proposed option should meet. Thus, if Shell chose a disposal option which met these criteria, the stakeholders would be happy.

**Implementation** Enabling the ‘right’ action/implementation was the goal of the dialogue. The potential contractors were well aware of that and at some points were involved in the dialogue.

**Closure** The process concluded when there was a final stakeholder workshop and the participants agreed that they were happy for Shell to make a final decision based on the criteria developed, and on specific pointers and concerns around each option that were highlighted at that workshop. The participants were asked to theoretically choose, in small groups, which option they would like. The difference in opinion was striking, and some groups strongly disliked the exercise. This demonstrated the difficulty in the decision-making process.

## Structural aspects

**Institutional back-up** The Environment Council managed the whole process and had many planning meetings with Shell to make sure that everyone was up to date and that the material going out was in plain English (not engineering speak), and so on. The Council also arranged events, invitations and venues. This was a highly political issue at the time, and Council’s coordinator and facilitator acted as ‘honest brokers’ at times with parties who had difficulty contributing to, understanding and/or trusting the process. Workshops were used to gain input from participants and to put dilemmas to participants, in order to inform Shell of stakeholder needs, and to inform stakeholders of Shell’s constraints in choosing options (there was, for example, a hole in the structure which made it unsafe).

**Facilitation** By The Environment Council.

**Documentation** Reporting was done verbatim from flip-charts and Post-it notes used at the events. Reports were also transcribed with nothing changed. Stakeholders could then share the outcomes of the workshops with their constituents to get their feedback and comment on the process. The reports were put on the web and made available to anybody in document form, too.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** The facilitator was constantly on call to all participants who felt they might have difficulty relating why they had made the decisions they did at the dialogue workshop. Sometimes a stakeholder may go back to their constituency and, after the learning experience of the workshop, have a different opinion from that held previously. The constituency has not had

this learning experience which might cause difficulty at this stage ('constituency drift').

**Relating to the general public** Schools packs were produced, a competition was set up to see who had good ideas for the decommissioning of the Brent Spar, a website and a CD-ROM were created, as well as many other forms of communication. The press were particularly interested in this project, so disseminating the decisions of the process was very easy (eg the *Six O'Clock News*).

**Linkage into official decision-making** Shell needed to present a recommendation to the Government. The Government could reject their recommendation, but since there was a wide range of stakeholder support for the final decision, this was highly unlikely. The UK Government welcomes processes that produce consensus between a wide range of stakeholders because it makes ministers' jobs easier - they know that no key stakeholder will object to the decision they make.

**Funding** Shell paid - on the polluter pays principle. Shell were definitely the problem holder, having had a flawed decision-making process the first time around. (Although it was not legally flawed, it was not a legitimate decision and the public would not let them implement it.) The process cost £450,000.

**Additional remarks** The Brent Spar episode is perceived by industry and government as a 'defining moment' in the relationship with environmental groups and the general public. It marked a shift towards seeking more open dialogue, and for campaigning groups it was a move towards solutions-oriented campaigning. In 1995, following a Greenpeace direct action campaign and Shell's subsequent decision not to use the ocean for disposing of the unwanted Brent Spar, pending further discussion regarding options, Greenpeace commented that it was to Shell's credit that it had had a sea change in its attitudes. Greenpeace analysed its own tactics following the 'Brent Spar experience' at their 'Brent Spar and After' conference in September 1996, trying to work out what the 'defining moment' meant in practice.

## **UN FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT HEARINGS (FfD)**

*Issues* Financing for development and sub-issues.

*Objectives* Informing FfD negotiations; identify viable proposals, innovative ideas, action-oriented suggestions for the FfD process.

*Participants* NGOs, business.



*Scope* International.

*Time lines* July–November 2000 (Hearings) – February 2001 2nd Prep-Comm (summary reports) – September 2001 (UNU book publication).

*Contact, URL* Financing for Development Coordinating Secretariat, New York; <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd>

## Procedural aspects

**Designing the MSP** The initial idea was sparked by a precedent: before the General Assembly (GA) decision on FfD, there were formal hearings in the GA 2nd Committee (in 1998–99). At the organizational 1st PrepComm, the Secretariat suggested modalities of civil society involvement in the process: dialogues (modelled after CSD dialogues) or hearings. Nobody pushed the CSD model because nobody was really familiar with it. There was also concern about the amount of resources required to run a dialogue process similar to CSD, and concerns about the burden put on delegates in terms of preparatory papers, and so on.

It is questionable if this is an MSP as hearings with NGOs and business were held separately.

**Identifying the issues** Issues were predefined as the issues of the FfD process, based on decisions by the GA and the FfD Bureau. Participants chose which of these issues they wanted to address.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** This was based on a broad definition of civil society by the FfD Bureau; included were NGOs (who included women), business, trade unions and academics.

**Identifying participants** Slightly different strategies were necessary to identify participants from the NGO and the business communities. The process started by identifying possible panellists via the following means, starting on July 2000:

- 1 contacting the network of NGOs (small at that time), mostly those who participated at the 1st PrepComm (ten NGOs);
- 2 sending information to relevant list serves; and
- 3 issuing personal invitations (20 to 35) to people identified by the Secretariat (DESA), UNDP, WB and the Non-governmental Liaison Service (NGLS).

People took some time to respond; by September 2000 there were few confirmations – a rather frantic time followed to find panellists

and alternates between September and November 2000. Potential participants were then required to submit outlines of their planned presentations. These were reviewed within the FfD Secretariat by the NGO Focal Point and colleagues knowledgeable on the various issues. Selection criteria were: critical approaches; innovative ideas; possible policy recommendations; balance by gender and region. The Secretariat made suggestions into which panel potential participants would fit. The decision was taken by the FfD Bureau.

**NGOs:** there were 23 panellists, including one trade union representative and one academic (of an initially longer list of academics), and women.

**Business:** achieving the goal of regional and gender balance was difficult, particularly because the process was supposed to be very open. Getting successful *and* available business representatives to participate is difficult (it is usually either/or). After submission of the first drafted list, the Bureau required that more developing countries' business representatives should be identified. In the end, only one North American business representative was present at the hearings. The process of identifying business people was more top-down than with the NGOs; there was more active search required. It was difficult to find interested business people (in the traditional sense) and people who would trigger ideas rather than make requests.

**Setting the goals** The goals were set by the 1st PrepComm, the FfD Bureau and Secretariat (making suggestions). The goals were to have a process as broad and as open as possible. The hearings organized by the GA in 1994 served as the model. No new organizational grounds were covered; hence the process was labelled a 'hearing'.

**Setting the agenda** The FfD Bureau set the agenda. The NGO format was that all panellists spoke, followed by questions and answers. In the business format, questions and answers occurred after each panellist's presentation.

**Setting the timetable** The initial idea was to invite both groups, NGOs and business, for the same dates. There was resistance from the business community towards that idea, so it was decided to hold the NGO and business hearings separately.

**Preparatory process** Participants were required to send their papers well in advance and about 50 per cent of them did so. It would have been better if more of the presentations had been circulated well in advance.

**Communication** Hearings were held as face-to-face meetings with questions and answers following the presentations. Room for discussion

was limited as some presentations were too long so that little time was left. As stakeholder groups did not participate at the same time (business and NGO hearings were separate), no dialogue took place between business and NGO representatives at the hearings. There are diverse views regarding government participation – some view it as little (with no real interaction), some as significant. The assessment also seems to depend on the respective issues being addressed. Some governments feel they do not need to enter discussions at the hearings as they perceive the process as an informative input into intergovernmental negotiations. The process did not have space for meta-communication (but some people said that would have been good).

**Decision-making** No agreement was sought; it was an informative process providing input into subsequent intergovernmental deliberations.

**Implementation** No implementation process is being sought at this point. Implementation will depend upon decisions coming out of the intergovernmental FfD process, to be finalized by March 2002.

**Closure** The FfD hearings were single events. However, most likely the process of civil society input is not over. There might be more, maybe at the international, maybe at regional levels. This will depend on decisions to be taken at the 2nd PrepComm and what requests it will generate towards the FfD Secretariat to organize further procedures of stakeholder involvement, such as round-tables on certain issues (for further exploration) or panels on issues where the documents are rather weak so far. The FfD Bureau is discussing the idea of a ‘task force on business’ which would aim to design a follow-up process with the private sector.

## Structural aspects

**Institutional back-up** UN DESA/Financing for Development Secretariat.

**Facilitation** The FfD process has a 15-member Bureau, with 2 co-chairs at ambassador level. The co-chairs alternated at hearings. The co-chairs and other Bureau members worked all week on these, starting Sunday morning with a four-hour briefing with participants, with Bureau members making presentations; then there were the hearings themselves followed by more events. This was viewed as very significant engagement and involvement of the governments present. The hearings also triggered increased NGO involvement (10 at the 1st PrepComm; 100 registered for the 2nd PrepComm by January 2001). In the FfD Secretariat, one person is working on this process (NGO Focal Point),

with help from a person in NGLS and from people within the Secretariat who are knowledgeable on certain issues, to help review submitted outlines of presentations.

**Documentation** The goal is to publish the hearings' outcomes as objectively as possible. Documentation is as follows: the FfD Secretariat produced two summaries of business and NGO hearings respectively, which were official reports to the 2nd PrepComm (not background papers, which was viewed as a success), translated into all UN languages. A UN university book publication is planned for September 2001, to make the material publicly available (targeting, for example, NGOs, academia) and to provide delegates. The book will be much more widely accessible than UN papers.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** Information is publicly available via the FfD website. NGOs have been disseminating information to their constituencies and networks. Feeding into the preparations of presentations was possible but dependent on the process of preparation chosen by the participants. There was more or less consultation, but it is difficult to assess as this information was not requested by the process.

**Relating to the general public** FfD website. Feeding into the process by the general public is difficult; interested people would need to get in touch with those already involved.

**Linkage into official decision-making** The hearings have been the starting point of bringing substance into the FfD process; the 1st PrepComm was only organizational. It is for government delegates to pick up what the summary reports offer (as is true for the Steering Group (SG) reports). It is up to the intergovernmental process to bring the initiatives together. People who judge the hearings as well attended them believe that the reports will be used. There was also sometimes a sense of complicity between G77 countries and NGOs, but it is not foreseeable how that will play out in the negotiations. NGOs have been organizing briefings to increase understanding of certain issues, especially for delegates; steps forward are possible and likely, but it does not depend only on the preparatory papers - negotiations are different.

**Funding** The hearings were funded out of the FfD Trust Fund and by Nordic country governments. The UNDP provided travel funding for three panellists, the FfD Secretariat for seven. The UK Government supported panellists' with a daily allowance and funded seven to eight NGOs to attend. Business representatives from developing countries were also funded (four to five people).

## GLOBAL REPORTING INITIATIVE (GRI)

*Issues* Developing consensus on a global framework for corporate environmental/sustainability reporting. Multi-stakeholder perspectives.

*Objectives* To develop and disseminate globally applicable sustainability reporting guidelines for voluntary use by organizations reporting on the economic, environmental and social dimensions of their activities, products and services. GRI is a long-term, multi-stakeholder, international undertaking, focused on the corporate sector, with possible extensions to other organization types in future, such as local municipalities, NGOs.

*Participants* The Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES); NGOs; accountants; business; international organizations such as UNEP.

*Scope* International/national. International processes may spark off national or local level MSPs.

*Time lines* Initiated in late 1997, ongoing, developing process.

*Contact details, URL:* [www.globalreporting.org](http://www.globalreporting.org)

### Procedural aspects

**Designing the MSP** The Coalition for Environmentally Responsible Economies (CERES), in collaboration with the Tellus Institute, convened the GRI in late 1997. (CERES is the coalition of environmentally concerned groups that sponsors the ten-point CERES principles.) The UNEP then joined as a key partner. Encouragement was given to others to become part of the process.

The GRI has two main components:

- 1 To develop a multi-stakeholder, global consultation process based on the principles of transparency and inclusiveness.
- 2 The development and dissemination of the GRI's Sustainability Reporting Guidelines.

The process for the initiative was fairly organic. Initially, an informal group of like-minded people developed the concept, then a more formal group was set up (also involving new individuals) as a Steering Committee (SC) to develop the Mission Statement. The SC has membership from 7 countries and 17 organizations and has guided the GRI to date. The statement was open to comment and change for others outside

the SC. Now it is fairly defined, although it is still open to change. The core principle is to allow anyone interested and committed to the process to participate, that is no stakeholder is being excluded. Also, if a party should decide not to participate, then they can still receive regular updates and reports on the process for purposes of transparency and openness.

The opportunity for GRI arose in response to rising expectations for greater corporate accountability, transparency and encouragement for more companies to move towards sustainability reporting (as opposed to just financial reports).

**Identifying the issues** CERES identified potential SC members to kick-start the process. The Steering Committee had the initial idea and then widened the discussion. GRI meetings were held in more than 15 countries – 35 countries have been involved so far. The GRI process developed through working groups, briefings, conferences and communications. The GRI's Sustainability Reporting Guidelines were released in a draft format in March 1999, and opened to comments and testing. The Revised Guidelines released in June 2000 were developed with the help of representatives from business, NGOs and governments across the world.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** The process of identification began informally, then through a more coordinated structure (SC). Alliances were built, eg John Elkington (SustainAbility), Roger Adams (from the UK Association of Chartered Certified Accountants – ACCA) and working groups and programmes developed. The SC meet quarterly and less frequent 'open meetings' are held to identify the focus of a working group, eg Social Development Indicators. Governments, NGOs, businesses, business associations, labour organizations and human rights groups are involved to date.

**Identifying participants** The GRI is open to all individuals and organizations interested in sustainability reporting. There is particular targeting of multinational corporations in this phase. The GRI clearly states that it will not enter formal alliances, partnerships or ventures with commercial firms. Altogether, 21 companies pilot tested the draft guidelines, published in 1999 – about half volunteered and the rest were recruited after the gaps became obvious. They were selected on the basis of various criteria, such as geographical balance, diversity in size, reporting experience, and so on. Many other stakeholders – corporate and non-corporate – provided feedback. Several companies have already published GRI reports.

**Setting the goals** The GRI Steering Group in partnership with stakeholders has guided developments so far. The vision aims to move, over time, from an informing process to one that brings together

disparate reporting initiatives into a new multi-stakeholder, global process, with ramifications for disclosure, investment and business responsibility. Set out in a mission statement (defined by the SC) and refined through ongoing dialogue and consultation (largely via the internet and email).

**Setting the agenda** The GRI in collaboration with stakeholders. An open process, so checking back is possible. Process in steps: stewardship (consolidation), tools (identification issues) to application (use and implementation). Set by the SC and open meeting.

**Setting the timetable** The process is ongoing. This band of activities will finish in 2002. The timing is led by the SC, the Secretariat and Transitions Director.

**Preparatory process** The GRI describe the process as intensive, multi-stakeholder and international. As well as from input from business and governments, the June 2000 release benefited from the thinking of labour organizations, human rights, environmental and investor groups. The GRI identifies initiatives, invites them into the process and tries to find common elements across the programmes. It optimizes the use of email, regional meetings and video conferences to ensure a top-down, bottom-up balance. It uses the internet for grass-roots and NGO monitoring and feedback. People are involved more in a personal capacity and less on behalf of organizations, so consultation is less relevant and anyone can be involved. However, where contentious issues arise people can go away and assess.

**Communication** Extensive use of electronic reporting to facilitate dialogue dissemination. Email, meetings, conferences, international symposia, for example Washington. The process seeks to be neutral as far as possible. Careful and strong chairing in a meeting is essential. The GRI offers an opportunity to NGOs to deliver their message to industry and government actors. The GRI view the process as one which enhances and disseminates the Guidelines through ongoing consultation and stakeholder engagement.

**Decision-making** Agreement is sought through working groups; careful wording and clarification of definitions is often necessary. Groups work by consensus, not by majority.

**Implementation** The Guidelines will be a useful resource for any company wishing to use them. They were described by Roger Adams of the ACCA as 'a major step towards a generally accepted, global framework for sustainability reporting' (DETR, 2001). The test of whether the GRI succeeds in improving the quality of company reporting will depend on the number of companies adopting the

Guidelines. The process is constantly redefined (this is an integral part of the GRI process) and redesigned through an iterative, open process (rather like software development – version 1.0, 2.0, and so on).

