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REPORT OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



Administrative Committee on Coordination

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REPORT OF THE EIGHTH MEETING OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(United Nations Headquarters, New York, 10-12 July 1996)

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) held its eighth meeting in New York from 10 to 12 July 1996. The agenda for the meeting, as adopted by IACSD, is contained in annex I, the list of participants in annex II and the list of documents in annex III.

I. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE
ON COORDINATION

A. Follow-up to the outcome of meetings of ACC and other
intergovernmental bodies

2. IACSD, in its consideration of the follow-up to the outcome of the meetings of ACC and other intergovernmental bodies, discussed the interface between the inter-agency task forces established by ACC and the work of IACSD. IACSD emphasized the need to take practical steps to give effect to the ACC recommendation for ensuring close substantive links between the task forces and relevant IACSD task managers; it agreed that if specifically requested by the inter-agency task forces to contribute to some aspect of their work, it would complement such work, as requested. It was also noted that the time-bound nature of the task forces was one factor that should be borne in mind in defining their interface with IACSD.

3. IACSD was briefed on the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the entire range of activity within the Commission, as well as related events, such as panel discussions, special events and presentations, that were held during the session. The task manager approach has been well established and is being referred to in the context of the coordinated follow-up to international conferences.

B. ACC Statement to the special session of the General Assembly
for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the
implementation of Agenda 21

4. The attention of ACC is drawn to paragraphs 31 to 36 below. Since, in the view of IACSD, the impact of the ACC statement on the outcome of the special session of the General Assembly to be held in June 1997 would be enhanced if it were made available prior to the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (7-25 April 1997), IACSD requests ACC to agree with the following procedure for preparing the statement:

(a) IACSD will finalize the draft ACC statement to the special session at its ninth meeting;

(b) The text of the statement, on an exceptional basis, will be formally approved by ACC members by correspondence with a view to making the statement available prior to the fifth session of the Commission.

C. Proposed agenda, dates and venue for the ninth meeting of IACSD

5. It was agreed that IACSD would held its ninth meeting at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 20 and 21 February 1997, immediately prior to the meeting of the Inter-sessional Working Group of the Commission on Sustainable Development; the provisional agenda is contained in annex IV.

D. Dates and venue for the fifth session of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas

6. IACSD approved the proposed timing and venue for the fifth session of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas at World Bank headquarters in Washington, D.C., during the week of 6 January 1997.

7. IACSD also endorsed the recommendation of the Subcommittee that, as of 1 January 1997, Ms. T. Melvasalo of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) be appointed Chairperson of the Subcommittee and Mr. M. Hayashi of the United Nations be appointed Vice-Chairperson.

II. WORK OF IACSD

A. Preparations for the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and planning for the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21

8. IACSD emphasized the political importance of the preparations for the special session, to be held in 1997, at which the General Assembly would carry out a comprehensive review of progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). The United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions and other relevant bodies, should actively contribute to making the special session a highly visible international event that would energize global commitment to the implementation of Agenda 21 and advance international dialogue and action for sustainable development.

9. IACSD agreed that it would be essential for the 1997 review to go beyond assessing progress achieved in the Commission on Sustainable Development and the United Nations system and produce a frank and analytical appraisal of the overall progress made and problems encountered at the international, national and local levels.

10. It was suggested that, in addition to their active involvement through the IACSD system of task managers in the preparation of the main reports being prepared for the 1997 review (see list in annex V), the organizations of the United Nations system consider making their own contributions to the review process with a view to enriching the preparations for the fifth session of the Commission and the special session itself.

11. IACSD welcomed work carried out by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in response to General Assembly resolution 50/95 to prepare a comprehensive assessment on trade and environment, as well as the work carried out by the World Health Organization (WHO) to prepare a world health and environment report, as important inputs to the special session. Preparatory work for the special session would also benefit from a mid-term review of achievements made in reaching the goals set out by the World Summit for Children, whose outcome had been fully incorporated in Agenda 21. Other important contributions could also be received from the regional commissions and relevant conventions. Furthermore, there were high expectations that the final report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests would provide a significant contribution to the 1997 review and to forest-related work in general in the period after the special session. Another important expectation concerned the ongoing global freshwater assessment.

