

NGO intervention at the Cross-cutting and interlinkages panel 02/05/07

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for giving us the space to contribute to this dialogue.

Let me first stress that we strongly support the proposal to involve the private sector more actively in the implementation of sustainable development programmes. We however stress further that this must be with the application of corporate environmental and social accountability and responsibility. It is an important cross-cutting issue and we propose that a legally binding mechanism should be developed for this.

We applaud the various contributions by delegates about the need for gender mainstreaming. We further propose that delegates should take this beyond the level of rhetoric and see that they are implemented on the ground.

To ensure sustainable development, we call for the phasing out of environmentally harmful subsidies. In the JPOI is an agreement to phase out energy subsidies that inhibit sustainable development, and we propose that this should be implemented until 2010. If subsidies for fossil fuels and nuclear power are phased out and funds directed effectively towards efficient renewable energy we would soon see major progress in the transition to sustainable energy solutions. It is however not only in energy that a number of environmentally harmful subsidies inhibit sustainable development. It is also true for industrial development, for agriculture, and for the other issues dealt with by the CSD in its five “cycles.”

A cross cutting issue that has not been much discussed at the CSD is that development of energy markets as well as other markets must contribute to sustainable development and must benefit the poor. This includes that the markets must contribute to sustainable development and consumption patterns.

Finally, we propose a simple principle: energy and industrial development must be sustainable. It has already been proposed by some countries that renewable energy must be used sustainably. We certainly agree with this, but this must also be extended to other forms of energy and their use must stay within the carrying capacity of the earth. As a consequence of this, we propose to stop the expansion of unsustainable hydropower and fossil fuels and to phase out nuclear power as these cannot be sustainable.

We like to remind delegates of the words of a former Saudi oil minister who said that the Stone Age did not end because of a shortage of stones. Likewise the fossil fuel age will not end because oil deposits had been exhausted but because of the urgent need to move to a sustainable future.

Thank you for your attention.