**Closure** The process is still in its early stages. The Guidelines will be further tested and refined. Work is to be done on strengthening and increasing stakeholder engagement. The SC decides with open meeting consultation.

## **Structural aspects**

**Institutional back-up** The SC, Secretariat, working groups, open forum (largely internet-based). The interim Steering Committee reflects the GRI's multidisciplinary and international dimension. Set up in early 1998 and currently based in Boston, US. Efforts are under way to build a permanent GRI institution, governed by a Board of Directors and involving multi-party technical and stakeholder groups to ensure the continuation of the GRI's core values of inclusiveness and transparency.

**Facilitation** The GRI Secretariat, in partnership with CERES (GRI base) and the UNEP. Offers research, meeting, drafting, coordination services.

**Documentation** There is extensive use of the (internet; reports, frameworks and so on are being produced – the first draft of the GRI Guidelines in 2000).

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** The June 2000 release of the GRI's Sustainability Reporting Guidelines attracted widespread attention. The Guidelines can be used by any relevant institutions and the UK Department of Trade and Industry for example, is currently seeking independent advice on the feasibility of their reporting against the Guidelines. The GRI is now working to strengthen stakeholder engagement and can receive information, comment and input at any opportunity.

**Relating to the general public** The GRI is not really a public forum but the process is open to comments from relevant individuals. Information is available via the internet. The GRI Guidelines provide reporters and users of reports with guidance on reporting principles and recommendations for report content. They also include indicators covering the 'triple bottom line' issues – environmental, social and economic issues – which will make it easier for users of reports, such as investors, to compare performance across organizations. Information is available through brochures, the internet, and the press.



**Linkage into official decision-making** The GRI is a voluntary initiative and a non-governmental process. The agreed principle initially was that government involvement at too early a stage could slow down the process and be potentially hazardous. Now, however, government interest is growing and the GRI is often consulted in other processes, the EU Disclosure guidelines, such as the OECD equivalent, by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), UNEP, GC, UN, ILO, and the High Commission for Human Rights. The GRI is assisting the processes of standard reporting.

**Funding** The GRI is funded mainly by foundations including the United Nations Foundation, Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, CS Mott Foundation, as well as Spencor T Oil (US), the US Environmental Protection Agency and one Danish funder (undeclared). A business plan to secure future growth is under way. Independence is an issue. The budget is around US\$3–4 million for the first three years. Requirements will grow to US\$4–5 million per year. The proposal in the future is to create a trust, ensuring transparency. Funders will have no control or influence over the distribution of their funds.

### **LOCAL AGENDA 21 PROCESSES A: COOPERATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE LOWER COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN**

*Issues* Urbanization, agricultural and forest practices, fisheries practices, economic development and navigation.

*Objectives* Informing and defining processes to create a community-based political counterpoint to a proposal from the United States Corps of Engineers to dredge the Columbia River channel from the Pacific Ocean to the Port of Portland, Oregon. To build on this issue a specific coalition to create an ongoing bi-state local community involvement strategy towards sustainable development of the lower Columbia River basin.

*Participants* The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of Sustainable Communities through the consultancy Sustainable Strategies & Solutions, Inc, the City of Astoria, Oregon, Port of Astoria, Astoria News, a variety of local governments from both Washington State and Oregon, including port districts, cities, counties, water districts and forestry districts, regional environmental NGOs, chambers of commerce, and the Governors' offices from both Washington and Oregon.

*Scope* The proposal involved national, state, regional (counties) and local authorities, and coastal communities on both shores of the final 150 miles of the Columbia River. It needed to bring together a variety of data centres and plans.

*Time lines:* Ongoing since mid-1999.

*Contact, URL:* Gary Lawrence, Sustainable Strategies and Solutions, Inc.  
Email: jgarylawrence1@home.com

## **Procedural aspects**

**Designing the MSP** The process in which a broader outreach was to be accomplished was designed by a team representing the City of Astoria, representatives of local economic development organizations and regional environmental NGOs, with assistance from the NOAA which provided a consultant. Advice was solicited from the media, the League of Women Voters and political party organizations.

**Identifying the issues** The catalysing issue, dredging the Columbia River channel, was proposed by the Port of Portland, agricultural interests in eastern Washington and Oregon, Idaho and Montana in conjunction with the US Corps of Engineers. A great oversimplification of the core issue was that it was a fight for survival in which fisheries' interests were pitted against agricultural interests.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** Some of the relevant stakeholders – local and state governments – were obvious. Many of the environmental and business stakeholders were identified through their participation in litigation and public information campaigns. Community organizations such as churches, welfare organizations and social clubs were identified through consultation with local newspapers and radio reporters. There is a continuing attempt to broaden the stakeholder base to include urban constituencies in major media markets.

**Identifying participants** It was left to each organization to choose their representative. Smaller organizations were offered assistance in organizing local meetings in case they wanted to appoint shared representatives. When particular participants, by personality or history, were perceived by other organizations to be barriers to progress, the consultant was asked to work with the organization to find a different representative. It was important that stakeholders' viewpoints were considered objectively, and some representatives had histories that made hearing their points of view difficult.

**Setting the goals** Goals were proposed by the instigating group (NOAA, Astoria, Columbia River Watershed Alliance) and changed or adjusted at the first and second organizing meeting. The group tried to function as a consensus organization, although 'mission creep', a gradual broadening of goals, was resisted in order to keep scarce resources and limited energy focused on the initial priorities. Participants were encouraged to check back with their constituents regularly. Some participants did not work well with their own constituents, and this was a problem. Also, some attempted to exercise veto power at critical junctures by declaring a need to check back even after there had been ample opportunity to get direction earlier.

**Setting the agenda** For the initial issue - proposals to dredge - the agenda and time lines were determined by the Corps of Engineers' submission of an application for review under the US National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). There is ample time under the review calendar of NEPA for those who follow the processes closely to check back *if* communications channels and communication coordination is established within the organization up front. A loosely run system in which reviewers feel no time pressure will not work. After failure to agree upon clear, outcome related goals, poor information management that does not establish personal responsibility or take into account different learning styles, is a fundamental barrier to success.

**Setting the timetable** The timetable was established by the initiating partners - Astoria et al - to ensure compliance with the legislatively established project review and comment requirements. Even the time line for legal appeals is covered in NEPA.

*Comment* It is often the case that stakeholder processes must be compressed in order to comply with legislatively mandated time limits, as frustrating as that can sometimes be.

**Preparatory process** The more formal dialogue (newsletters, and so on) was prepared by a consultant who listened to the informal dialogue within and among stakeholder groups and then fed back to the groups, in non-jargon language, what he interpreted to be the important issues. The stakeholders group did some editing and then approved the effort.

*Comment* To my knowledge, there is no programme to monitor for either faithfulness to the agreed dialogue or the effectiveness of the dialogue in educating the public. It is always a struggle when specific interests are trying to act like a group. Priorities, language, the need to satisfy constituencies, and so on, result in a lot of 'word-smithing' and, if one is not careful, it can render the dialogue meaningless.

**Communication** Within the smaller communities involved, communication is mostly face-to-face or through small, informal meetings. In

the larger communities and in the larger interest groups, the communication takes place through meetings, newsletters and the telephone.

There are significant differences in power. Federal and state governments have information, access and staying power that is unavailable to community organizations. The private sector has the ability to take its decisions more quickly and in private, contrary to the public meeting requirements of local government. The community organizations have the advantage of a 'presumption of good intentions' that makes it easy to question the statements and findings of government. In this case, the local governments, community organizations and local media are all in tune so that they can present forceful arguments through public media to individuals who count on the local constituency for re-election. The local communities, in this case, also have an advantage of federal and local law and regulation that gives them a standing in court when the legal process starts.

Populism is the predominant political ethic in the Pacific Northwest part of the US. Laws codify the rights of individuals to participate in governmental decision-making, and the public almost always bring the power of the public media to their side. This tends to reduce the willingness of elected officials to overuse their statutory authority. Community organizations, especially through environmental laws, can often stop or modify projects through their power to slow things down while, with the support of the media, taking the 'moral high-ground.'

**Decision-making** The efforts started by Astoria et al are intended to reach agreement among other compatible stakeholders so that no agreement is possible with the proposal to dredge the river channel. A steering committee of stakeholders is responsible for this area.

**Implementation** Not applicable at this time.

**Closure** It is likely that, as a result of lawsuits and legal appeals, elections, and so on, a final decision to dredge or not to dredge based on the current application will take a few years. Then, if the decision is not to dredge, the issue will come up again in a decade or so and the entire process will restart. Decisions not to do something are almost always revisited. Ultimately, the advantage goes to those organizations that have staying power.

## **Structural aspects**

**Institutional back-up** The stakeholders group has not been formulated as a legal organization. This effort is ad hoc and built upon a fragile trust rather than bylaws.

**Facilitation** Two members of the Astoria City Council facilitate the process. City Council members are elected to serve part-time on the assumption that their income will come from full-time jobs in the community. One member is director of an environmental stakeholder and another is involved with a local economic development organization. They use City of Astoria staff for meetings arrangement, mailings, etc – a common practice in the Pacific Northwest of the US.

**Documentation** The minutes from meetings are taken by different stakeholders on a rotating basis. Publications are produced by one of the local governments on a rotating basis.

*Comment* It is important that every stakeholder has an opportunity to be the recorder of decisions taken.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** Other stakeholders know about the process. Participants are all trying to extend their constituencies through this process. Most of the formal outreach comes through the editorial page of the regional newspaper and through solicitation of comments at public meetings. A more formal outreach process in a time-limited process with ad hoc stakeholder collaborations is difficult. In this particular case, the applicants for permission to dredge are required by law to have public meetings and public written comment periods. They are also required to record public comments and their responses. Ultimately, all of this is included as information for review if and when the project review moves to the courts.

*Comment* As always, the right to be heard does not result in any obligation to be heeded. The comments need to expose flaws in the environmental findings and proposed mitigation.

**Relating to the general public** Only what the newspaper and radio chooses to cover, statements recorded in public meetings, reports from meetings and word of mouth, is available to the public. Information is provided by all the stakeholders working off an agreed-upon focus document. There is no controlled comment requirement.

**Linkage into official decision-making** This entire MSP is driven by the notion that there is strength in collaboration when providing opposing views in a formal National Environmental Policy Act process. The US Army Corp of Engineers is the project applicant, along with freight, aluminium and agricultural interests, who see the river as a means of transport that gives the products a competitive cost advantage. The law prescribes formal input mechanisms. There are informal mechanisms, designed to affect the weighting that decision-makers give environmental considerations versus economic interests. The formal mechanisms are completely transparent. Informal mechanisms are as

transparent as either party cares to make them or as transparent as the media can make them.

**Funding** Funding comes from each stakeholder in support of their participation. In this case, local governments are subsidizing the participation of community-based organizations by paying for meeting rooms, supplying facilitators and producing publications.

*Comment* Unless there is some cost loading on organizations with taxing power and resources in place, most small NGOs will get left out.

## **LOCAL AGENDA 21 PROCESSES B: LOCAL AGENDA 21 (IN THE UK AND ELSEWHERE)**

*Issues* equity, strong partnership, community participation, improving people's quality of life; environment + social issues + economic issues = sustainability.

*Objectives* Partly awareness-raising/informing, partly planning; developing and implementing an action plan, based on shared visions, for local sustainable development.

*Participants* Local authorities, civic society, NGOs, community-based organisations, business and more

*Scope* Local/regional, sparked off by an international process.

*Time lines* Initiated Earth Summit 1992, ongoing.

*Contact* Jan McHarry, London, email: [jmcharry@earthsummit2002.org](mailto:jmcharry@earthsummit2002.org);  
Chris Church, London, email: [cjchurch@geo2.poptel.org.uk](mailto:cjchurch@geo2.poptel.org.uk)

### **Procedural aspects**

**Designing the MSP** The process has never been designed around a single template; as a result, 'a thousand flowers have bloomed'. Some have become genuine attempts at better community planning, others little more than environmental awareness exercises. The UK Local Government Management Board (now the Improvement and Development Agency) issued guidance - *Local Agenda 21: Principles and Process. A Step by Step Guide* (1994) - but this was not really about process design. In fact, virtue was made of the fact that all LA21s were going to be different, which is one of the problems for evaluation. The consultation procedures were often designed by people looking

upwards, rather than starting at the grass-roots, which was why much consultation did not break out of the traditional mould, did little to empower people or communities, but carried on the 'business as usual' approach.

The ICLEI has, over the years, run a variety of MSPs, such as the European Local Agenda 21 Round-table Programme. Stakeholder representatives are identified through networks, the ICLEI database and wide-ranging participation – from faith groups to business, from women to youth to local authorities. Participants are identified as 'experts' involved at the European level or concerned with urban sustainability. This can be a broad swathe of people – churches, elderly people, cyclists – depending on the issue. The round-table is essentially a brainstorming, with results now disseminated by the web (for economy and effectiveness). Usually the ICLEI tries to get the host city to make a declaration or recommendation.

**Identifying the issues** Local Agenda 21 is the process of developing local policies for sustainable development and building partnerships between local authorities and other sectors to implement them. It is a crucial part of the move towards sustainability. LA21 is a continuing process rather than a single activity, event or document. There is no single 'tick-list' of things you must do or cover for LA21. Instead, the process involves a range of activities, tools and approaches from which local partners, including the local authority, can choose according to local priorities and circumstances.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** The process varies enormously. Within two to three years of LA21 starting, information was available to guide anyone who wanted to have serious input from, and dialogue with a range of stakeholders, but many processes remained based within the local authority, relying on their mailing lists. The traditional way of involving people was to ask them to participate. The stakeholders were largely defined by LA21.

In their analysis of LA21s from around the world, the Women's Environment and Development Organizations (WEDO) state that the

*cases clearly demonstrated that to a large extent there has not been an explicit approach to gender in most countries as part of LA 21; however, they showed there is ample room for development of such an approach.*  
(WEDO, 2000)

The report goes on to identify barriers to women's participation and strategies to overcome them.

**Identifying MSP participants** Many local authority processes are initiated by asking 'known' people to attend a launch conference. Those that do have the opportunity become involved in further discussions, working groups, and so on; those that do not are often 'lost' to the process.

**Setting the goals** Set internationally by Agenda 21. There was some confusion as to whether LA21 was about community empowerment or about a programme of better environmental management. This lack of clarity about the purpose is not surprising given that LA21 was a fundamentally new approach to local development with no established procedures and it was not a statutory duty. The original aim, as set by Agenda 21, was a local plan for sustainable development that would focus on key issues, including poverty, health and livelihoods, as well as resource and environmental issues. Goals did develop and processes moved into a dialogue situation.

*Conflict – Consensus* The basic principles of LA21 call on councils to achieve 'a consensus' with their community. This led to increased interest in consensus and mediation techniques by councils, backed by active promotion from local government support organizations. However, many NGOs and community networks remain sceptical about consensus, seeing it as compromise by another name. A number of flawed or inconclusive exercises provide evidence to support this view, as does the way in which some authorities have set the frameworks for consensus-building exercises in ways which meant that areas of conflict have been concealed rather than openly discussed and resolved.

*Comment* Those who said it was a consensus-building process had not asked the right people to be involved. Very few Local Agenda 21s have done realistic or credible work on consensus-building, but that does mean that there has not been a substantial consensus.

*Evaluation* Right from the start, questions were asked as to what impact LA21 might have. This led to interest in local indicators to track progress. It is probably too late to evaluate LA21 successfully. Much of the very rich seam of material has probably been discarded or 'fallen down the back of filing cabinets'. In 1997, some NGOs supported the '3 Ps' model which poses insightful questions (Church, 1997):

*Process* Has the process of consultation been designed to ensure that all stakeholders had a genuine opportunity to take part and have an input?

*Projects* Are things actually happening in the locality as a result of the LA21 process?

*Policies* Are the policies of local authorities and other affected bodies changing as a result of the LA21 process in ways that support moves towards sustainable development?



Participants have had endless opportunities to check back with their constituencies, but there are real questions as to whether this ever happened as effectively as it might. People within working groups tend to become members of that group, rather than representatives of an organization. If they checked back, they tended to do it with the organization they had come from, rather than with their broader constituency. People don't know how to do this properly, and often end up representing an artificially large constituency - an environmental group might represent the community sector (where in a large city they could be faced with contacting several hundred groups they have no knowledge of).