12. Taking into account the time-frame of the preparatory process, it was emphasized that United Nations organizations that were undertaking or considering making contributions to the 1997 review should strive to make such contributions available before the fifth session of the Commission with a view to enhancing their impact on the final outcome of the special session.

13. Furthermore, it was felt that it would be essential to engage in the process, as far as possible, relevant governing bodies and intergovernmental meetings held under their auspices. An important input to the 1997 review would come from the World Food Summit, which would address the issue of sustainability, and from the nineteenth session of the UNEP Governing Council, at which the Governing Council would specifically consider the UNEP contribution.

14. IACSD noted the significance of various country-driven initiatives, which would build up a political momentum leading to the special session. IACSD also noted with satisfaction a proposal voiced during the high-level segment of the fourth session of the Commission to organize a joint meeting of ministers of environment and ministers of finance as part of the 1997 preparatory process, and expressed its hope that interested countries would follow up on that promising initiative. Important contributions were also expected from non-governmental organizations and major groups.

15. IACSD felt that its own role in the preparations for the 1997 review should be focused on ensuring that the substantive material submitted by the United Nations system for consideration by the Commission and the special session was of the highest quality and credibility. That material should, inter alia, demonstrate that international institutions were both responsive and capable of facilitating consensus-building and that they supported action at the global and field levels; it should also draw attention to the constraints that they faced.

16. IACSD expressed its appreciation to the task managers for providing a most valuable contribution to the preparation of reports for the 1997 review. It welcomed the outcome of the meeting of the task managers (New York, 8-10 July 1996) (see ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.4), and invited the task managers, in their further work on those reports, to take into account the conclusions

reached at their meeting, as well as the specific comments and suggestions made on individual reports.

17. IACSD specifically highlighted an important recommendation of the meeting of the task managers to ensure the participatory nature of the preparation of reports by maintaining close consultations with all relevant parts of the United Nations system and by broadening, as appropriate, consultative outreach to other relevant institutions, non-governmental organizations and outside experts, who would also contribute to building momentum for the special session.

18. As to specific suggestions made at the meeting concerning the concise reports on individual chapters of Agenda 21, the following was decided:

(a) Further consideration would be given to the most effective way of addressing matters related to programme area 2 D, "Encouraging economic policies conducive to sustainable development". It was agreed that the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat, UNCTAD, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other organizations of the United Nations system would continue their consultations on the matter;

(b) Further consultations would take place between the Department, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the secretariat of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction and the task managers on the ways of adequately addressing in the reports matters related to natural disasters.

19. IACSD took note of the outline of a comprehensive report on progress achieved since UNCED in the implementation of Agenda 21, as requested by the General Assembly in paragraph 13 of its resolution 50/113, which was submitted by the meeting of the task managers (see annex VI), and which in the view of IACSD adequately reflected the main policy issues to be included in the report. IACSD invited the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and the task managers, in future work on the report, to take into account recommendations made during the meeting of the task managers. IACSD emphasized that an important challenge for the comprehensive report would be on the one hand to show real achievements and progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 at the international and national levels, and on the other to convey the urgency of the need for further action to achieve sustainable development. The comprehensive report should also recommend that the Commission adopt a more focused approach to key policy issues of sustainability, while strengthening the roles and commitments of other intergovernmental bodies and processes in addressing the objectives of Agenda 21.

20. The Committee requested the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, in its further work on the report on main trends in sustainable development (see annex V), to give due attention to matters related to food security and the situation of children.

21. It was agreed that UNEP would take the lead and prepare, in consultation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), a

contribution to the comprehensive report that would deal with the environmental impact of activities that were gravely hazardous to the environment.

22. The Committee also encouraged the task managers, as agreed during their meeting, to collect success stories in Agenda 21 implementation and submit relevant information to the Department so that it could be used in information and awareness-raising work in the preparations for the 1997 special session.

Assessment of the post-UNCED institutional arrangements

23. IACSD noted that the specific institutional, policy and programme actions undertaken by individual United Nations agencies in response to UNCED had been reported to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourth session. What was expected from the fifth session of the Commission and the special session of the General Assembly would be an analytical assessment of the changes in institutional processes reported by agencies in response to UNCED. The report on chapter 38, however, should follow the common structure agreed for all the concise reports: that is, it should present achievements, constraints, promising changes and emerging priorities.

