

Bali, 7 June 2002

Vice-Chairs' Summary of the Informal Meetings on Partnerships for Sustainable Development

1. During the fourth Preparatory Committee of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) two informal meetings on Partnerships for Sustainable Development were held ('type 2' outcomes). The meetings provided participants a forum to exchange further views on the guiding principles for partnerships for sustainable development which are intended to contribute to implementing Agenda 21, the Millennium Declaration Goals and the intergovernmentally agreed outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit. They also gave interested parties an opportunity to inform about partnerships which they are undertaking. The informal meetings were attended by representatives of governments, international organisations and major groups. Discussions showed a considerable interest to engage in partnerships for sustainable development, and participants expressed the hope for wider participation, particularly by developing countries.
2. Based on the discussions during the first informal meeting, the Vice-Chairs circulated an explanatory note with guiding principles for partnerships for sustainable development. Participants welcomed the note as a useful basis to engage in such partnerships. A slightly revised version, taking into account comments made during the second informal meeting, is attached to this summary.

Observations on the guiding principles for partnerships for sustainable development

3. Participants asked for further elaboration of the guidelines for partnerships issued by the Vice-Chairs at the end of the third Preparatory Committee meeting. They stressed that partnerships for sustainable development are not intended to substitute strong commitments by governments in the intergovernmentally agreed outcomes of the Summit, rather they should reinforce the implementation of these commitments through concrete action.
4. Several participants expressed the view that partnerships for sustainable development should allow for a wider participation of stakeholders, involve them through a bottom-up approach and focus on the strengths and assets of each partner instead of being donor-driven. They would thus contribute to increasing the quality of implementation of Agenda 21. Other participants expressed concerns that these partnerships might lead to a shift in funding at the expense of existing programmes and projects and stressed the need for partnerships to mobilize additional resources.
5. It was generally understood that partnerships for sustainable development are of a voluntary, self-organizing nature. The framework for their

elaboration should therefore be flexible enough to allow for creativity and innovative ideas. On the other hand, there were strong calls to establish parameters for such partnerships that would ensure integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in their design and implementation, as well as monitoring of progress in their implementation after the Johannesburg Summit.

6. Participants highlighted the need for a multi-stakeholder approach, based on mutual respect and shared responsibility of all partners involved. Ownership of the partnership process and its outcomes should be shared among all partners, and all partners should be equally accountable. It was pointed out that capacity-building efforts should be undertaken to support potentially weaker partners.
7. The importance of getting the community level involved in the design and implementation of partnerships was stressed by several participants, as the successful implementation of sustainable development has to be achieved to a considerable extent at the local level. The impact of partnerships to be recognized by the Summit should however extend beyond the local and national levels; these partnerships should not replace existing bilateral channels of development cooperation.
8. There was agreement that the partnerships should ideally be elaborated as a genuine contribution to the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and that in case of on-going initiatives and processes, there would have to be a significant added value in the context of the Summit for such partnerships to qualify for recognition by the Summit.

Potential areas for partnerships for sustainable development

9. Several participants informed about partnership proposals in a wide range of areas, including freshwater, energy, sustainable urbanisation and sustainable agriculture. Other participants indicated that they need more time to develop their ideas for partnerships for sustainable development and would welcome an opportunity to explore them with potential partners. Areas mentioned include chemicals, science, education and training, forests, information and communication technologies, sustainable mountain development, oceans and fisheries, sustainable consumption and production patterns, and technology transfer.

Follow-up process after the Johannesburg Summit

10. Participants agreed that the Commission on Sustainable Development should serve as a focal point for discussion of partnerships for sustainable development. They stressed that the Johannesburg Summit should not be the end-date for the submission of partnerships and expressed the expectation that many more partnerships for sustainable development would be developed as part of the follow-up process. Some highlighted the need for a participatory

approach in designing a mechanism for assessing progress in the implementation of partnerships. Others felt that reporting requirements should be kept as simple as possible, given the wide range in size and characteristics of partnerships. Several participants asked the Summit Secretariat and the UN system to propose for consideration ways and means to support partnerships for sustainable development, including through the establishment of a clearinghouse mechanism, by giving quality guidance for partnerships and by helping to provide a regular assessment of on-going partnership activities.

Information on the selection of partnerships to be recognized by the WSSD

11. All interested partners are invited to submit their proposals for partnerships for sustainable development to the Summit Secretariat (email linnm@un.org), at the latest by mid-August, using the [information sheet](#) attached to the Chairman's explanatory note available at the official United Nations website for the Johannesburg Summit (www.johannesburgsummit.org). Submissions will be posted to this website. The Bureau of the Preparatory Committee, with the assistance of the Summit Secretariat, will review the information provided by the partners and determine whether the guiding principles for partnerships have been observed.