*Legitimacy issue* NGOs and councils frequently claim to speak for local people, but often there is little legitimacy for this claim. Some NGOs may represent the broad long-term interests of local people, but claims by participative groups to be representatives for specific communities are often founded on nothing more than wishes and anecdotal evidence. The most positive approaches are where each viewpoint has acknowledged the other and has agreed on the need to link these different processes in a well-defined and transparent manner. Dialogue like this takes time to build.

Community empowerment has to be a precursor to more issue-focused work if that work is to be sustainable over the long term. Much local action is only effective up to a certain point, after which institutional and political problems prevent it from achieving its full potential.

**Setting the agenda** The best LA21s were open processes using the initial stages to see what expertise people had and what they wanted to do. This was how many processes changed from being purely environmental initiatives. For example, the issue of equalities arose early in the London Borough of Redbridge's process and it has developed into one of the few LA21s with a meaningful statement and subsequent action on this.

**Setting the timetable** Timetables are usually set by the local authority, and lately have been set to coincide with the revised target of having an LA21 strategy in place by the end of 2000. The ICLEI is coordinating local government preparations and input into the Earth Summit 2002. One element is a worldwide survey of LA21 in practice (in association with UN CSD Capacity21/UNDP).

**Preparatory process** A multitude of approaches, but the standard technique is to have an initial conference, the use of working groups and some kind of cross-sectoral body monitoring it all. This might be a steering group or, in the case of Redbridge, an ongoing panel which represents all sectors, rather than individual issues. Many programmes, when questioned about what they might do differently on this issue,

reply that they would make more strenuous efforts to widen the steering group to involve other key organizations so that ownership, representation and the platform for action is widened.

In many LA21s the involvement of various sectors – notably business or an institution such as an education authority – has tailed off as the process has got under way. Stages can be described, therefore, as a public participation exercise, agreeing a more detailed vision, and specific actions plans in response to the needs identified. This process can take two to four years for trust building and partnership to evolve. A frequent comment is that the participation work always takes more time and persistence than originally expected.

*Creating better dialogue* round-table format (as defined by the Canadian experience), not one-off meetings; composed of senior representatives of government, business and environmental interests; active at a range of scales; non-hierarchical and meeting on terms of equality, so as not to be ‘owned’ or dominated by any one partner.

*Strong partnerships* Experience from the ICLEI member, Puerto Princesa City, the Philippines, demonstrates that even communities that have suffered severe environmental degradation in the name of economic development can reverse the trend and become a role model for sustainable development, as long as a strong partnership is developed between the local government and its citizens. People power made a difference. While the Puerto Princesa Watch originated as a special task force unit under the office of the mayor, it grew eventually into a multisectoral movement that involved the air and police force and joined forces with civilian volunteers to apprehend perpetrators of marine and forest-related crimes. Among the lessons learned for smooth process and programme implementation is the need for strong political will coupled with broad-based support from all key sectors.

**Communication** Primarily face-to-face contact, meetings, newsletters, publications and events. There is less reliance on electronic means (due to the time-frame when LA21 was initiated), but this is picking up now. A mixture of participation routes works better than one medium; together they provide a mixture of credibility and creativity. Other tools for creating involvement include visioning, planning for real, village appraisals and parish maps. The better designed processes had independent facilitation, especially for external meetings. The spirit of LA21 initiatives has ranged from ‘can do’ to ‘must do’, depending on the local authority person coordinating it. This is a key point for most of the LA21 processes – the professional involved does an enormous amount to ‘shape’ the atmosphere of it. This is something that needs to be explored in more detail as success depends on it. Identical processes in different boroughs and neighbouring towns can have

hugely different rates of success which is often down to just one key person. Power gaps exist by the very nature of the process. Recent evaluations suggest that in very few places have the power relationships changed as a result of LA21 (Young and Church, 2000).

*Participation – representation question* With any interest in participation comes concern from those in authority about real or imagined loss of power (Abbot, 1996).

In many cases the total failure of MSPs to involve different disciplines is a significant failure. They are clearly more democratic than authorities simply, saying ‘This is what we are going to do’. As a lesson in democracy, LA21 has been very good at mobilizing white, educated middle-classes. Its nature – jargon-laden, with lots of meetings taking place in people’s relatively rare spare time, and a requirement (to be effective) of knowing how local authorities work – leads it to people who are well educated, employed and so on. This issue lies at the bottom of most LA21 problems – and is exploited by chief executives who label them as ‘middle-class chatter-shops’, which is unfortunate as it ignores some of the very good work that has been done.

There are numerous opportunities to review issues and often an annual conference is used.

**Decision-making** Often sketchy and ill-thought-out; relatively few LA21s had coordinated ‘ground rules’. They might have a day where a facilitator who had been brought into the process stressed the need for ‘ground rules’, but on many occasions they have been forgotten by the next committee meeting (because people are human).

**Implementation** A classic case is if one sector leads an MSP, all the other sectors look to it to implement the results rather than taking on ownership themselves. This occurs partly as a result of the big power gaps because local authorities have a huge role as guardians/stewards of the local environment. One internationally recognized example of LA21 implementation is the MAMA-86 Drinking Water Project in the Ukraine which brought together community activists from different parts of the country, representatives of other stakeholder groups and government officials to facilitate an integrated approach to discussions on water quality and its impact on health. Communication work on these issues and public participation underpin their work. MAMA-86 (a grass-roots NGO set up after the Chernobyl disaster) uses international forums/agreements (events associated with Agenda 21, the WHO Conference on Environment and Health, the CSD among others) to publicize its work. It believes that this tactic increases the role of NGOs and major stakeholders and the possibilities for cooperation with foreign partners in the implementation of Agenda 21.

**Closure** LA21 was never intended to be a process with an indefinite future: Chapter 28 of Agenda 21 set an initial target of 1996 for the production of plans. The UK has a revised target of 2000. Some plans are still ongoing and evolving with a new agenda to 'mainstream' sustainable development; some closed; some just collapsed and died when a local authority withdrew funding, or LA21 staff posts were not filled, or there was a lack of political commitment, or when something else came along to grab attention, such as Community Planning (part of the modernization of UK local government). Note that many of the innovative tools under development to assure greater democracy have been used by LA21 initiatives previously. It has been suggested that LA21 practitioners should be happy to stand back and not insist on taking credit for their own innovations (Christie, 1999).

*Comment* It is difficult to think of LA21s that have just ended (Manchester pulled the plug when NGOs walked out). Other local authorities, like Gloucester, have handed over the responsibility for running the process to an external body (this could be seen as devolving ownership but cynics also say that it relieves the authority of responsibility if the process goes wrong).

## **Structural aspects**

**Institutional back-up/facilitation** Local authorities often assume overall facilitation and an enabling role.

**Documentation** Varying ways and levels of reporting.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders and the general public** Other stakeholders do know about the process because theoretically it is open to anyone. The lack of people 'buying in' to LA21, the lack of publicity and comprehension by the media meant that it became hard to get publicity out. LA21 is full of jargon - it doesn't 'speak' the language of people on the street. Most processes have not engaged people; LA21 is seen as something designed to empower the middle classes. But the best processes have set targets for public awareness and made all efforts to reach out to different stakeholder groups, often the traditionally hard to reach. Specific areas of concern have been the under-involvement of black and ethnic minority communities, poorer or disadvantaged communities, youth and the aged. 'Non-involvement of such groups is a common failing of participative processes that have developed with little forward planning or policy' (Taylor, 1995). Strengthening civil society can be seen as a process of building social capital, of building confidence and trust between citizens and institutions. This is extremely relevant to local councils

which are often mistrusted by their local populations. Much work done through LA21 processes directly relates to building social capital.

Using mass media to convey messages is far more effective than other means. Many far-reaching claims have been made for LA21 processes, but there is no doubt that

*tens of thousands of people have taken part in a process that developed both their environmental awareness and their perceptions of how such issues are related to broader social issues. In the best cases, there has been capacity and confidence building, and the creation of new local structures that seem to be self-sustaining . . . LA21 has opened up new ways of working nationally, locally and even globally: what is less clear is how far it has helped deliver the key objectives of Agenda 21.*  
(Church, 2000)

**Linkage into official decision-making** The LA21 MSP is not clearly linked to an official decision-making process, so as a non-mandatory process it is all the more remarkable that it has gone so far. But as a non-mandatory process, there is a question as to how much it will deliver. Perhaps its influence on other processes will be a more important and lasting legacy. While many individual LA21 initiatives have been disappointing in their failure to deliver what was expected, some extremely good work has been done and the best initiatives have certainly provided very valuable information on how sustainable development can be taken forward at the local level.

**Funding** There are different funding arrangements, depending on the situation. This is mainly under the control of local authorities which, as facilitators, have an ongoing role in initiating, running and implementing LA21 processes.

## Additional Information

The ICLEI is involved in a number of MSP-related projects:

- 1 One very specific project, a region in Germany where ICLEI representatives go to assist; ongoing, it will last two to three years. There is no evaluating work to date.
- 2 Evaluation of Local Agenda 21 in Europe: the Local Authorities' Self-assessment of Local Agenda 21 (LASALA) Project will provide an overview of what is going on in Europe and will help LA21s to self-assess their actions; it also offers training on the internet.

- 3 Research is under way on a number of issues to discover facts and conditions and prerequisites for urban sustainability, and to see how LA21 can contribute to employment action plans.
- 4 Round-table formats, consisting of dialogue between stakeholders.

All these programmes aim, on different levels, to engender urban sustainability and action plans. International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) website: [www.iclei.org](http://www.iclei.org).

### **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER DIALOGUE SESSION AT THE 8TH INFORMAL ENVIRONMENT MINISTERS' MEETING, BERGEN, NORWAY**

*Issues* water for basic needs; energy for a sustainable future; multi-stakeholder participation.

*Objectives* To facilitate a multi-stakeholder input and dialogue with ministers, with a view ahead to 2002, in order to inform ministerial deliberations.

*Participants* Environment ministers (worldwide); high-ranking UN officials; leading civil society representatives (local government, trade unions, women, business and industry, Indigenous Peoples)

*Scope* International.

*Time lines* 15 September 2000 (six months' project: five months' preparations, reporting one month).

*Contact, URL* UNED Forum, London; [www.earthsummit2002.org/es/2002/bergen/bergen.pdf](http://www.earthsummit2002.org/es/2002/bergen/bergen.pdf). Ministry for Environment, Government of Norway; <http://odin.dep.no/md/engelsk>

### **Procedural aspects**

**Designing the MSP** The initiative to incorporate an MSP into the usually closed ministerial meeting came from the Norwegian Government which decided that it might advance participatory discussions at the international level. UNED Forum was invited to coordinate the three-hour dialogue session. It was the first time that civil society participation had been allowed at this annual meeting.

**Identifying the issues** The major issues - water and energy - were among the issues on the agenda of the ministerial meeting. The Steering

Committee, working with stakeholders, chose to focus on water and energy for strategic reasons, given that the target audience was ministers. The Steering Committee identified the overarching theme and topics for dialogue according to the following criteria. It should be:

- Manageable in 90 minutes and be cross-sectoral.
- Relevant to each of the stakeholders with potential for common ground and collaboration.
- Relevant to issues on the agenda for CSD-9 or the Earth Summit 2002 process.

Specific topics and sector viewpoints were decided by participating groups in the preparatory process. Umbrella organizations represented business, local government, trade unions, NGOs, Indigenous Peoples and women.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** The UNED Forum working with umbrella organizations via their own networks, contact and experience. Major groups approved for this meeting were limited to:

- Business and industry – coordinated by International Chamber of Commerce and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development;
- Trade Unions – International Federation of Free Trade Unions;
- Local Government – International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives; and
- NGO Group – coordinated by UNED (NGOs), CSD Women’s Caucus, and CSD Indigenous Peoples Caucus.

**Identifying participants** The UNED Forum and umbrella organizations via their networks and expertise. The numbers were limited due to the nature of the event and the time-frame for dialogue (a three-hour session).

**Setting the goals** The dialogue with ministers was perceived as being a useful background and complementing forthcoming preparations for other international policy processes, such as the International Freshwater Review Conference 2001; energy at CSD-9 (also with multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions); Earth Summit 2002.

**Setting the agenda** A Steering Group according to the criteria mentioned above.

**Setting the timetable** Set by the schedule drawn up by ministerial meeting.

**Preparatory process** A one-off event, allowing about five months for preparations. A thorough preparatory process involving a range of civil society groups from all regions. Once the overall themes had been chosen, they were narrowed down further. They were carefully framed to provide a focus for a short dialogue to be cross-cutting and inclusive in scope so that each stakeholder group could make a positive contribution. A common methodological framework was agreed for writing the background papers, allowing for a useful comparison of the positions of each group. (Business and industry diverged from this, with agreement.) Papers were prepared in consultation within stakeholder groups. NGOs were to absorb the input from women and Indigenous Peoples. However, the time lines were too short for Indigenous Peoples to conduct a consultation within their constituency. However, they participated at the dialogue itself. A comparative summary of the different papers was prepared (in table format) highlighting areas of divergence and convergence. This and background papers went to all the participants before the meeting. The participants reported back that they had found the preparatory process a valuable cooperative learning experience of working with other stakeholder groups. The summary tables clearly demonstrated that there were several points of convergence between the groups. UNED reports that, given a longer preparatory process, areas of convergence and conflict highlighted in the papers could have been explored more substantially. Stakeholders – as potential agents of change – have a responsibility to continue this dialogue and to explore the common ground.

**Communication** During the preparatory phase via telephone conferences and email, the dialogue was a face-to-face meeting. Energy was addressed in the first half, followed by water. Sessions opened with brief presentations from civil society (business, trade union, local government, and NGO perspectives). Both women and Indigenous Peoples participated as well. Following civil society presentations, the proceedings were opened up to the ministers and other delegates. Discussion was lively as ministers were able to speak and participate without the need to reach a formulated outcome. They also sought input from civil society representatives as to what government strategies needed to be adopted to address the issues. It was an attempt at open and genuine dialogue and ministers were enthusiastic about the process. ‘This has strengthened my view that interactive debate should be the way’ (Siri Bjerke, 2000). There was particular interest by delegates from countries without a strong civil society presence.

**Decision-making** No formalized outcome was expected. The proceedings were more ‘preparing the ground’ and seeding topics for further discussion at relevant upcoming international meetings.



**Implementation** No implementation process was aimed at.

**Closure** A single event, but ramifications will ripple through to future discussions and agreements at ministerial level.

## Structural aspects

**Institutional back-up** Steering Committee membership consisted of representatives from each of the participating stakeholder groups who hold appointed or elected coordinating positions within their groups.

**Facilitation** UNED provided preparatory material for telephone conferences and email discussions in the preparatory process. The dialogue was co-chaired by the Environment Minister of Norway, Siri Bjerke, and UNED Forum Chair Derek Osborn.

**Documentation** Background papers and results are available at [www.earthsummit2002.org](http://www.earthsummit2002.org).

While the remainder of the ministers session was closed, conclusions taken from the chairpersons' reports were taken by UNED, written up overnight on consultation with stakeholder representatives and present and distributed to all ministers the next day.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** UNED disseminated information about the process during the preparatory phase. Participating stakeholder groups were agreed with the Norwegian Government and numbers were limited from their side.

**Relating to the general public** It was a specific and specialized debate. Information is available on the web. There was press coverage in Norwegian daily newspapers.

**Linkage into official decision-making** Not directly linked at this stage. Stakeholders urged ministers to consider how the process of stakeholder engagement at international meetings can be developed into a recognized, transparent mechanism which links into decision-making. This is of specific importance in the run-up to 2002 where openness and transparency depend, to some extent, on whether adequate time and resources for meaningful participation have been allocated.

**Funding** The Norwegian Government paid for the preparatory process and stakeholder representatives attending the meeting.

## NOVARTIS FORUM EVENTS

*Issues* Acceptance of GMOs (genetically modified plants for food production) in Germany (1997-1999; in 2000 the focus shifted to healthcare issues around ageing).

*Objectives* To create a platform for informed debate and to demonstrate the company's willingness to listen to stakeholders.