24. It was recognized that chapter 38 addressed institutional arrangements (a) at the level of individual organizations; (b) at the inter-agency level; and (c) in terms of country-level coordination. As for assessing inter-agency cooperation and coordination arrangements, it was felt that the ongoing review of the functioning of IACSD should produce sufficient elements for its report to the Commission on that topic.

25. In terms of country-level coordination, IACSD suggested that the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), as the agency primarily responsible for the coordination of United Nations programme implementation at the country level, take the lead in producing an assessment of such efforts, in cooperation with its partners at the field level.

26. IACSD agreed that the proposed assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the institutional changes adopted by individual organizations should be carried out jointly. It was recognized that individual assessments could serve as the basis of the collective review. It was understood that such assessments would be used only as an initial input of the task manager in preparing a draft paper for further discussion.

27. It was agreed that the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development would address a letter to all concerned agencies setting out the main points for preparing the individual assessments. It would, at the same time, circulate a background note from the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development to brief agencies on institutional changes already reported to the Commission in order to avoid repetition of purely descriptive materials. Based on the individual assessments received, the Department would prepare an annotated outline or a first draft of a discussion paper, which would set out the common findings stemming from individual assessments. It would be circulated to agencies for their review and would serve as the basis for the proposed inter-agency meeting to be held in New York in late October 1996, which

would include selected outside experts who were familiar with the United Nations system.

28. Accordingly, IACSD decided on the following process for undertaking the assessment:

	<u>Deadline</u>
- The Department to send out letters to agencies providing a structure and guidelines for self-assessments, and recirculation of the above-mentioned background note from the fourth session of the Commission	End-July 1996
- Short self-assessments, preferably one page, to be prepared by agencies and sent to the Department	16 September 1996
- Preparation of an annotated outline/discussion paper to be circulated in advance to agencies	Mid-October 1996
- Expert/inter-agency meeting to finalize the collective assessment	Back to back with ACC (25 and 26 October 1996)

B. Streamlining of requests for national reports

29. The Committee considered the background notes prepared by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.7), containing proposals for presentation to the Commission on Sustainable Development. IACSD endorsed the proposal that streamlining, at that stage, should be pursued by seeking a division of labour between reporting to the Commission and reporting to conventions and agencies. Through that process, the country profiles currently being prepared for the Commission on Sustainable Development would become a first access document containing general institutional and macroeconomic information, with cross-references/linkages to other databases holding more specific information collected by the conventions and organizations of the United Nations system. Moreover, countries would be encouraged to indicate the bodies to which they had already reported certain information. That process would eventually require common core data sets, computerization of the country profiles and mutually accessible databases.

30. It was agreed that following additional consultations with convention secretariats, task managers and Member States, a report enumerating the proposals would be prepared for discussion by IACSD at its ninth session and eventual presentation to the Commission at its fifth session.

C. Review of IACSD: phase III

31. The Committee recalled that in accordance with the arrangements determined by ACC, phase III of the review of the functioning of IACSD would result in a statement of ACC for submission to the special session of the General Assembly to be held in 1997. That statement would analyse the effectiveness of inter-agency arrangements established to follow up UNCED, and on the basis of experience gained since UNCED would suggest ways of promoting more effective and efficient United Nations system-wide support in the area of sustainable development for the period after 1997.

32. It was agreed that the statement should be seen as an opportunity to show to the General Assembly that not only were United Nations system institutions committed to Agenda 21 and sustainable development but also that in spite of various constraints they could add value and provide momentum for real progress towards sustainable development at international and national levels. It was also essential for the statement to be forward-looking in order to enhance its impact on the deliberations during the special session. Furthermore, it should be concise, policy-oriented and analytical.

33. The statement should formulate the collective views of the United Nations system on promising opportunities for United Nations organizations to deliver more and current problems that they faced in the field of sustainable development. Emphasis should be placed on actual and potential support for progress at the country level, including through forging new alliances both among the organizations of the United Nations system and with other partners and organizations.

