

CSD Education Caucus

Outline of a Response to the UN High-level Panel Report on System-wide Coherence, *Delivering As One*

The experience of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) processes might be summarized in this way: From broadly engaging people in sustainability to evaluating the shifting mosaic of development, humanitarian assistance, and environment, education transcends the dimensions of a cross-cutting issue to function more centrally and strategically as a foundation for both international institutional coherence for sustainable development and achieving real outcomes. How well the institutional framework can learn, adapt and adjust itself to empower all actors determines -- or, at least, strongly influences -- the fulfillment of commitment to a shared agenda.

One of the strengths of CSD is its capacity for sustained interaction among governments, inter-governments and the major groups as identified in Agenda 21, and civil society. This capacity can be further strengthened given the UN Coherence panel's proposed superstructure.

Establishing a standing or permanent forum for multilateral and multistakeholder as well as high-level dialogues: This non-normative approach -- especially taken where a country's people have no recourse to a National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), a Local Agenda 21 initiative, or a country-level platform for negotiation -- can bring about new policy options and new partnerships to resolve "deadlocks" in adaptation, response measures, coordination, and partnerships. This forum would be a way to capture, for example, innovations exemplified by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and also the indigenous work in the Arctic Polar region.

To parallel CSD negotiated outcome texts, a "Challenge Document" prepared by the CSD Bureau should identify themes to be addressed in the standing or permanent forums for dialogue. These themes should aim to clarify the qualities of a sustainable (-- that is, economically, environmentally and socially just) -- future for all. In view of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), one example of a thematic forum would be to discuss interlinkages between and syntheses with peace and human security as qualities of the three pillars (economic, social and environmental) of sustainable development.

The UN Sustainable Development Board should address the public by way of a periodic report that:

(1) translates progress on the sustainable development agenda within the context of normative frameworks; e.g., Agenda 21, the Millennium Development

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Goals (MDGs), and NSDS;

(2) presents the challenge of learning, adjustment and engagement/empowerment in the areas of governance and civil society partnership, with the aid of case studies; and

(3) discusses approaches to integrating environmental, social, and economic concerns, highlighting the impacts on global youth and women.

Additional thoughts:

(1) The capacity for multiple and inclusive stakeholder dialogues should be recognized as a global public good.

(2) Recognition of the human right to dignity equates with education/learning for sustainability