*Participants* Environmental NGOs, consumer groups, ethical and religious institutions, politicians, administrators, scientists, communications consultants, trade unions, representatives from different industries (all relevant to the issue), the media.

*Scope* National.

*Time lines* annual event since 1997, 1.5 days each.

*Contact, URL* Novartis Germany (contact Martina Bauer), [www.de.novartis.com](http://www.novartis.com); Novartis International (contact Andreas Seiter), [www.novartis.com](http://www.novartis.com)

## Procedural aspects

**Designing the MSP** Designed by the company, Novartis Germany (communications department) together with consultants.

**Identifying the issues** Defined by the company (related to Novartis' technology and products).

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** Novartis, in consultation with stakeholder groups.

**Identifying participants** Novartis either knew the relevant people (eg GMO expert in trade union) or asked stakeholder groups for advice ('Who in your institution is the expert on GMOs?').

**Setting the goals** There were no specific goals for the event which required agreement. The focus was on mutual listening and learning. A mix of presentations and discussion (panel, panel and full audience, group discussions). There were no company presentations; Novartis was in a listening role.

**Setting the agenda and timetable** The agenda was set by Novartis, consultants and speakers/chairpersons of the panel discussions.

**Preparatory process** Thorough pre-discussions between consultants, designated speakers and Novartis.

**Communication** The event started with presentations (different viewpoints on the issue), discussion, break-out groups. The evening was free to allow for informal discussions (a very important aspect). There was no formal meta-communication, but plenty of informal. There was a chance to talk to people who usually are not easily accessible.

**Decision-making** In discussions, one goal was to identify agreements and disagreements (Where do we need more debate?), but no formal agreement was sought on anything.

**Implementation** There was no formal implementation; experience shows that participants tend to return the invitation if they organize dialogue events – the debate continues, proceeds faster and smoother as before.

**Closure** An open process, ongoing but adapting to the current issues; it focused on (potential) conflict areas between the company and society.

## Structural aspects

**Institutional back-up** Provided by Novartis; consultants helped to approach speakers or identify important stakeholder representatives and to assist in briefing speakers.

**Facilitation** Provided by Novartis. The moderation of the event was shared between a senior company executive and an outside chairperson. Journalists typically acted as facilitators of workshops.

**Documentation** The company puts together a written report and sends it to the participants and everybody else who want to be informed.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** Only by word of mouth; the event is not widely announced. Experience shows that several people register spontaneously without being invited.

**Relating to the general public** There was no direct link with the meeting, but journalists are always present who are encouraged to write about it.

**Linkage with official decision-making** There was no formal link with the decision-making process.

**Funding** Entirely funded by Novartis.

## OECD/BIOTECHNOLOGY

### **The OECD Edinburgh Conference on the scientific and health aspects of genetically modified foods (2000)/OECD consultation with non-governmental organizations on biotechnology and other aspects of food safety (1999)**

*Issues* The scientific and health aspects of GM food.

*Objectives* To bring together a diverse group of participants for a constructive dialogue on the safety of GM food.

*Participants* Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); governments; industry; scientists; civil society organizations such as Greenpeace International, Friends of the Earth, GeneWatch; consumer groups.

*Scope* International/national.

*Time lines* OECD Conference, 2000; OECD first NGO consultation process 1999.

*Contact, URL* OECD, Paris; [www.oecd.org/subject/biotech/edinburgh.htm](http://www.oecd.org/subject/biotech/edinburgh.htm) and [www.oecd.org/subject/biotech/ngoconsultation.htm](http://www.oecd.org/subject/biotech/ngoconsultation.htm)

### **Procedural aspects**

**Designing the MSP** 1999: Consultation process initiated by OECD with over 50 invited NGOs with the purpose of hearing/understanding their views.

2000: OECD Conference, hosted by UK Government as part of an ongoing programme of work at the OECD on biotechnology.

NGOs did not have input into the conference planning process. However, it is possible that the 1999 consultation impacted the design of the conference.

**Identifying the issues** The initiative arose out of a request from the G8 Heads of State and Government that the OECD 'undertake a study of the implications of biotechnology and other aspects of food safety' (G8 Summit, Cologne, June 1999). The conference focus was GM food safety and human health. There was discussion of the science (including social science of consumer attitudes) with agreement from the chair, Sir John Krebs (Professor of Zoology, Oxford University and Chair

Designate of the future UK Food Standards Agency) that other 'non-scientific issues eg values and beliefs' should not be excluded from the debate.

From an NGO perspective, it appeared that the government felt it needed to constrain the dialogue to health. The debate was then constrained by the fact that unless evidence was peer-reviewed, issues could not be raised. Therefore, scientists who had peer-reviewed work were able to dominate and much of that benefited biotechnology.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** The OECD Directorate for Science, Technology and Industry (DSTI) responded to concerns of the OECD Council and the Secretary-General that 'communication with the public and representatives of the many concerned elements of civil society is crucial to promoting progress in the fields of biotechnology and food safety'. Civil society participants included scientists, business, industry, agriculture, labour, consumer groups and a few environmental organizations, plus a number of representatives from developing countries.

**Identifying participants** The conference was attended by approximately 400 invitees from more than 25 countries. The aim was to be inclusive, to encourage a wide diversity of views both on the platform and in the audience. NGOs included Greenpeace International, Friends of the Earth, GeneWatch, Soil Association, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. There were also health professionals but no opportunities to overlap.

**Setting the goals** The purpose of the three-day event was to bring together a diverse group of participants for 'a constructive dialogue on the safety of GM food', with an emphasis on the underlying science and on human health.

**Setting the agenda** The OECD set the agenda.

**Setting the timetable** The OECD set the timetable in response to the request from the G8 Industrialized Countries' Heads of State and Government (1999) and OECD mandates.

**Communication** A one-off event which was in conference format with short introductory presentations to each section. Panel members then offered their comments before the discussion was opened to the audience. There was, however, an informal segment during the event which would have allowed for a mixing of the different groups and more side-line discussions.

It was NGOs' view that the format – a large conference hall with no possibility of clusters/sector groupings – was not appropriate. There was very little evidence of MSP dialogue – it was more a 'showpiece'

event. With an 80/20 ratio of pro/con participations, there was no real cause for concern. Others said that the speakers and panellists were, in approximately equal numbers, proponents of GM, opponents, and those who were neutral. Presenters came from a wide range of developed and developing countries; they were primarily scientists, regulators, NGOs and industry representatives. It was recognized that the debate needs to become more open, transparent and inclusive.

The conference organizers perceived that there was a strong sense of the need to rebuild trust between the various actors, particularly governments, industry, scientists, regulatory agencies and the public.

Industry commented that at an unofficial side event organized by a Scottish environmentalist group, the debate was more informal and addressed more of the fundamental philosophical issues; the impression was that this was a step towards overcoming the usual hostilities.

NGOs were not happy with the process, described as a 'complete abuse' of what an MSP ought to be, compared with other events like the World Conservation Congress. NGOs said they would not participate in this kind of set-up again. The view of some industry representatives was that some activist groups were not happy with the format because it did not work in their favour; they had problems in responding to the chair's repeated explicit invitation to support their anti-GMO claims with evidence, whether it was scientific or anecdotal. This made them look stupid so that even the press reacted negatively at the Greenpeace press conference. Industry also commented that there was a deserved degree of discomfort among some people who tried to stick to their preapproved corporate speak in a setting which would have required a more open, flexible approach. There were interesting internal discussions on the industry side.

**Decision-making** The conference did not aim at consensus, rather it identified 'areas of greater agreement, of divergence of opinion, and of uncertainty due to lack of knowledge'. The chair's report suggested that 'the most significant aspect of the Edinburgh conference was that it included all sides of the debate surrounding GM foods and nevertheless identified certain areas of agreement . . . It also succeeded in separating out issues which are subject to scientific analysis and those which are related to political factors, beliefs and values' (OECD, 2000).

**Implementation** No implementation process aimed at.

**Closure** There was support for continuing the process to deal with other parts of the debate. The chair recommended that an international forum be created. One possible model is that of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) which informs but does not make policy and acknowledges minority scientific views. The IPCC reports,

however, come under the scrutiny of governments before publication. For a similar process on GMOs, wider stakeholder involvement and a global scope would be required.

## Structural aspects

**Institutional back-up** The OECD as Secretariat and in a facilitating role.

**Facilitation** The OECD; facilitation of panel discussions by conference chair.

**Documentation** The OECD summarized and produced a report on the findings. It states clearly that, unlike other OECD reports, these outcomes do not necessarily represent the official views of member governments; instead, they 'reflect broader and sometimes conflicting views of civil society, indicate areas of agreement and disagreement, and attempt to show a way forward towards resolving some of the controversies raised by genetically modified foods' (OECD, 2000). The report was published in hard copy and electronically.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** Participation was by invitation only.

**Relating to the general public** The reports are available on the OECD website. The proceedings acknowledged the need for trust building. 'The general public - consumers and citizens - not only have a right to know, but they also have valid points of view, which need to be effectively voiced, understood and given weight in the decision-making and policy making process. A range of good practice examples were put forward for public engagement' (OECD, 2000).

**Linkage into official decision-making** Linkage arose from an official request from G8 leaders; the linkage of outcomes into decision-making is unclear - it is an informative process. It will be up to governments to use the conference report.

**Funding** The conference was hosted and funded by the UK Government. The NGO consultation meeting (1999) was hosted by the OECD.

**PROCESSES FOR DEVELOPING NATIONAL STRATEGIES ON  
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, A: NATIONAL STRATEGIES  
FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (NSSD)**

**Donor – Developing Country Dialogues on  
National Strategies for Sustainable Development**

*Issues* National strategic planning for sustainable development, participatory dialogues.

*Objectives* To improve international understanding of the key challenges involved in developing and implementing NSSDs, and examine, through good practice examples, how donors can best assist developing countries in such processes.

*Participants* OECD/Development Assistance Committee (DAC), UK Department for International Development (DFID), European Commission, IIED, pilot countries and communities.

*Scope* international/national multi-donor initiative.

*Time lines* Phase 1, October 1999; Phase 4, February 2001.

*Contact, URL* [www.nssd.net](http://www.nssd.net)

**Procedural aspects**

**Designing the MSP** Building on previous discussions and agreements made by the OECD/DAC to review good practice to inform donors assisting developing countries, the IIED was approached in 1998 to coordinate and manage the overall project and provide technical support. The project is a collective effort of all the participants (developing countries and donors). The IIED has been coordinating, providing guidance and support, and assisting with analysis and synthesis. Country-based teams organized and facilitated the country dialogues on NSSDs with a view to documenting experiences, lessons learned and the effectiveness of NSSD approaches. The project focuses on the kinds of processes and conditions required to make NSSDs work in practice.

A scoping workshop was held in the UK in 1998 to help shape the project and a Task Force, led by the DFID and the European Commission, was established.

Participating countries: Bolivia; Burkina Faso; Nepal; Tanzania; Thailand. Three other 'parallel learning countries' – Ghana, Pakistan, Namibia – are participating through targeted reviews.



**Identifying the issues** In May 1999, DAC endorsed the definition of an NSSD as 'a strategic and participatory process of analysis, debate, capacity strengthening, planning and action towards sustainable development'.

NSSDs are therefore processes or mechanisms which enable better communication and informed debate among stakeholders; they seek to build consensus where possible and to facilitate better ways of working, leading to more effective action in planning for sustainability. An NSSD need not be something new.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** Stakeholders: government, private sector, civil society.

**Identifying MSP participants** There were different procedures in different countries, depending on the circumstances, which aimed to allow input from all stakeholders. Country dialogues were implemented by country/regional institutions. More information was provided as [www.nssd.net](http://www.nssd.net).

**Setting the goals** Set by the OECD/DAC - to develop a practical guidance and a source book for development cooperation on national strategies for sustainable development.

**Setting the timetable** The international timetable arose from the Programme of Action for the further implementation of Agenda 21 at the Special Session of the General Assembly (Earth Summit 11) in New York in 1997. This document states that 'by the year 2002 national strategies for sustainable development that reflect contributions and responsibilities of all interested parties should be completed in all countries' and that 'Local Agenda 21 and other sustainable development programmes should be actively encouraged'. The OECD/DAC set a further target of 2005 for NSSDs to be in the process of implementation. The timetable for the project was agreed by the participants (developing countries and donors). They viewed it as important to get the policy guidance before aid ministers at the DAC high-level meeting in April 2001 for endorsement, so that the DAC could use the guidance to lever a renewed focus on strategies and seek convergence around the principles in the guidance. Otherwise another year would have been lost (the high-level meeting only takes place once a year).

**Preparatory process** Five dialogues were held at the country level. One regional dialogue, in the Sahel, was planned but was not undertaken as it was found to be too complex in the available time-frame. Instead, there was more in-depth focus in the five dialogue countries. Each dialogue was implemented by a country or regional institution. In addition to the status review of all significant strategic planning processes that are current or recent, dialogues take place that involve stakeholder consultations, round-tables and workshops.

**Communication** There was constant communication via an email list and the website, and the IIED was in constant contact with all country teams and the donor Task Force. There was also considerable effort to establish in-country networks (and country websites). The process used focus groups, round-tables, national workshops (which vary according to local circumstances). Three review workshops took place during the time-span of the dialogue process - an initial planning meeting, mid-term and final workshop.

**Decision-making** With regard to the final document, the project worked with teams of authors and through workshops that discussed the documents. The DAC high-level meeting produced a statement based on the report (OECD, 2001).

**Implementation** The document will impact on donor decision-making and the country planning of NSSDs as the outcomes provide lessons learned and recommendations.

**Closure** The final workshop focused mainly on the main thrust and content of the policy guidance. The sourcebook was discussed in outline and will be developed between April and December 2001.

## **Structural aspects**

**Institutional back-up and facilitation** The IIED facilitated and coordinated at the international level. Facilitation of the participatory dialogues is undertaken by local teams, guided by local steering committees.

**Documentation** Material was prepared by both the IIED and project participants. The NSSD website and CD-ROM were tools for project management and information sharing during the lifetime of the project and beyond; a detailed sourcebook was produced on NSSD processes and case examples; there was policy guidance for DAC members on good practice and support for developing countries. Various background and issues papers were also produced during the project's lifetime. These inform the process of developing NSSDs and comment on the processes used. The IIED developed the NSSD Knowledge Management System - an internet and CD-ROM tool. The website provides a forum for dialogue as well as background and reference material. The project maintains an email discussion list to facilitate dialogue and information exchange. Each country/region involved will prepare a status report and a dialogue report. The IIED will prepare a rolling Issues Paper, updated through the process, and a final report. A sourcebook, pulling together all the main issues and lessons from these reports, and guidelines for donors will also be published at end of project (OECD).

**Linkage into official decision-making** The results will be one of the main outputs from OECD/DAC to the Earth Summit 2002. It is likely to have other impacts in future national/international decision-making processes. The results will also go to a high-level OECD/DAC meeting in 2001.

**Funding** Multi-donor funded initiative.

### **PROCESSES DEVELOPING NATIONAL STRATEGIES ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, B: NATIONAL COUNCILS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (NCSD)**

*Issues* Planning/implementing sustainable development strategies.

*Objectives* NCSDs are seeking to strengthen civic society participation in local and multi-stakeholder decision-making mechanisms and activities related to the implementation of the UNCED agreements. The Earth Council (an independent, international body) has, since 1992, been instrumental in promoting the creation and strengthening of NCSDs through greater civil participation. It has also facilitated the organization of regional networks of NCSDs (and similar entities) through a series of regional meetings held in Latin America, Europe, Africa and Asia.

*Participants* Governments, private enterprise, NGOs, civil society.

*Scope* National, regional and ultimately global.

*Time lines* The idea was introduced at the Earth Summit, 1992; it is ongoing.

*Contact, URL* [www.ncsdnetwork.org](http://www.ncsdnetwork.org)

### **Procedural aspects**

**Designing the MSP** Most countries have some form of focal point or mechanism at the national level to oversee the implementation of the Earth Summit agreements. Many of these are structured as multi-stakeholder and participatory mechanisms, usually referred to as National Councils for Sustainable Development (NCSD). The composition of each NCSD and the way it operates varies widely, reflecting the circumstances of each individual country. But key common features are their multi-stakeholder character and integrative approach.