34. IACSD agreed that the statement should contain the following main parts:

I. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT INTER-AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS TO FOLLOW UP UNCED AND TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND ASSESSMENT OF THEIR EFFECTIVENESS

The main goal of this part will be to illustrate that the United Nations system provides the opportunity for a flexible, multidisciplinary and participatory mechanism (outreaching beyond the framework of United Nations system institutions, if needed) to support the implementation of Agenda 21.

It will include the following considerations:

(a) That modalities for inter-agency collaboration have evolved since UNCED as more experience has been gained; brief reference to the outcomes of phases I and II of the review; role of the task managers system; reference to interaction with inter-agency arrangements established to follow up other recent conferences;

(b) Successful examples of system-wide collaboration, particularly at the programme/country levels;

(c) Brief reference to ongoing work in the United Nations system to further improve inter-agency collaboration and coordination (such as streamlining requests for reporting, coordination at the regional/national levels, interaction with other ACC bodies and mechanisms for inter-agency coordination (such as the Inter-Agency Environment Coordination Group), involvement of organizations outside the United Nations system etc.).

II. MAIN CHALLENGES FACED BY THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM DURING THE PERIOD

This part will address:

(a) The need for common approaches and building up new and innovative alliances for joint action at the country/project level;

(b) Resource constraints;

(c) The increasing volume of tasks, including requests for reporting, emanating from the Commission on Sustainable Development and other intergovernmental bodies;

(d) The need for better policy coordination between various governing bodies within the United Nations system in order to ensure policy coherence and support joint programming.

III. MAIN ISSUES REQUIRING ATTENTION DURING THE SPECIAL SESSION AND IN THE PERIOD BEYOND THE 1997 REVIEW

This section will focus on suggestions for ways of promoting more effective and efficient United Nations system-wide support in the area of sustainable development for the period after 1997.

Furthermore, it might suggest possible ways for promoting a more focused approach to coordination and closer cooperation in advancing action-oriented recommendations on main policy and programme issues. One of the messages that could be included in this part of the statement might suggest that the reorganization of the work programme of the Commission and of sustainable development work in general on a limited number of strategic and priority issues could contribute to a more focused approach to relevant activities in the United Nations system, at both international and country levels.

35. The Committee agreed that in order to enhance the impact of the ACC statement on the outcome of the special session it would be important to finalize it prior to the fifth session of the Commission. Accordingly, IACSD agreed to seek the endorsement at the next ACC meeting of the following course of action:

(a) That IACSD be permitted to finalize the draft ACC statement to the special session at its ninth meeting, in early 1997;

(b) That the text of the statement, on exceptional basis, be formally approved by ACC members by correspondence with a view to making it available prior to the fifth session of the Commission.

36. Furthermore, it was agreed that the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development would prepare and circulate the first draft of the ACC statement to the special session by 1 November 1996 for comments (with a deadline of 1 December 1996). The second draft, incorporating comments received and attempting to reflect relevant latest developments, would be prepared for consideration and approval at the ninth meeting of IACSD. Bearing in mind the important nature of the statement, it was agreed that the Department would circulate the second draft at least two weeks prior to the ninth meeting of IACSD.

D. Reports of subsidiary bodies reporting to IACSD:
report of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and
Coastal Areas on its fourth session

37. The Chairman of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas introduced the report on its fourth session and brought to the particular attention of IACSD matters contained in section I of its report.

38. IACSD agreed on the dates and venue of the fifth session of the Subcommittee at the headquarters of the World Bank at Washington, D.C., during the week of 6 January 1997.

39. IACSD also agreed, bearing in mind the principle of rotation for the Chairperson, on the Subcommittee's unanimous nomination of Ms. T. Melvasalo (UNEP) to that function as of 1 January 1997, and Mr. M. Hayashi (United Nations) as Vice-Chairperson as of the same date. In the interim, the current Chairperson, Mr. S. M. Garcia (FAO), would consult with the new officers to ensure a smooth transition.

40. IACSD noted that the Subcommittee in accordance with the recommendation contained in decision 4/15 of the Commission on Sustainable Development, had considered the question of its status and effectiveness, and that it had made the preliminary suggestions that it report directly to ACC through the Organizational Committee (OC), and that its Chairperson be invited to attend IACSD sessions.

