

Agenda item 7.3

**A note on the deliberations of the 13th Session of the UN
Commission on Sustainable Development**

Action requested: Given the emphasis of CSD13 on integration, SC31 may wish to consider an affirmative draft Resolution which links the menu of prospective COP9 decisions in a holistic way with the work of CSD and the World Water Forum.

1. The 13th Session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD13) met during 14 – 30 April 2005. The Convention Secretariat was represented throughout by the Convention Development Officer and for the final high-level segment by the Secretary General. CSD13 was preceded by an Intergovernmental Preparatory meeting held between 28 February and 4 March.
2. This paper represents an attempt by the Secretariat to identify in the communiqué and decisions of CSD13 key issues which have a bearing on past decisions of the Convention, the projected work for the Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP), and anticipated decisions for COP9, as well as issues germane to the implementation of the Convention in accordance with the Convention text. Obviously the text of the CSD *communiqué* is broader than that relevant to the convention *sensu stricto*, but it is also clear that CSD intended better and more comprehensive use of multilateral environment agreements (MEAs) to deliver positive outcomes for the environment in the context of sustainable development.
3. In the following text the Secretariat has used bold text to emphasise points which seem especially relevant to Ramsar. The final CSD communiqué, which dealt with Water, Sanitation and Human Settlement, had the members of the Commission emphasizing, *inter alia*, that:
 - The **policy options and practical measures for expediting implementation relating to water**, sanitation and human settlements should be nationally-owned and **integrated into poverty reduction strategies and/or national sustainable development strategies**, whose implementation should begin by 2005, or national development plans;
 - **The JPOI goals and the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, are complementary and an integrated approach is necessary;**
 - **The achievement of water, sanitation and human settlements goals, is critical to the implementation of the three pillars of sustainable development** and the achievement of all the internationally agreed development goals;

- **Governments have the primary role** in promoting improved access to safe drinking water, basic sanitation, sustainable and secure tenure, and adequate shelter, **through improved governance at all levels and appropriate enabling environments and regulatory frameworks, adopting a pro-poor approach and with the active involvement of all stakeholders;**
 - Efforts by Governments to achieve the agreed goals and targets on water, sanitation and human settlements should be supported by the international community through a conducive international policy environment, **including through *good governance at the international level*, technical cooperation and capacity building, and technology transfer consistent with *international obligations including agreements acceded to*;**
 - **Water, sanitation and human settlements are interlinked and complementary and should be addressed in an integrated manner**, taking into account economic, social and environmental aspects, related sectoral policies and cross-cutting issues as identified at CSD-11, **as well as national, sub-regional, and regional specificities, circumstances and legal frameworks, and bearing in mind that *no one size fits all*;**
4. CSD clearly thus indicated the role that better governance can play in defining, managing and resolving the water issue, and several interventions in the discussions leading to the communiqué emphasized especially the role that Ramsar can play in the suite of international environmental governance mechanisms.
5. **On Water especially, the CSD *Decided to call, inter alia***, on Governments, working in partnership with the UN system, major groups and other stakeholders, to:
- build capacities of local communities in operation and maintenance of water systems, and training educators, managers and technicians in different aspects of water management;
 - tap local and indigenous knowledge in project development and implementation;
 - improve monitoring and analytical capabilities of water information management agencies;
 - invest in research and development projects; and
 - address the special needs of countries with arid and semi-arid areas due to water scarcity;
6. **On Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) specifically, the CSD *recognized*** that the 2005 target on IWRM may not be met by all countries, and urged acceleration of preparation of nationally-owned IWRM and water-efficiency plans tailored to country-specific needs, paying particular attention to economic development, social and environmental needs, supporting implementation through learning-by-doing, directed, *inter alia*, towards the following:
- **encouraging, where appropriate and within their mandates, the use of MEAs to leverage additional resources for IWRM;**

- improving water governance through strengthening of institutional and regulatory reforms, capacity development and innovation;
 - providing technical and management support to local authorities and community-based organizations, taking into account research, traditional knowledge and best practices, to improve water resources management within national policy frameworks;
 - encouraging effective coordination among all stakeholders in water-related decision making;
 - **enhancing the sustainability of ecosystems** that provide essential resources and services for human well being and economic activity in water-related decision making;
 - **facilitating information exchange and knowledge sharing, including indigenous and local knowledge;**
 - **developing preventive and preparedness measures, as well as risk mitigation and disaster reduction, including early warning systems;**
 - **protecting and rehabilitating catchment areas for regulating water flows and improving water quality, taking into account the critical role of ecosystems;**
 - involving all stakeholders, including women, youth and local communities, in integrated planning and management of land and water resources;
 - promoting higher priority and greater action on **water quality;**
 - supporting African initiatives in the area of water, within the framework of AMCOW, with particular reference to **basin-wide initiatives in Africa;**
 - **enhancing cooperation among riparian States** through relevant arrangements and/or mechanisms with the consent of the States concerned, taking into account the interests of the riparian States;
 - supporting more effective **water demand and water resource management** across all sectors, **especially in the agricultural sector;**
 - developing and strengthening national monitoring systems on the quantity, quality and use of surface and groundwater resources at national and local levels, and for measuring progress towards internationally agreed goals and targets, as appropriate, as well as for assessing the impact of climate variability and change on water resources, through the following actions:
 - **establishing and managing water information systems;**
 - **installing networks for monitoring water resources and quality;**
 - **standardizing methodologies and developing monitoring indicators;**
 - **transferring monitoring technologies adaptable to local conditions;**
 - **disseminating information to relevant stakeholders.**
7. And finally, and perhaps critically, the CSD decided to address water, sanitation and human settlements **in an integrated manner**, taking into account economic, social and environmental aspects, related sectoral policies and cross-cutting issues as identified at CSD-11, as well as national, subregional, and regional specificities, circumstances and legal frameworks, with particular attention given to the requirements of women, youth and workers, through a range of measures and approaches such as:
- **interlinking measures on water, sanitation and human settlements** to increase their synergy, efficiency and impact by developing integrated and inclusive

- policies of planning and management** in water, sanitation, and human settlements;
- **improving national coordination efforts** to address water and sanitation, to manage the competing demands for water, including those for agricultural production;
 - **enhancing inter-ministerial coordination cross-sectoral coordination** and planning mechanisms, as well as mechanisms for coordination between different levels of administration;
 - **devising water, sanitation and human settlements policies and actions taking account of the need to address the impacts of rapid urbanization, desertification, climate change and climate variability and natural disasters**, including by:
 - **strategies or other relevant policy plans;**
 - **assessments of the impact of natural disasters, climate change and climate variability on water resources**, water supply, sanitation, human settlements;
 - **implementation of monitoring and early warning systems** and of relevant mitigation and adaptation technologies.
8. These decisions interact with the menu of decisions and discussions included in DOC SC31-10 on the water framework and DOC SC31-28.
9. The Secretariat has been informed that Mexico, working with other Parties, is currently preparing a COP9 draft Resolution on water-related issues and the Convention, and it is anticipated that a draft will be available by the time of the meeting of the Standing Committee.