Processes are designed through regional coordination. For example, in Latin America, there was national consultation after Rio+5 and some

sub-regional groups. Specific multi-stakeholder processes are under way in two specific arenas:

- 1 Based on resolutions agreed at the International Forum for NCSDs April 2000, the global network is preparing to undertake a multi-stakeholder assessment of the Earth Summit commitments to feed into Rio+10 process.
- 2 With funding from GEF-UNDP, a pilot project is under way to 'develop methodologies to integrate global environmental priorities into sustainable development plans'. It will involve developing capacity-building strategies as appropriate to address weaknesses and barriers to change. The project is founded on the concept of Multi-stakeholder Integrative Sustainability Planning (MISP), based on the principles of broad participation, flexibility, dynamic, and promoting vertical and horizontal integration and empowerment. Countries involved include Mexico and the Philippines. Draft guidelines and information promoting good practice are available on the NCSD Knowledge Network website.

**Identifying the issues** The stakeholders identify the issues for the NCSD.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** Initial contact occurs at global and regional meetings, through existing contacts with the Earth Council.

**Identifying participants** The Regional Coordinator (RC) makes unilateral visits to different groups within a country, then sets up a first group meeting.

**Setting the goals and agenda** The NCSD sets the goals and identifies priorities under the heading of sustainability, Agenda 21 and the Earth Charter. Goals develop over time, within a broad framework, and it usually takes over a year to develop strong foundations. As part of this process, participants need to check back with their constituencies. Continuity is hardest with governments.

**Setting the timetable** It is an ongoing process. Setting clear time-bound strategies for the implementation of priority areas is one of the most difficult aspects. Rio+10 Assessment: Preliminary results presented at CSD, April 2001; International NCSD Forum, December 2001.

**Preparatory process** The dialogue process is defined by the group, in consultation with, and via feedback from constituencies, municipalities, and so on. There is ongoing (internal) monitoring and reports of workshops (limited only by funds). The RC follows up issues and progress periodically.

*Rio+10 Assessments* NCSOs will identify the most appropriate ways to conduct these via workshops, working groups, issue identification techniques and national forums.

**Communication** Communication by the RC is initially through face-to-face meetings, then telephone contacts and mailing, with visits at critical points – RCs always revisit when there is a change of government. The need for additional support to engage and enable the participation of indigenous communities and other marginalized groups is addressed from the outset of an NCSO. The RC raises questions about NCSO and subnational groups resources (including financial) to enable their inclusion. An internet resource (NCSO Knowledge Network) has been developed to facilitate information exchange between NCSOs. Experiences and lessons learned are shared between countries within the region. Some countries have been in the process longer than others. Mexico is frequently cited as a good example for a region, with strong subnational groups and NCSO. The NCSO in Mexico is 50 per cent subnational representatives and 50 per cent national-level MSP.

The Philippines is perceived by many as the best global example. The Philippine Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) was set up in 1992. It is a multi-stakeholder body involving government, civil society, business and labour sectors, practising consensus-building processes in decision-making. It already had a national plan for sustainable development before the development of the Philippine Agenda 21 (PA21). Through the PCSD, PA21 has been adopted as the nation's blueprint for sustainable development. This was published in 1996 after an extensive multi-level, multi-stakeholder consultation process. It covers a broad span of issues, including urban poverty, agriculture and labour, as well as a range of topics related to economics and technology. Specific reference was made to global governance and the need for financial assistance to developing countries to implement Agenda 21 commitments. In 1995, a regional NCSO meeting facilitated by the Earth Council and hosted by the PCSD, led to the formation of a network of NCSOs in Asia and the Pacific, called the Asia-Pacific National Councils for Sustainable Development (APNCSO). Outputs from this inclusive network include feedback into the Rio+5 Forum. It is currently investigating how it could strengthen existing mechanisms for communicating its message.

**Decision-making** Initially government driven, this is now evolving in many Latin American countries to be a more representative MSP. It is, by its very nature, a gradual process as it requires a change in the decision-making culture for many countries. The political, historical, traditional and cultural make-up of a country is crucial to how the NCSO structure is initiated and progresses. The move towards truly multi-stakeholder processes in decision-making for a region is a gradual one

and requires considerable determination and belief in the underlying principles for the NCSD. As most NCSDs report back to a high-level position in government, often the head of state, they are in an ideal position to conduct participatory assessments of progress since Rio.

**Implementation** Using climate change as one example, the NCSDs work together, often in subgroups to build a strategy to implement the key principles in the Climate Change Convention, and also to undertake research and to implement and monitor progress.

**Closure** The NCSD is an ongoing structure, although priority issues may 'close'.

## **Structural aspects**

**Institutional back-up** Each NCSD has its own secretariat. The secretariat and a steering committee or board meet regularly (every three to four months). They receive input from the subnational grouping (where they exist). Both secretariat and board are involved in facilitation. The Earth Council is tasked to design, strengthen and facilitate funding to establish national secretariats to support civil society participation within NCSDs and similar entities. It also facilitates regional networks of NCSDs.

**Documentation** The secretariat reports on the meetings. It produces National Agenda 21s (equivalent to National Strategies for Sustainable Development Reports).

**Relating to not-participating stakeholders** This issue is taken seriously. For example, in Mexico there are larger meetings and subnational meetings to incorporate views additional to the NCSD.

**Relating to the general public** Mexico produces occasional leaflets on key issues like climate change, as a strategy to help change public behaviour/attitudes. There is little money for massive outreach campaigns and wider public engagement. Work is dependent on government and stakeholder budgets.

**Linkage into official decision-making** There is a national link to Agenda 21; UN CSD and national reporting. There are also links to the UNEP and UNDP/Capacity21 (DESA). Experience highlights that in the initial stages, stakeholders are usually very sceptical/critical of large institutions, require clear reasons for getting involved, and need a deeper understanding of the process and their role in it. Developing an NCSD is by nature transparent. Stakeholders can impact the process considerably and challenge it throughout.

**Funding** The GEF, governments (for example The Netherlands, Canada, Scandinavian countries), Capacity21 (indirectly), UNEP.

**Additional comments** Discontinuity and inadequate funding are an ongoing problem, especially for engaging more local level input. For example, to get subnational representatives to a meeting in Brazil, participants must fly to one location, and on top of this resourcing, there is all the necessary reporting, administration and monitoring required. Local participants do so on a voluntary basis. One suggestion is to ensure that funding from external sources gets distributed evenly through all stakeholder groups and is not channelled through government first (as is current practice). This would also encourage each grouping to ensure that the other is managing their finances according to agreed strategies and programmes.

Some conflict exists with 'alternative processes', eg in Bolivia, where the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) process (set up separately by the WB, directly linked to Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) funds) is also under way. This financial incentive detracts attention from the NCS process when actually it should be seen as one of the key elements for sustainable development.

## UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT

*Issues* Nine principles covering human rights, labour, environment.

*Objectives* Overall goals as defined by the Global Compact (GC) principles: business to 'enact the principles'. Individual companies' goals: reputation management; alignment of internal/global policy; alignment of global standards regarding human rights, labour relations and the environment; social component: identification of employers. Individual NGO goals: working on how to improve the transparency and answerability of business activity regarding the issues of the environment/sustainability to stakeholder networks. There are different views regarding what type of process this is - some view the GC as implementation oriented (through information), others as merely informative. Others say that the GC is an informing process at the moment; the process will have implications for future actions which this will lead to more concrete objectives.

*Participants* UN; industry; environment and human rights NGOs; trade unions.

*Scope* International/national (in-country activities).

*Time lines* started 1999 - open-ended; annual reporting.

*Contact details, URL* UN Global Contact Unit, UN Headquarters, New York; [www.unglobalcompact.org](http://www.unglobalcompact.org)

At the World Economic Forum, Davos, on 31 January 1999, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan challenged world business leaders to 'embrace and enact' the GC, both in their individual corporate practices and by supporting appropriate public policies. These principles cover topics in human rights, labour and environment.

## **Procedural aspects**

**Designing the MSP** The process started in 1999 with a series of bilateral meetings with business associations, then with individual companies, NGOs and trade unions, then defined the compact and what to do. The first GC meeting was held in May 2000. The UN is not only asking business to take action but to work with labour and NGOs; it is also asking labour and NGOs to work with business. The compact is not meant for business simply to carry out and include in the compact their own projects, but for business to change their practice. The compact process consists of several areas of work:

- business development (companies to join);
- learning forum (to share case studies, and so on, perhaps using the compact website);
- issues dialogues; and
- projects of companies with other UN agencies.

The GC is asking companies to join; the prerequisite for joining is that they agree with the nine compact principles plus the UN guidelines on working with the private sector, plus that they provide one good practice example per year to the UN. NGOs and labour have been invited; the prerequisite is that they have accepted to work with the companies. Activities in countries must be led by business and are not UN-initiated. The UN advises, including on NGO and labour involvement. A company wishing to engage in the GC can do so by sending a letter from the Chief Executive Officer to the UN Secretary-General, expressing support for the GC and commitment to take the following actions:

- 1 To issue a clear statement of support for the GC and its nine principles, and to publicly advocate it. This may include:
  - informing employees, shareholders, customers and suppliers;
  - integrating the GC and nine principles into the corporate development and training programme;



- incorporating the GC principles in the company's mission statement;
  - including the GC commitment in the company's annual report and other public documents; and/or
  - Issuing press releases to make the commitment public.
- 2 Provide, once a year, a concrete example of progress made or a lesson learned in implementing the principles, for posting on the GC website.

In addition, within the framework of the GC, a company may wish to:

- actively support the principles and broad UN goals by initiating and participating in projects in partnership with the United Nations; and/or
- participate in result-oriented Issue Dialogues related to the critical problems facing our world, for example The Role of Business in Zones of Conflict.

Companies have informal contacts with other GC partners; 'Local Compacts' might be established, for example in Switzerland, composed of Swiss businesses. Within some companies, working groups are being established (at Novartis: one executive committee member; one steering group member; and a working group; it is also planned to have a multi-stakeholder advisory group to monitor.) Some companies perceive the immediate effect of joining the GC to be that problems falling into the three areas of the GC are being brought on to the table within the company.

NGOs have criticized the GC, saying, for example, that it was designed haphazardly and that there is a lack of transparency about how it was designed. The code that affects the lives of people was not prepared by people, but by top elite within business and the UN, at a time when business was giving a lot of money for pieces of work to the UN. As a result, they received the UN imprint. It is also said that there is a lack of clarity about the agenda which was not defined from the outset, and that various partners pursue different agendas, not a common one.

**Identifying the issues** The nine principles came from the UN, stemming from intergovernmental negotiations. They are not to be negotiated with potential partners. Negotiations with partners focus on the implementation of the principles. Within industry partners, there are in some cases two levels (or layers) of the GC: with the UN as well as within the company. For example, Novartis has developed a set of parameters that function as a 'vulnerability check'. New issues (like issues of biodiversity, biosociety, healthcare, workforce) are being added to existing ones during the process as some of the GC issues do not seem applicable.

NGOs criticize the way the GC issues were identified by a core group that was established before proceedings were under way. Lack of commitment by some partners may reflect how issues were defined. Corporations identified the issues where they were under attack for bad practices. Issues which are relevant for NGOs are, among others: industry answerability beyond shareholder interests; fresh water, land, air; indices, impacts, indicators; climate; toxics.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** The UN identified stakeholders through invitations to companies to take up the challenge. NGOs and trade unions were asked to join. Some companies are in the process of identifying further stakeholders in a cascading process. There is indirect involvement of others when the given agenda is worked through.

NGOs criticize that there is a lack of transparency about how stakeholders were identified, and that the most relevant stakeholders were not included. International NGOs that were identified are not necessarily the most relevant stakeholders; others criticize those NGOs which are involved for lending legitimacy to the process.

**Identifying participants** Various people are identified within the GC partners, participating NGOs and trade unions, for example to coordinate and represent sectors, and to be the GC focal point (usually high level).

Some NGOs say that companies that were under attack identified participants. More ethical companies were not involved.

**Setting the goals** The UN set the overarching goal of the GC: companies were to internalize the nine principles. Specific goals are set by GC partners. Agreed and joint activities develop over time through consultation with partners. The GC is designed as a flexible, evolutionary process. The overall process is starting from the set nine principles, then through consultations. When developments of goals occur, stakeholders can check with their constituencies (companies consult within). Regarding the annual issue dialogues, there is consultation and consensus decision-making to identify the issues.

The GC is perceived by business representatives as a very decentralized process. One approach, for example, would be to proceed as follows: if a Novartis supplier employs children, the supplier would have to explain to Novartis, who would have to communicate contentious issues such as the issue of child labour (including, for example, issues of the education provided for the children) on its website (and the progress report) as some kind of model case.

Some NGOs criticize that legitimization was given first; anything that happens afterwards is an add-on. Ideally, it should be the other way around. Membership should not imply that the company has achieved a standard just by having signed up to it. NGOs also criticize that the GC has only general goals (not time-specific, clear objectives;

indicators; monitoring mechanisms) which are not measurable as goals. Possible consultations upon issues and goals will finish with only a number of stakeholders agreeing on an issue.

**Setting the agenda** While the issue dialogue for 2001 has been identified (the role of the private sector in zones of conflict), the 2002 issue has yet to be identified. The identification of issues works via surveys and consultation.

Some companies state that they are committed to involve stakeholders to prove their credibility. Stakeholders can make suggestions and look into the process. Some NGOs are under the impression that industry is the driving force, and that NGOs and trade unions have little say in identifying the issues.

**Setting the timetable** There are:

- annual meetings of the learning forum;
- issue dialogues, eg 2001: dialogues on the role of the private sector in conflict zones with labour, business, NGOs; a series of meetings; the first meeting is to agree the process (March 2001), for example three to four meetings per year, including internet discussions; and
- maybe annual meetings of the GC.

Some companies have set up an annual implementation process. Some NGOs say they have not seen a timetable.

**Preparatory process** For example, issue dialogues: the first meeting on conflict zones is to plan the process for the year 2001. There was a series of meetings to agree the issue, and a survey by the UN of what issues would come into question. The UN then developed a package of material which went to all participants, asking them what the key issues and challenges are; then a ping-pong process occurred to agree the agenda for the initial meeting.

A checklist was given to GC partners by the UN for orientation purposes. It is perceived by some partners as a top-down approach, but they feel that new aspects can be integrated. No position papers or the like are prepared for meetings. Some NGOs perceive that this will not be a dynamic dialogue and that Southern NGOs have not been contacted.

**Communication** There is official political communication (face-to-face and in written format) between the UN and its partners. Within companies, internal communication involves meetings, followed up by email; externally, the website and press releases are used. Other stakeholders communicate through meetings and the email list server.

Companies tend not to perceive power gaps between the UN and themselves; rather, they perceive having different kinds of power (the UN holds the political power, while companies hold the economic power). Novartis, for example, characterized the GC as a 'good faith process'. There are, however, power gaps between companies and their suppliers (which can be used to create pressure). Power gaps also exist between companies and NGOs. One way of dealing with that is to focus on potential win-win situations and on common objectives.

Some NGOs criticize that involved international NGOs are not obliged to work with their Southern partners. NGOs perceive that there are power (and aspiration) gaps; there is no discussion to identify these clearly and no agenda to take account of power gaps.

There are no formal mechanisms of meta-communication during the process. This is rather happening in the media and via the internet. Media interest generates meta-communication.

**Decision-making** To identify the issues for the dialogues, there is a consensus-building process – partners must not just say 'no'. Experience has shown that involving professional facilitators can work, but an experienced, well-known and respected chair is better. The individual personalities are very important – more so than their professional background. Companies can make decisions within their range of power. They can negotiate with suppliers and define the process with suppliers on an ad hoc basis.

Some NGOs say that it is hard to define the decision-making process and feel too distant from it. Others say that as there is no specific objective, no decision-making is involved.

**Implementation** Compact partners say that implementation falls within the standard framework of the decision-making of the individual corporation. Some NGOs say that the GC is merely an informing, consultative process and is not about implementation.

**Closure** The GC has no time limit. The issue dialogues are time-bound (annual). Companies have to submit one case study per year. Some NGOs feel that the process timing is undefined, and that it needs renewal, or should be driven towards a conclusion in the near future.

## **Structural aspects**

**Institutional back-up** UN Secretariat/Global Compact Unit. Within companies, there are steering or working groups (eg in Novartis there is the GC steering group (executive committee member), the GC working group (for planning and implementation) and the stakeholder's 'sounding' board ('challenging group')).