41. On the question of the participation of chairpersons of ACC subcommittees, including the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, it was decided that they would have a standing invitation to participate in IACSD meetings. On the basis of the specific agenda under consideration, each Chairperson could decide which meetings they would attend.

42. On the question of status and the Subcommittee reporting directly to ACC through OC, attention was drawn to the work under way in ACC on the streamlining of its subsidiary machinery. It was also observed that the subcommittees could draw the attention of IACSD to matters that they would like to send to ACC. In

the light of those observations, it was agreed that for the present no further action would be taken on that preliminary suggestion of the Subcommittee.

E. Other matters

1. Dates, venue and provisional agenda for the ninth meeting of IACSD

43. It was agreed that IACSD would hold its ninth meeting in New York at United Nations Headquarters on 20 and 21 February 1997.

44. IACSD approved the provisional agenda for its ninth meeting, which is contained in annex IV to the present report.

2. Other issues

45. The representative of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) informed IACSD of the current state of preparations for the World Solar Summit, to be held at Harare in September 1996 at the invitation of the President of Zimbabwe. He drew attention to the Harare draft declaration on solar energy and development, and invited the comments and cooperation of the members of IACSD in the follow-up and implementation of the World Solar Programme that would be adopted at the Summit.

46. IACSD also took note of the background note entitled 'Inventories of regional initiatives in the area of sustainable development' (ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.11), which was prepared by IACSD based on contributions received from the regional commissions, and invited organizations to submit their written comments on the note to the Department.

47. The representative of the World Bank informed IACSD of the World Bank's annual Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Development. The 1996 Conference would be convened from 25 to 27 September 1996 at George Washington University, Washington, D.C., and would address the theme 'Rural well-being: from vision to action'. Members of IACSD were most welcome. The outputs of the Conference would contribute to the World Food Summit and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research.

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda and timetable.
2. Follow-up to the outcome of meetings of:
 - (a) ACC;
 - (b) Intergovernmental bodies: relevant decisions with implications for IACSD and the Commission on Sustainable Development.
3. Preparations for the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly:
 - (a) Preparations for the fifth session of the Commission;
 - (b) Planning for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly;
 - (c) Streamlining of requests for national reports.
4. Review of IACSD: phase III.
5. Reports of subsidiary bodies reporting to IACSD: report of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas on its fourth session.
6. Other matters:
 - (a) Dates, venue and provisional agenda for the ninth meeting of IACSD;
 - (b) Dissemination of IACSD documentation by e-mail;
 - (c) Other issues.
7. Adoption of the report.

Annex II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairman: N. Desai (United Nations)

Secretary: N. Seth (United Nations)

United Nations, its entities and programmes

Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development	J. Waller-Hunter L. Flanders A. Rogers A. Vasilyev H. Morita-Lou M. P. Silveira-Williams K. Gerlach
Department for Development Support and Management Services	M. Brewster
Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis	G. Carissimo R. Shah
Office of Legal Affairs	R. Gruszka
Department of Humanitarian Affairs	O. Elo
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements	A. A. Gueye J. Tagami
Regional Commissions New York Office	M. McCaffery
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	G. Kell
United Nations Environment Programme	F. Schlingemann A. Dahl
United Nations Children's Fund	G. Ghosh M. Saint Lot Jingjing Qian
United Nations Development Programme	K. Jorgensen D. Rohrmann
United Nations Population Fund	A. Jorgensen-Dahl
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	E. Umlas

Specialized agencies and related organizations

International Labour Organization	C. Haupt
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	T. J. Aldington
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization	G. Glaser
World Health Organization	A. J. Joseph M. Ueda
World Bank	J. Martin-Brown
International Monetary Fund	J. B. Zulu H. Shugarman
World Meteorological Organization	S. Chacowry
United Nations Industrial Development Organization	M. Rigola
* * *	
International Atomic Energy Agency	M. S. Opelz
* * *	
Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity	C. Juma S. Johnston
* * *	
Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa	A. Jamal
* * *	
ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas	S. M. Garcia

Annex III

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

- ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.1 Annotated provisional agenda
- ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.2 Timetable
- ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.3 Follow-up to the outcome of meetings of intergovernmental bodies: decisions made at the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development requiring follow-up by IACSD (background note prepared by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat)
- ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.4 Preparations for the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly: report of the meeting of task managers (New York, 8-10 July 1996)
- ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.5 Preparations for the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly: ideas proposed for the special session of the Assembly during the high-level segment at the fourth session of the Commission (background note prepared by the Department)
- ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.6 Preparations for the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly: assessment of post-UNCED institutional arrangements (review of the implementation of chapter 38 of Agenda 21; background note prepared by the Department)
- ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.7 Streamlining of requests for national reports: proposals on the streamlining of national reporting (background note prepared by the Department)
- ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.8 Review of IACSD: phase III (background note prepared by the Department)

ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.9

Reports of subsidiary bodies reporting to IACSD: report of the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas on its fourth session (IMO headquarters, London, 28-30 May 1996)

ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.10

Dates of meetings/events relevant to the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (background note prepared by the Department)

ACC/IACSD/VIII/1996/CRP.11
and Add.1

Background note entitled 'Inventories of regional initiatives in the area of sustainable development', prepared by IACSD based on contributions from the regional commissions

Annex IV

PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE NINTH MEETING OF IACSD

1. Adoption of the agenda and timetable.
2. Follow-up to the outcome of the meetings of ACC and relevant intergovernmental bodies.
3. Consideration of the draft ACC statement to the special session of the General Assembly for the purpose of an overall review and appraisal of the implementation of Agenda 21.
4. Reports of subsidiary bodies reporting to IACSD.
5. Other matters.
6. Adoption of the report.

Annex V

LIST OF MAIN REPORTS BEING PREPARED FOR CONSIDERATION
DURING THE 1997 REVIEW a/

1. Comprehensive report of the Secretary-General containing an overall assessment of the progress achieved since UNCED in the implementation of Agenda 21 and recommendations for future actions and priorities
2. Concise reports of the Secretary-General on the progress achieved in specific sectoral and cross-sectoral areas of Agenda 21
3. Report of the Secretary-General containing an assessment of progress made and constraints encountered at the national level, based on information received in country profiles
4. Report of the Secretary-General on the application of the Principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development
5. Report of the Secretary-General on the environmental impact of activities that are gravely hazardous to the environment
6. Report of the Secretary-General on ongoing energy-oriented programmes and activities within the United Nations system
7. Report of the Secretary-General on the streamlining of national reporting requirements
8. Report on main trends in sustainable development
9. Global freshwater assessment
10. Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests
11. Report of the Governing Council of UNEP (parts relevant to the 1997 review)
12. UNCTAD report containing a comprehensive assessment on trade and environment

a/ Including documents officially requested by the General Assembly, Commission on Sustainable Development or other United Nations intergovernmental bodies specifically for the 1997 review, as well as those initiated by United Nations system organizations, regional commissions and conventions; titles of reports are provisional.

Annex VI

ELEMENTS FOR A DRAFT OUTLINE OF A COMPREHENSIVE REPORT ON
PROGRESS ACHIEVED SINCE THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
AGENDA 21

I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL
SITUATION FIVE YEARS AFTER UNCED, AND PROSPECTS FOR THE
FUTURE, WITH LINKAGES TO THE REPORT ON MAIN TRENDS IN
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT a/

This section will analyse, in the context of sustainable development, whether the overall world situation in 1997 is different in comparison with the situation in 1992. In particular, it should highlight:

(a) Changes at the national and international levels (highlighting main developments in developing and developed countries and countries with economies in transition), including in the donor community;

(b) Trends in globalization, privatization, trade liberalization, communications revolution etc.;

(c) The evolving role of major groups and other non-governmental actors, as well as of local government, and the changing role of central Governments;

(d) The increasing role of developing countries in international negotiations;

(e) The state of environment and situation with main natural resources components (water, forests, biodiversity, etc.), in a brief assessment that should be coordinated and cross-referenced with the more comprehensive assessment currently being prepared by UNEP);

(f) Health status as it relates to environmental determinants;

(g) The outcomes of recent international conferences relevant to sustainable development.