**Facilitation** UN Secretariat/Global Compact Unit, plus the participation of the UN Agencies involved (UNEP, the High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR), ILO). They facilitate between the UN and its partners; between partners, NGO and labour; and between the UN agencies, and thus include secretariat services. The full staff at the GC unit will be about six people (not all exclusively working on the GC); plus staff in the agencies – UNEP has created a new post for this. Within Novartis, for example, there is a working group to facilitate the process; its role is that of a central coordinating and implementation planning group. Some internal audits are in place and will be used for the GC (eg ‘Health, Safety, Environment Audits’).

**Documentation** The issue dialogues will be decided at the first meeting (March 2001). It is planned to start afresh on the issue dialogues every year, not to work with a firm model. GC partners publish information on a variety of corporate communication channels. Within GC partners, meetings are minuted; some plan to publish as soon as an implementation plan is developed and agreed on.

There is a lack of transparency as to how process developments are being published, other than the reports and statements on the GC website. Some NGOs perceive that the information flow is too low.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** With regard to India, for example, GC partners work on HIV, cities and basic education (on their own); they created these focus areas and work on them with other stakeholders. GC partners publish their involvement and activities through their means as they relate to the general public (or plan to do so). It is not clear if other stakeholders could feed into the process.

**Relating to the general public** The UN website, pages on GC partners’ websites, folders, flyers and digi-card are all used. Interested journalists produce features for radio and newspapers (the UN is regularly approached). GC partners use various channels – websites, journals, press releases.

Some NGOs criticize that very little information is available, or is available only in ‘UN speak’ which is not accessible to the general public. Stakeholders could go out to businesses to challenge them more, but the dynamic of the process does not seem to lead to specific goals. There is no formalized method for criticism. On the other hand, there is too much emphasis on publicity but no tangible outcomes, which can only lead to cynicism.

**Linkage into official decision-making** From a UN perspective, the process is linked to official decision-making, which is the ultimate objective. The GC is aiming to create ‘open learning action fora’ instead of bureaucracy. The process is meant not to be institutionalized but creative; the GC staff are looking at the linkage question, making

compact meetings part of UN agencies events (eg the UNEP Nairobi meeting), a conference at the Earth Summit 2002, with issue dialogues on zones of conflict in 2001 (the recommendations to go into the GA Second Committee upon request). On the UN side, there is hope that the GC will link into the Earth Summit 2002 process. There is the potential to link into CSD multi-stakeholder dialogues which would make the GC liable to organizations in the CSD process. Some GC partners and NGOs say that the GC is not a political decision-making process but that it supports global progress by providing good practice and creating transparency. Transparency depends on the effectiveness of the media and communication. The impact of stakeholders is not predefined and depends on the dynamics of the process. The branding of the term 'Global Compact' would increase the influence.

Companies perceive the increasing levels of compliance through the GC as other companies need to imitate its efforts. Those who lag behind or do not comply will eventually be sanctioned by their stockholders. Increasing compliance will create a more critical mass (for example awards in *Forbes* magazine).

Some NGOs perceive that stakeholders can impact the mechanism and that industry finds it very difficult to join the UN and dialogue process with NGOs. Industry also has difficulty in having a balanced dialogue as they are less accustomed to frustration and are less patient because they are used to a top-down decision-making process.

**Funding** UN budget: the GC is funded by governments and foundations; there is no funding from companies. Decentralized funding process: companies fund their own projects; there is little incremental costs at present, while costs for removing problem situations cannot be calculated in advance. Some perceive the process as driven by the funder.

**Additional information** In general, NGOs have been critical of the UN Global Compact Initiative, as have a number of governments. Discussions held at the UN General Assembly session in December 2000 led to a resolution that the Secretary-General is to prepare a report to the next GA session in 2001, addressing partnerships of the UN and civil society, particularly the private sector.

Some NGOs generally say that voluntary initiatives like the GC will be successful. Governments need to be involved and they need to regulate. Otherwise free riders can go ahead and won't be caught by the public eye if they are not one of the leading companies. The ethos of voluntary initiatives is useful in terms of making companies aware of the issues. Strategically, 'if companies are serious about the issues, there needs to be regulation' (a statement by Nike quoted by an interviewee). Some NGOs feel that overall, the process is not going well; that the objectives are not specific enough for people to raise

the energy to engage; that it lacks accountability; that the outcome is ephemeral; and that the GC is threatening the UN mission and its integrity. Some NGOs say that the companies that they campaigned against now use the GC as a source of legitimization. Some NGO GC members have joined the process halfway through, as a result of which they did not feel really part of it. A number of civil society organizations have issued a 'Citizens Compact', with suggestions regarding some of the critical points raised by them.

## MINING, MINERALS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### **World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD/International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED); Mining, Minerals and Sustainable Development Project (MMSD)**

*Issues* International mining issues; stakeholder partnerships; sustainable development.

*Objectives* To identify how mining and minerals can best contribute to the global transition to sustainable development.

*Participants* Variable according to each MSP, wide scoping exercises being undertaken.

*Scope* International, regional and national, with some local processes and inputs.

*Time lines* April 2000–2002.

*Contact URL* IIED, London; [www.iied.org/mmsd](http://www.iied.org/mmsd)

### **Procedural aspects**

**Designing the MSP** The MMSD is managed by the IIED in London, under contract to the WBCSD. The project was initiated by the WBCSD and is supported by the Global Mining Initiative (GMI). The process was started initially by an IIED scoping group, then included commercial parties, and eventually wider involvement occurred – a dynamic process.

In addition to the technical analysis and consultation, the stakeholder engagement element of the project is 'intended to promote an

equitable, constructive, secure, and transparent set of processes for engagement of all interested stakeholders' at the global and local level. It has three elements:

- 1 To ensure that there is an adequate plan for stakeholder engagement both at the project level and in each of the individual project activities. This includes identifying and engaging with a diverse range of participants in workshops and other events.
- 2 Managing three large global stakeholder dialogues on key issues.
- 3 Producing a 'Principals of Engagement' document that embodies the mutually agreed values and principles that govern how the project approaches stakeholders.

**Identifying the issues** The process builds on IIED/WBCSD previous experience in carrying out an independent assessment of the world's paper industry and prospects for sustainability (see below). Regional processes use round-table structures and expert groups.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** Through consultation, especially through the International Assurance Group.

**Identifying participants** The IIED, project staff among others identify participants through known contacts, networks, literature research, consultation, mass mailouts. Some key stakeholders may choose not to take part.

**Setting the goals** Goals outlined in the Scoping Report, prepared by the IIED for the WBCSD (1999), are:

- To assess global mining and mineral use in terms of the transition to sustainable development (track record, contribution to and detraction from economic prosperity, human well-being, ecosystem health and accountable decision-making will all impact on MSPs).
- To identify if, and how, services can be delivered in accordance with sustainable development.
- To propose key elements of an action plan for improvement.
- To build a platform for analysis and engagement for ongoing cooperation and networking between all stakeholders (which is crucial for long-term impact).

The MMSD is designed to produce concrete results during its two-year lifespan and to create structures that are capable of taking things forward thereafter. The MMSD does not exist to solve or address all the issues faced by the mining and minerals industry. It is a start in identifying different concerns and getting processes under way that in the long term will move issues towards solutions. Participants have opportunities to check back with their constituencies when changes are being proposed. The MMSD project aims to support the GMI.



**Setting the agenda** Various groups are involved since the process aims to use stakeholders to set the agenda. Other activities are spear-headed by IIED's London-based Work Group or directly contracted out to existing institutions with relevant expertise and networks. A large part of the work is decentralized to a series of regional centres in the principal mineral-producing and consuming regions of the world. An assurance group is charged with assuring adequate peer review of the project's outputs and so on.

**Setting the timetable** Set by the project's objectives and a time-frame for closure.

**Preparatory process** A multitude of MSPs, at different levels, is used within the project; each has its own characteristics. Three global stakeholder dialogues are planned: the role of financial institutions in funding mining programmes; information access; and the role of dialogue and Indigenous Peoples. The initial approach is via a small scoping group (there is no attempt at an MSP at this stage) which looks at certain issues and determines whether MMSD has anything to contribute. The MMSD will try to get hold of the best people (via known networks, and so on) to constitute a round-table brainstorming session to come up with ideas on how MMSD could inform issues and add value. Out of this falls the development of discrete areas of research around each project, an MSP networking process with regional partners on which groups to approach, who could input, who could critique and so on, plus interim research material. All this leads to an MSP workshop of some kind to reflect on the work completed (40–60 people).

**Communication** All usual group work methods are used in addition to stakeholder techniques that ensure two-way communication. A 'very high degree of openness and transparency' underpins the project. All interim research will be released to stakeholders (participating and non-participating) as part of a broader engagement process (web-based). The communications process is meant to ensure 'that interested stakeholders, researchers and others have the means to communicate their ideas freely and effectively in ways that impact the project and its outcomes' (website).

**Implementation** Preparations for implementation are under way: the MMSD partner Stratos Inc produced a 'framework for the considerations of options' regarding planning the outcomes of the MMSD process. It outlines various categories of possible implementation mechanisms: norms and instruments (legal and policy, market-based, voluntary); processes (stakeholder processes, capacity development, technological improvement); institutional responses (new institutions, reformed institutions, knowledge management, financial mechanisms). The paper suggests the criteria for selecting desired outcomes and a number of

factors to be used to guide selection. MMSD's work on 'planning for outcomes' will continue through reviewing implementation mechanisms, workshops to gather stakeholder and expert responses, and identifying concrete MMSD outcomes to be presented in the final report.

**Closure** The overall project is time-limited, ending in 2002. The expected results will be fed into Earth Summit, 2002. Individual MSPs have different time-frames.

## **Structural aspects**

**Institutional back-up** MMSD Secretariat.

**Facilitation** Usually done by experienced facilitators. The MMSD Secretariat provides support services.

**Documentation** Participants receive all records of the process. The core of MMSD's work is directed towards the preparation of a draft report, due at the end of 2001, covering the broad scope of the issues investigated. Interim reports are to be released. The material will cover the network-building issue.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** MMSD regional staff and LA21 projects (overlaps in Indonesia). At the outset there was an idea that it might be possible to engage with local communities, but this cannot really be done by the MMSD London Work Group due to a lack of time and resources. However, it will happen to a smaller extent by regional contacts, and some groups, such as Indigenous Peoples, come as individuals, thus allowing the project to gain a particular perspective.

**Relating to the general public** This is a specialized issue, so there is no intentional public information. However, there is a clear, informative and open website, encouraging input and feedback.

**Linkage into official decision-making** MMSD will probably feed into various national and international decision-making processes (it is too early to detail). The final report is likely to contain three aspects:

- technical report with research;
- viewpoints (positive and negative); and
- stakeholder engagement – all the lessons learned and what dialogue developed.

**Funding** The overall budget for MMSD is US\$9.5 million for all work globally (six regions), which is seen as constraining. Of the total, 60 per cent is from commercial sources.

**Additional information** The MMSD seems to exemplify a problem with all MSPs - a 'chicken-and-egg' situation. Do you start and then expose the work to a wider group of people, or do you start with a very open process and get pulled in 20 different directions immediately?

## TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE PAPER CYCLE

### World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD)/International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)

*Issues* The paper cycle; forestry practices, waste management.

*Objectives* The IIED in association with WBCSD undertook an independent assessment of the world's paper industry, examining the sector's life-cycle impacts and prospects for sustainability; to inform the debate, drawing on stakeholder consultations.

*Participants* WBCSD; IIED; private sector forestry and paper companies; environmental NGOs; academic sector, research institutions, government and international agencies.

*Scope* Global.

*Time lines* Research leading to the publication of the report 'Towards a Sustainable Paper Cycle', June 1996, and further activities.

*Contact, URL* IIED, London, and WBCSD, Geneva; [www.iied.org](http://www.iied.org) and [www.wbcsd.org](http://www.wbcsd.org)

## Procedural aspects

**Designing the MSP** Designed in a negotiation between IIED and WBCSD; multi-stakeholder advisory group (which proved to have relatively little input). A project sponsor task force was composed mainly of industry representatives and had more input to the study. Reports were distributed widely to a range of stakeholders for written comment. Also two regional multi-stakeholder workshops were held in Asia and Latin America during the study and one NGO consultation took place in London. Several multi-stakeholder workshops happened after the study was completed to discuss the findings.

**Identifying the issues** The issues were identified by IIED primarily but drew on suggestions from the WBCSD, the project task force, the advisory group, and information arising from regional workshops and

NGO consultations. At the Earth Summit, 1992, the WBCSD set out how industry might move into a more sensitive relationship with the environment. Later it was agreed that a sector example was required to show how the transition process might move the proceedings towards sustainability. The paper industry challenged the IIED to conduct a worldwide review of their social and environmental performance. The study demonstrates that the idea of finding global solutions to a set of diverse local problems will not work (there are different trade-offs, and so on).

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** Stakeholders were identified by the WBCSD and the IIED, but drew on suggestions made by organizations and individuals in different regions.

**Setting the goals** Goals were set by the WBCSD and the IIED but probably became less ambitious in the course of the study. The emphasis shifted from assessment to 'informing the debate' and 'providing raw material for dialogue'. 'The issues of sustainable forestry require open and transparent co-operation in new ways by all stakeholders. . . Therefore the primary aim of this project is to establish a factual base upon which to begin a constructive dialogue process with stakeholders in broader forest issues' (Bjorn Stigson, President, WBCSD, at [www.wbcscd.org](http://www.wbcscd.org)).

**Setting the timetable** Set by the WBCSD but an extension of the deadlines was negotiated by the IIED in view of the time taken for consultation and report delays.

**Preparatory process** There was a widespread consultation process with regional workshops, specialist meetings, task forces, numerous corresponding partners and an advisory group. The final study also drew on the findings of 20 substudies. An international group of senior advisers reviewed the research to ensure its independence.

**Communication** A mixture of communication channels was used - more than 500 stakeholder groups were contacted by IIED during the course of the study.

**Closure** There was no closure as such - the hope was that the report would facilitate and encourage further dialogue at different levels.

## **Structural aspects**

**Institutional back-up** The IIED and WBCSD.

**Documentation** The WBCSD reported on the task force and advisory group meetings, but these were distributed only to participants. The

IIED reported on the regional workshops and NGO consultations. The main report was published by the IIED with the WBCSD. Numerous substudies were published by the IIED several months before and after the publication of the main report.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** There was no formal mechanism relating to non-participating stakeholders, but if they expressed interest in commenting on the report they were included on the distribution list.

**Relating to the general public** The final report was distributed widely and also marketed by the WBCSD and IIED. Otherwise, there was little opportunity for the general public to feed in or comment. The process attracted attention from environmentalists as it seemed to be used by some stakeholders to support incineration rather than paper recycling.

**Linkage into official decision-making** There was very little linkage.

**Funding** A mixture of donor (35–40 per cent) and industry funding (60–65 per cent) across five continents. Fund-raising was done jointly by the WBCSD and IIED, with the latter concentrating more on the donor funding but participating in presentations to potential industry sponsors. It is believed that the non-industry funding helped enormously in maintaining the credibility of the study as an independent objective analysis.

**Additional information** This initial project served as a model for the other WBCSD projects which are now underway (including MMSD, see above).

### **WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO), THIRD MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENT AND HEALTH FOR EUROPE – ACTION IN PARTNERSHIP, LONDON 1999**

*Issues* Health and the environment.

*Objectives* A planning and informing process at European level. A complex process involving 11 working groups set up and run by the WHO, with substantial NGO input and with a parallel NGO forum, supported by the WHO and other UN agencies. The scope was health and the environment in its broadest sense; with the objective of furthering debate on a range of issues and helping to develop various protocols/agreements, including fresh water, transport and health, and a ministerial declaration on Environment and Health Priorities for Europe in the 21st century.

*Participants* NGOs; academics; health professionals.

*Scope* Regional.

*Time lines* 16–19 June 1999.

*Contact, URL* UNED Forum, London; [www.unedforum.org/health/index.htm](http://www.unedforum.org/health/index.htm)

## **Procedural aspects**

**Designing the MSP** The process was designed by the WHO in consultation with UNED Forum who put together a multi-stakeholder advisory committee. There was some consultation with stakeholders on the process design facilitated by UNED. The European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC) helped to plan this with a relatively small group of professionals/representatives of different sectors and one or two NGOs, although NGO involvement increased markedly during the process.

**Identifying the issues** Largely set by the WHO European Regional Office as stakeholder involvement only began after the start of the process.

**Identifying the relevant stakeholders** NGOs and other stakeholders were invited into the process. The UNED facilitated the broadening out to stakeholders beyond that, although the WHO had their own links with stakeholders, too, with governments and health professionals being the most obvious groups. Local authorities also came into the process. Interestingly, the WHO did not use their own multi-stakeholder process (the Healthy Cities Initiative, see additional remarks, below) to any great extent. The reasons included the fact that this initiative has its own agenda and is a worldwide initiative in which the European part was not heavily involved. It was also possibly due to some internal matters within the WHO.

**Identifying participants** People have different perceptions as to how much outreach was done. The WHO did some in terms of identifying participants, but the perception was that it was rather 'hit and miss'. Most health professionals knew that it was happening. Bodies such as the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Officers (CIEH) and the International Federation of Environmental Health (IFEH) who were already involved through the EEHC, did a lot to help involve a wider audience. Most of the other outreach was facilitated by UNED and the multi-stakeholder advisory group.

**Setting the goals and agenda** The main goal was to hold the event and second to come up with the relevant protocols, charters and so on. The remit also included setting up the working groups. Goals developed as the process progressed. As there had been two previous ministerial conferences, the dialogue-building process does go back a long way. The London process started immediately after the ratification of the previous meeting. It was pushed by EEHC, various governments, and international health and environment professionals. About 50 countries participated, with about 40 in the preparatory events. It was something of a consensus-building process. As with many of these international declarations, nothing would happen without a fairly substantial government consensus. Without this, members like the Vatican could block the aspects they disliked. But with this 3rd WHO conference of this type (after 1989 and 1994), hopefully the process has gone from a mere exchange of views through to the development of agreements, to implementation, although this last stage remains to be seen.

There was much serious checking back with constituencies at the governmental level. It is unclear (not documented) just how far other representatives checked back. There is the suggestion that people who go to these international processes tend to become sucked in and other attendees almost become their peer group, rather than those who sent them there in the first place. For example, the CIEH are still involved in the issues, but it is questionable, due to time constraints, how far they actually checked back with individual environmental health officers. It is also questionable whether the IFEH consulted back with bodies such as the UK CIEH.

## Setting the timetable

This was set according to the conference date.

**Preparatory process** A preparatory process with a range of specialist working groups and NGOs consulted through various events. The Soesterberg conference was the main event, but by the time that NGOs became interested most of the agenda was set; the role then is mostly a working-out/lobbying role regarding 'What we will do about this or that?' as opposed to a 'What do we want to talk about?' But the increased NGO involvement and capacity building has already led to NGO involvement in the Budapest 2004 preparations (small groups format).

**Communication** Substantial use was made of electronic networks. The EEHC was the main coordinating body for various meetings both for the preparatory process and conference, and the working groups.

The UNED set up a list server, a quarterly newsletter and a website to keep stakeholders informed.

*Power gaps* Probably not much, partly because the WHO (an agency funded by governments) was 'desperately trying to get its staff to attend meetings' (one interviewee). They were extremely short of resources and reliant on national governments. Therefore it could be said that national governments probably had more power. NGOs also had a lot of power in terms of turning out to lobby at the right time and often after having done their homework much better than governments. A great deal depended on how strongly governments felt about something; if it was more open, then NGOs had quite a lot of power. Industry did not take the conference that seriously, so was not lobbying in the same way as NGOs.

**Decision-making** Agreement had to be sought in standard international process terms with governments able effectively to force a lowest common denominator.

**Implementation** Agreements go back to the working groups for implementation. Those that had funding are largely medical professionals run by a WHO senior professional.

**Closure** The process concluded with the London conference, but it has also impacted on the working groups and NGO process in the run-up to the Budapest conference in 2004. On all the main issues - fresh water, climate change, transport - far more is happening, but not necessarily as a result of the ministerial conference. On some of the other issues on the agenda - children's health, economics and health, local processes for environment and health - more might be expected to be happening than it actually is as a result of the London event.

## **Structural aspects**

**Institutional back-up and facilitation** An international secretariat at the WHO, the EEHC, a NGO coordinating group which was close to being multi-sector. There is a question as to how far professional networks (IFEH) are included as NGOs. Business was not involved in NGO dialogues. They had more direct input through the WHO (a two-sided process).

**Documentation** All documentation is available via the WHO and UNED websites.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** Non-participating stakeholders had an opportunity to attend the meetings at the confer-



ence on the NGO process, and to feed in through their own agencies or to the WHO directly.

**Relating to the general public** Relatively little – a specialist process.

**Linkage into official decision-making** The conference was linked to an official decision-making process. Regarding transparency, at least people knew that a conference was happening. The Ministerial Declaration noted that it wished to ‘encourage greater transparency in the work of the EEHC’ and extended its membership by adding six representatives of Major Groups, including NGOs, local government, business, trade unions, and environment and health professionals, nominated by their appropriate organizations. The Declaration also noted the value of NGO input into the process, called for partnership to help with the implementation and in the ‘regular and transparent reviews of progress’.

**Funding** The WHO provided some funding, while governments provided much of the key funding. The British Government funded the UK conference. But people like CIEH, Glaxo Wellcome, the EU, and the UK and Dutch governments had to help fund NGO and other stakeholder involvement because insufficient money was available. The process as a whole was underfunded.

**Additional remarks** The WHO’s Healthy Cities is a classic two-way partnership between the WHO and local authorities. Some of the individual Healthy Cities have been very effective in bringing other parties besides health professionals into the debate, such as business and voluntary sector groups.

## **WORLD BANK WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT ONLINE DISCUSSION, 2000**

*Issues* Transparency, informing the dialogue, providing feedback.

*Objectives* To inform; to open up and inform the WB/WB Review process via an online e-conference and electronic exchange of moderated comments on the released draft of the World Development Report on Poverty.

*Participants* NGOs, academics, women’s groups.

*Scope* International.

*Time lines* Six-week open process in 2000.

*Contact, URL* Bretton Woods Project, London; [www.brettonwoodsproject.org](http://www.brettonwoodsproject.org)

## **Procedural aspects**

**Designing the MSP** Via an email exchange with 30 people deciding the pros and cons of trying the idea of an electronic exchange of comments and feedback on the first draft of the World Development Report on Poverty, 2000–2001. This process started the summer before the release of the draft report on the WB website. They solicited views on the idea and negotiated with the WB's lead author, Ravi Kanbur. This advance preparation eliminated the risks.

**Identifying the issues** The idea of an online conference was put forward by the Bretton Woods Project and the New Policy Institute. A formal steering group was appointed. They communicated mostly via conference calls and email to plan and review the documentation, and to communicate with the WB/WB Review.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** An issue was how to recruit people to take part in the online conference who don't know how the WB works. This was tackled through fliers, mentions in relevant newsletters, fax alerts and electronically.

**Identifying participants** As above and by recruiting potential people through the Steering Groups' contacts. Effort was put into trying to get away from the 'usual suspects' and a purely EU/Northern emphasis. This meant a substantial amount of preparatory work. It was a very time-consuming process – three-and-a-half months' full-time input.

**Setting the goals** The online conference was an attempt to open the WB process. It was not a negotiating process, but it did have a charge to look at the final draft version of the World Development Report. There was informal input from the WB (by Ravi Kanbur) as to what its thinking was, but this was not constant feedback. However, even this level of contact had helped until the whole process became mired in the sudden departure of the report's author in late May 2000, following attempts by the WB and government officials to make him change his text before the final version was published (September, 2000).

*NGO comment* The WB Development Reports are written and marketed giving the impression that they convey broadly held views and contain objective research. But many civil society organizations feel that they are selective and biased. In recent years, WB teams have consulted NGOs on draft versions of reports, but groups have often commented that their responses have not been dealt with adequately. There is a need to make this process more credible.

**Setting the agenda** The debate was planned the summer before the report's release. Some benefits did arise, for example, participants were more in touch with each other outside the dialogue. Some even held

meetings so they could prepare fully, as happened in Cameroon. The impetus for meeting and feeding back comments into the online conference was that feeling of being part of a global dialogue. There were also micro-spin-offs in terms of better developed relationships and credibility.

**Setting the timetable** This was set up to coincide with the WB process.

**Preparatory process** 1500 people participated, either as individuals or on behalf of an institution, plus there was academic involvement. All contributions were valid – it was not a prenegotiating body.

**Communication** Electronic exchange of views and comments. The Bretton Woods Project and New Policy Institute received a favourable response to their initiative.

*Power gaps* This was inevitable as the WB is still not an MSP. Processes are opaque. It was always known that the power gaps would be there, but that it was better to try to open up the dialogue to some degree. It did bring some pressure to bear on the WB.

The Bretton Woods Project did attempt some evaluation in the fifth week of the process. Issues included comments that some heavy-handed moderation was under way (people wanted their point put across even if it was not directly relevant to the process). As a result, another group was going to start an entirely open online debate, but this never happened and they conceded that the original process was acceptable. The idea of moderation (with topics set in advance at the start of each new week and a quick context-setting piece) was to prevent participants from being overloaded (the quickest way to reduce wide participation) and to keep matters focused.

**Decision-making** This project was about opening up perspectives. The project aimed only to bring different viewpoints into dialogue – it was not trying to reach a consensus.

**Implementation** It was too difficult to agree a meaningful level of consensus after only six weeks' exchange of views.

**Closure** A time-limited process – six weeks: 21 February–31 March 2000.

## Structural aspects

**Institutional back-up** A Steering Group.

**Facilitation** A moderating team, all based in London. Their role included maintaining a list of conference participants, to answer

queries, filter incoming messages and provide advice to people whose messages were not appropriate. A conference protocol was established as a guide to how the process worked: short messages, no self-promotion, and so on. Anyone who wished to submit a longer piece which did not fit the rules could send their message to the moderators for passing on to the WB author. The Bretton Woods Project and the New Policy Institute took it in turns.

**Documentation** The Bretton Woods Project did the summaries and so on, and translated them into French and Spanish as soon as they could (they paid for this service).

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** It was an open process unless people had access to the technology. The main language of the conference was English. Submissions were accepted in French and Spanish but were not translated. The weekly and final summaries reflected all submissions and were available in the three languages.

**Relating to the general public** It was web-based only and is now closed as time was limited.

**Linkage into official decision-making** The MSP was linked to the WB as an intergovernmental body. Endless ramifications will exist for a long time as the inputs from the WB report are fed into aid packages etc.

*NGO comment* The endgame is not very transparent but the on-line conference did open this up a little. However, the real outcomes will always be made in 'smoke-filled rooms in Washington'. There was a two- to three-year campaign to get the WB to release a draft of the WDR, so this move is to be welcomed. But pressure must continue on the WB as this is not enough.

**Funding** MacArthur Foundation via Cornell University: £20,000. Funders had no direct contact or impact on the project.

## **GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF), COUNTRY DIALOGUE WORKSHOP (CDW) PROGRAMME**

*Issues* GEF issues, depending on the country; dialogue and capacity-building workshops for recipient countries; fostering an ongoing two-way dialogue between the GEF and member countries.

*Objectives* To inform stakeholders and GEF programmes. To facilitate a group dialogue among and between the workshop participants and the GEF; to inform a broad-based national audience about the GEF; to facilitate national stakeholder input to and information-sharing on the country's GEF programme to ensure that it reflects national priorities

for GEF assistance; and to provide practical information on how to access GEF resources and how to propose, prepare and implement GEF-financed activities, including the dissemination of information on best practices and lessons learned; capacity-building; empowerment; to promote country ownership of GEF-financed activities.

*Participants* 23 recipient countries so far; target beneficiaries comprise a broad group of stakeholders from recipient countries identified through an initial needs assessment process. Beneficiaries include national and local governments, GEF national focal points and council members, GEF/SGP (Small Grants Programme) national coordinators or representatives from national steering committees, NGOs, the implementing agency and other donor country and regional staff, including regional development banks, academic institutions, (STAP) of the GEF, the private sector, the media and the populations they serve.

*Scope* National, regional (11 national and 2 regional workshops to date).

*Time lines* A three-year programme. Individual workshops are recommended to be four-day meetings. It is suggested that an additional day be added for a field trip to visit GEF projects.

*Contact, URL* [www.undp.org/gef/workshop](http://www.undp.org/gef/workshop)

## Procedural aspects

**Designing the MSP** Each workshop is organized around a series of core 'Workshop Facilitation Materials' developed by the Programme. The Programme is guided by an Interagency Steering Committee which consists of representatives from the UNDP, UNEP, WB and the GEF Secretariat. The Programme is executed by the UNDP/GEF in New York on behalf of the GEF partners. The GEF Operational Focal Points (OFP) coordinate the workshop organization. The overall process should be a group effort to set in motion an effective dialogue. The organizers may wish at the outset to think about how best to establish a collaborative spirit, given their national circumstances (GEF Country Dialogue Workshop (CDW) Guidelines).

**Identifying the issues** The GEF OFP are responsible for ensuring that the workshop is tailored to meet specific national needs. In this regard, it is suggested in the GEF CDW guidelines that the OFP prepare a presentation for the workshop on national priorities as they relate to environment and development objectives.

The OFP is invited to share a draft with the UNDP Country Office and UNDP/GEF for feedback in advance of the workshop. The OFP is

also invited to request that others, such as the biodiversity and climate change focal points, make presentations during this session.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** Countries are selected by an Interagency Steering Committee; the criteria include convention ratification, previous workshops in the pilot phase programme, cost-effectiveness, lack of strong GEF portfolio/pipeline, the significance of concerns in one or more of the focal areas, and the submission of the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) or National Communication on Climate Change. The GEF OFP takes the lead responsibility for organizing the workshop in close consultation with the GEF Political Focal Point, the implementing agencies and any other groups or institutions chosen by the OFP. It is recommended first that a tentative list of participants should be prepared and then that other stakeholders should be consulted to make the list more comprehensive, specific and accurate.

**Identifying participants** The OFP is responsible for seeing that all relevant GEF projects and other representatives working in the GEF focal areas are represented. It is recommended that the workshop participants comprise a broad group of stakeholders from the recipient country or countries identified through an initial survey carried out by the GEF OFP. Participants could include those from the stakeholder groups identified below that are involved in, or interested in becoming involved in the preparation and implementation of national and global environmental projects, strategies and action plans.

**Setting the goals** There are is preset by the GEF CDW Programme. The aim is to have a broad-based discussion and exchange of ideas to catalyse cooperation and capacity-building in the preparation of project proposals, project development and project implementation.

**Setting the agenda** The GEF OFP prepares and distributes the workshop agenda; it is suggested that the workshop should be based on the 'Workshop Facilitation Materials' prepared specifically for the GEF CDW by the GEF. The workshop structure should be adapted to match national priorities.

**Setting the timetable** The GEF OFP operates on the basis of the GEF CDW Programme, guidelines and material.

*Preparatory process* The GEF OFP is supposed to discuss a draft workshop agenda with the UNDP Country Office and the UNDP/GEF at least one month in advance of the scheduled workshop for their consideration and comments.

**Communication process** One of the key objectives of the workshops is to facilitate a group dialogue among and between the participants

and the GEF. The materials allow for working group exercises and activities that aid in facilitating dialogue. A Facilitator's Kit provides information to the participants in support of the three Project Development working group exercises as outlined in the Facilitator's Notes. The kit contains ten handouts, including checklists to determine project eligibility, summaries of the operational programmes, a basic concept paper format, a list of strategic action programmes, a funding pathway table, a project brief format and a basic logical framework format. The workshop facilitators are invited to include additional handouts or to customize the existing handouts before distribution to the participants. Chairpersons should represent the various stakeholder groups attending the workshop. However, according to workshop reports (eg from Uzbekistan), speakers included only representatives of the GEF, WB, UNDP and so on, and there were no NGO speakers. The organizers are advised to choose a venue that accommodates all participants (people should live/eat together), and to ensure enough breaks as an essential opportunity for participants and facilitators to continue the dialogue in a less formal setting.