In the light of the above, this section will also include justification of continuing or indeed growing importance of achieving sustainable development; reconfirmation of the relevance of Agenda 21; and the role of international cooperation, particularly of the United Nations system, including the Bretton Woods institutions, in facilitating the achievement of sustainable development, with highlights of recent and emerging policy changes.

II. MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS SINCE UNCED (BASED ON CONCISE REPORTS)

This section will cover:

(a) Progress in institutionalizing Agenda 21 at international/national/local levels (conventions, outcomes of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, adoption of specific programmes of action envisaged in Agenda 21, national sustainable development strategies/councils and local Agenda 21s);

(b) National initiatives that have advanced the international sustainable development agenda;

(c) Key policy trends (effective implementation and promising approaches, and examples of instruments or categories of instrument);

(d) Areas of activity in which UNCED/the Commission on Sustainable Development have made a difference and influenced policy development and/or implementation actions, with some concrete examples at international/national/major groups levels.

III. MAIN PROBLEMS IN AGENDA 21 IMPLEMENTATION AND UNMET EXPECTATIONS OF UNCED (BASED ON CONCISE REPORTS), AND CAUSES OF SUCH SHORTCOMINGS

This section will focus on those commitments and recommendations of Agenda 21 on which progress so far has been limited, and will analyse the main reasons for such shortcomings, both economic and political. It will also explain that most of the strategic objectives of Agenda 21 are long-term in nature. This part will include:

(a) Examples of areas/goals in which progress has been limited or there was no progress at all (such as public international financial flows, wealth gap, health gap, gender gap and technology transfer in the terms identified in Agenda 21);

(b) The main difficulties and constraints faced by countries/international institutions in the implementation of Agenda 21 (such as lack of integration for sustainable development).

IV. MAIN CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES FOR THE PERIOD AFTER 1997 (BASED ON CONCISE REPORTS). THIS PART SHOULD, INTER ALIA, ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY THE NEED FOR A NEW APPROACH IN THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AFTER 1997

In the light of the main conclusions contained in sections I-III above, this section should attempt to:

(a) Reinforce the need for emphasizing implementation now that main international agreements are in place;

(b) Demonstrate the need for a shift in policy approach from achieving international agreement on the management of environmental/natural resources to

an approach focused on driving forces, cross-cutting issues and economic actors/sectors involved in implementation with a view to integrating sustainable development in the mainstream of national and international decision-making;

- (c) Identify new approaches to financing, with a focus on prevention;
- (d) Identify key issues in achieving sustainable development/implementation of Agenda 21 (such as natural resource valuation, ownership and compensation, energy and consumption patterns) at the national and global levels;
- (e) Identify new areas of concern that have arisen since UNCED that were not properly addressed in Agenda 21 (for example, possible link with the results of global freshwater assessment, transport, urban issues and tourism);
- (f) Suggest ways of addressing problems, as well as new and emerging priorities in Agenda 21 implementation (such as education);
- (g) Make sure that adequate monitoring arrangements are in place.

V. SUGGESTIONS ON INSTITUTIONAL CHANGES AFTER 1997, INCLUDING THE ROLE AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

This section will cover:

- (a) The need for the General Assembly at its special session to call upon various intergovernmental bodies in the United Nations system to reconfirm their commitment to sustainable development and energize their efforts in the implementation of Agenda 21 (reference to ACC statement);
- (b) Institutional linkages in the implementation of Agenda 21 and coordinated follow-up to other international conferences, as well as linkages with United Nations reform;
- (c) Relevant roles and programmes of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and other intergovernmental bodies and commissions, such as the UNEP Governing Council, the Commission for Social Development, the Commission on Population and Development, the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development, including their interaction with the Commission on Sustainable Development;
- (d) Suggestions on the programme and methods of work of the Commission on Sustainable Development (in the light of section IV above), including:
 - (i) A programme of work that allows a focus on key issues, rather than reviewing all chapters of Agenda 21 on a routine basis;
 - (ii) Ways of ensuring a more active and systematic involvement of major groups;

(iii) Modalities of work of the Commission.

Notes

a/ See annex V.