**Decision-making** The workshop participants formulate recommendations for the different stakeholders (for the national GEF, for the GEF, for ministries, agencies, private enterprises and NGOs). Recommendations focus on how stakeholders can better support GEF operational procedures, mechanism and operational programmes.

**Closure** The OFP should open and close the workshop with a defining message, and conduct the workshop evaluation using the form provided by the GEF CDW Programme.

## Structural aspects

**Institutional back-up and facilitation** This GEF initiative is implemented by the UNDP/GEF. Country offices and OFPs are responsible for organizing and logistics. The chairpersons could represent the various groups attending the workshop. It is suggested that a different chairperson be appointed for each session to introduce the facilitators, presenters and experts. The chairpersons' task is to work with the facilitators to encourage dialogue and to keep the sessions focused on the most important issues. It is suggested that they are selected both for the stature they bring to the workshop and their ability to perform these tasks.

**Documentation** CDW materials (and individual GEF CDW reports) are available on the GEF website and CD-ROM. One or more rapporteurs are supposed to record the dialogue. The workshop organizers are

encouraged to prepare a brief report outlining the key discussions, outcomes and recommendations of the workshop for distribution to the participants. It is recommended that the report should be prepared in an easy-to-read, action-oriented format that will generate interest and be produced immediately after the workshop to build on the momentum generated. A copy of the report should also be sent to the GEF Country Dialogue Workshops Programme, based at the UNDP/GEF in New York where it is posted on the internet so that countries can share experiences as the Programme develops.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** Countries are welcome to utilize materials in organizing workshops using other sources of financing (government, bilateral, UN agency, NGO, among others) in consultation with the GEF Implementing Agencies. The significance of the participation of many representatives of provincial organizations, which is an additional guarantee of experience dissemination all over the country, should also be specially noted.

**Relating to the general public** The media are supposed to be invited to the workshops. Workshop reports are available on the GEF CDW website.

**Funding** The UNDP Country Offices are disbursing workshop funds to the OFP based on an agreed budget. Costs are partly covered by the GEF and partly by the host country. As a first step, after initial consultation with the GEF CDW Programme, the GEF OFP will submit a workshop budget to the UNDP/GEF for consideration. Once the GEF OFP and UNDP/GEF have agreed on the workshop budget, arrangements will be made to disburse the funds through the UNDP Country Office according to UNDP administrative rules and regulations.

## **THE WORLD COMMISSION ON DAMS (WCD)**

*Issues* The impacts of large dams around the world.

*Objectives* To conduct a rigorous independent review of the impact of large hydro-electrical and irrigation dams; to develop recommendations on future dam building and to propose practical guidelines for future decision-making; informing / advisory, not judicial.

*Participants* (Commission and Forum) Multilateral agencies; affected communities; international professional associations; international NGOs; government agencies; utility companies; research institutes; private-sector firms in the power and engineering sector; river basin authorities.



*Scope* International with regional inputs.

*Time lines* The WCD was launched in February 1998 and started work in May 1998 – November 2000 (publication of their report).

*Contact, URL* <http://www.dams.org>; complete report at <http://www.damsreport.org/>

## Procedural aspects

**Designing the MSP** The WCD was established in February 1998 through a process of dialogue and negotiation involving representatives of the public, private and civil society sectors. It has attracted substantial interest because of the unique way in which the different sides of the debate were brought together and the belief that this may form a model for resolving other contentious development issues. It was set up and financed by aid agencies, industry, governments and NGOs. An Interim Working Group, composed of participants of a workshop facilitated by the WB and the IUCN in Gland, Switzerland was tasked with establishing the World Commission on Dams (WCD). The mandate for the work of the Commission is the result of agreements reached at the workshop in Gland, along with the subsequent preparatory work and consultation process that followed.

The WCD started as a debate within the WB. The WB used to fund large dams to a great extent (6–7 per cent of the WB's annual budget). This caused crises, for example with the Namada Dam, and the WB's involvement in dams building was looked at by an independent inspection panel (the WB's Operational and Evaluation Department's first evaluation of Bank financing of big dam projects). The Bank subsequently declined its lending, whereas coal-related lending increased. NGO campaigns called for comprehensive reviews of WB-funded dam projects. Companies were interested in finding a way forward on dam building, because of the criticism and the decrease in available loans by the WB and other funders.

The environmental advisers within the WB had discussed these issues critically all along – a debate took place to discuss the 'green position' of the Bank. The IUCN was then asked to create an external group to discuss the issue of large dams. The original idea of the WB and the IUCN was to set up a working group and to have a three-day conference which took place in Gland in April 1997. A wider group of stakeholders was then invited, including anti-dam groups. The IUCN contacted the International Rivers Network to obtain potential names and comments on the design of the event. It was important to have representation from people who were actually affected by these

developments and therefore were strong critics, rather than what has been termed more 'establishment-type groups of NGOs', where the power gaps would have been less prominent and therefore the outcome would have been less progressive. The process of setting up the Commission was also supported by an NGO meeting in mid-March 1997 in Curitiba, Brazil, which had issued a Declaration calling for an international independent commission to conduct a comprehensive review of large dams. The Gland workshop brought together 39 participants representing governments, the private sector, international financial institutions, civil society organizations and affected people in a balance that later was mirrored in both the Commission and the Forum (World Commission on Dams, 2000, p27). One of the outcomes was the agreement reached on the last day of the meeting to continue the work, for example through a Commission. After the meeting, participants communicated via email.

In the view of some NGOs, the shape of any potential Commission – its scope and range – would have been narrower without the 'alternative stakeholder input' at Gland. A joint press statement issued by the WB and the IUCN noted that all stakeholders would collaborate on a study to review the effectiveness of large dams and of setting standards. Thus, all the stakeholders involved were established as central to the legitimacy of the process. The joint WB/IUCN press release read 'Dam-builders and some of their strongest critics agreed today. . .'. The IUCN and the WB noted how they had brought together the two sides of a highly contentious debate and forged consensus between them.

The workshop in Gland produced one recommendation: that people affected by dam building, particularly those that have to resettle, need to be (materially) better off after the building than before (a recommendation also put forward in the WCD report). The principles of transparency, consultation and independence were enshrined as key to the process.

**Identifying the issues** To ensure the independence of the Commission, the IUCN and the WB have maintained their roles as initiators, but neither institution interfered with the work programme of the Commission. Issues for the initial Gland meeting were identified by the WB and the IUCN. After that, issues were identified by participants, the Interim Working Group and subsequently the Commission and the Forum, and via input from regional hearings/meetings, and expert and stakeholder background papers.

**Identifying relevant stakeholders** Relevant stakeholders were identified before the initial conference in Gland by the WB and the IUCN. The issue of whether NGOs should participate was considered

carefully, given the scarcity of their resources and time, and the issue that the usual power balance might happen and decisions would be favourable to the industry. Dam critics noted that there would be less chance of this happening if the Commissioners had integrity and the process was transparent.

**Identifying participants** Selecting the Commissioners was no easy process as some people felt that the suggested lists did not include adequate representation of people affected by dam building. The Commission was composed of a chair and 11 members, balanced by regional representation, expertise and stakeholders. Commissioners are members in their individual capacities, not representatives of organizations. Ensuring inclusiveness, independence and transparency were the goals of the process. 'As an international commission, our process has been unique in taking on board a range of interests and opinions previously held to be irreconcilable' (WCD, 2000). The WCD Forum is a consultative group consisting of 68 organizations, acting as a sounding board and advisory group for the WCD. It is a mix of participants at the initial Gland meeting, new stakeholders and interest groups. Selection criteria were relevance, balance and representation of a diversity of perspectives, interests and regions. The Forum is a mechanism for maintaining a dialogue between the WCD and the respective constituencies of the Forum members. Members of the Forum provide ongoing input into the Commission, play a key role in outreach and most likely in the follow-up work.

**Setting the goals** The Interim Working Group negotiated the form and mandate of the Commission. This group had been part of the Gland meeting and represented all stakeholders. The WCD addressed the conflicting viewpoints within the debate on large dams through:

- Undertaking a global review of the development effectiveness of large dams and assessments of alternatives.
- Developing a framework for assessing alternative option and decision-making processes for water and power development.
- Developing internationally acceptable criteria and guidelines for the planning, designing, construction, operation, monitoring and decommissioning of dams.

The goal was to undertake an independent review of large dams and their impacts as well as developing proposals for the future.

**Setting the agenda** This was identified at the Gland meeting and shaped at each and every consultation session. Ultimately the 12 Commissioners as representatives of all interested groups agreed the final agenda of the issues.

**Setting the timetable** After the Gland meeting communication took place between the participants, then by the Commission, including consultations with the Forum.

**Preparatory process** The process had a number of components:

- Commissioned research and submitted papers.
- A five-month preparatory phase (January–May 1998).
- Regional meetings; a thematic group which was increasingly important (a long list of stakeholders funded by themselves mostly); a Forum as a sounding board which also created commitment.
- Background papers were prepared to feed in expert and stakeholder views.

A large part of the Commission's work involved a broad and independent review of the experience with large dams. The resulting WCD Knowledge Base includes eight in-depth case studies of dams, several country reviews, briefing papers, thematic reviews and cross-check surveys, as well as the results of public (including regional) consultations, and 947 submissions made to the WCD.

**Communication** Meetings were held; otherwise there was huge email traffic. After the Gland meeting, NGOs were very thoughtful and business people too direct, which made the NGOs more powerful. Some business people have been 'converted' by this process and some NGOs changed their views too (comment from the WB and NGOs).

'The experience of the Commission demonstrates that common ground can be found without compromising individual values or losing a sense of purpose' (World Commission on Dams, 2000, Executive Summary). 'Those groups facing the greatest risk from the development have the greatest stake in the decisions, and therefore must have a corresponding place at the negotiating table' (ibid, 2000, p209). The WCD report aims to encourage 'improved decision-making processes that deliver improved outcomes for all stakeholders' (ibid, 2000, Executive Summary). The Commission grouped the core values that informed its understanding of the issues under five main headings: equity; efficiency; participatory decision-making; sustainability; and accountability. 'Only decision-making processes based on the pursuit of negotiated outcomes, conducted in an open and transparent manner and inclusive of all legitimate actors involved in the issue are likely to resolve the complex issues surrounding water, dams and development' (ibid, 2000, Executive Summary). Regarding gaining public acceptance, the report stated: 'Acceptance emerges from recognising rights, addressing risks, and safeguarding the entitlements of all groups of affected people. . . Decision-making processes and mechanisms are used that enable informed participation by all groups of people, and result in the demonstrable acceptance of key decisions' (ibid, 2000).

Bringing about change will require planners to identify stakeholders through a process that recognizes rights and risks.

**Decision-making** The WCD report is a consensus document by the Commissioners; the report includes a comment by one Commissioner concerning the overall approach and definition of development taken by the Commission, not individual conclusions or recommendations.

**Implementation** The Commission identified that they were not constituted to implement the recommendations and indeed did not have the mandate or authority to do so. One key aspect is development finance; the multi- and bilateral agencies have been tasked with responding to the recommendations. This may initiate some form of institutionalizing of the WCD process/recommendations. The WCD urged all groups to study their report and its recommendations, 'bearing in mind that it results from consultations that, in terms of inclusiveness and breadth of scope, are beyond the reach of any individual interest group' (ibid, 2000, p311). 'Capacity must be built if good outcomes are to be achieved, including strengthening civil society and particularly empowering women to make their voices heard' (ibid, p313). The report is being studied by individual governments, some of whom have adopted in some way or the other. Further steps are under discussion.

**Closure** The mandate of the Commission expired with the publication of the report in November 2000. Another WCD Forum meeting was held in February 2001 to assess and discuss follow-up, which might include a strategy of feeding the results into governmental decision-making, the establishment of regional commissions and establishing a follow-up group. The February 2001 Forum meeting was prepared by the Secretariat and a Forum Liaison Group (FLG) comprising representatives of the IUCN and WB, two of the civil society Forum members, and two of the industry, government and operators' Forum members. At the meeting, Forum members agreed 'to work through their diverse governmental, private-sector and civil society organizations and affiliations:

- To ensure widespread dissemination and understanding of the report, its findings and recommendations. . .
- To promote testing, refinement and adaptation in implementing the Commission's proposed guidelines in the varied practical contexts worldwide. . .
- To promote dialogue, information exchange and networking in working with the WCD report. . . (DAMS, No 9).

The meeting also mandated the FLG to take the lead in establishing new arrangements for follow-up, such as a 'Dams and Development

Forum', a 'Dams and Development Governance Group' and a 'Dams and Development Unit', a small office which may find its home at UNEP.

## **Structural aspects**

**Institutional back-up** The WCD Secretariat; Capetown, South Africa.

**Facilitation** The WCD Secretariat.

**Documentation** Website at [www.dams.org](http://www.dams.org). A WCD report launched in November 2000 was described by Commissioners as a 'consensus document'. It 'sets out to distil more than two years intense study, dialogue and reflection by the Commission, the WCD secretariat, the WCD stakeholders' Forum and literally hundreds of individual experts and affected people on every aspect of the dams debate' (World Commission on Dams, 2000, Executive Summary). The WCD describe the report not as a blueprint but 'as the starting point for discussions, debates, internal reviews and reassessments of what may be established procedures and for an assessment of how these can evolve to address a changed reality'.

**Relating to non-participating stakeholders** The WCD has entered into partnerships with various organizations, networks and international agencies. These collaborations have led to exciting opportunities for sharing, reviewing and disseminating information of common interest. Some NGOs comment that a negative charge of elitism could be placed against the process - despite its claims of inclusiveness - as almost all WCD documents used the English language, and without internet access it would have been hard to obtain large amounts of the documentation (the reason given was the tight time-frame for their task).

**Relating to the general public** Website, publication, press releases, big public launch events in all regions (publicity involving celebrities like Nelson Mandela).

**Linkage into official decision-making** There are linkages via individual governments; many governments are currently reviewing the report. Government interest increased over the course of the Commission's work period. For example, Brazil decided to do its own WCD for Brazil (individual commission); Sweden decided to build no more dams (December 2000); Germany is reviewing the WCD report, and so on. Further linkages, for example into the Earth Summit 2002 process, are under discussion.

**Funding** The WB and the IUCN undertook to secure the initial core resources for the Commission to be created and to implement its work

programme. The IUCN provided the initial administrative support system to facilitate the work of the Commission and the Secretariat. The Gland meeting was funded by the Swiss Development Corporation, with a contribution from the WB. The Commission then engaged in fund-raising activities, resulting in a large number of funders for the Secretariat and the Commission, including 17 governments and government agencies, 20 private-sector firms, 12 NGOs and foundations, and 4 multilateral agencies. The WCD has thereby implemented a new funding model involving all interest groups in the debate. Funding was sought from the public and private sectors as well as from civil society. Contributors had pledged funds equal to more than three-quarters of the Commission's total projected budget of about US\$9.9 million.

**Additional information** The Global Public Policy Project, which is sponsored by the UN Foundation to explore the potential of public policy networks for increasing the effectiveness of the United Nations, recognized the value of the WCD as a trisectoral process (public, private, civil society). The process took on board all the different interests and moved the debate forward. The WCD report acknowledges that the conflict and 'stalemate' that was developing around the dams controversy benefited no one: 'A new way had to be found.' Understanding the WCD process is important because it is being hailed as a precedent for dealing with other controversial global policy issues (by the WB and others). Monitoring of the follow-up is necessary – there is a need to learn from this experience. It is unclear as yet who could fulfil that monitoring role. The WCD report and the process received acclaim from dam critics such as the International Committee on Dams, Rivers and People (a coalition representing 13 countries). However, they have highlighted that 'it is one thing to get a good report and it will be quite another for the report actually to make a difference to real world practices' (McCully, 2001).

Some NGOs believe that among the many process-related factors that allowed such a welcome report is the fact that governments and international agencies were marginalized from the process, and the private-sector dam industry lacked a coordinated strategy. Some say that the whole process and report raises many more issues for countries than just dams – such as governance issues in general.

The World Resources Institute, the Lawyers' Environmental Action Team, and Lokayan are currently undertaking an independent assessment of the WCD. Preliminary findings as of April 2001 have been published at [www.wcdassessment.org](http://www.wcdassessment.org); the final report will be available in September 2001.