16.1.2008

ForUM positions to UNEP GC

The Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development (ForUM) is a network of more than 50 non-governmental organisations.

The Norwegian Forum has the following recommendations to UNEP GC 2008:

1. Globalization and environment

- The interests and the basic needs of the people and the environment must be at the heart of any political and economic development, and must supersede wishes for privatisation and liberalisation. Market based solutions must not be chosen when they threaten poor people's basic rights such as the right to food, water, basic health services and basic education. Economic activities must not result in negative consequences for social and cultural conditions or for the environment. Economic globalisation must be to the advantage of the poor.
- Recalling the *Millennium Ecosystem Assessment Report,* it is crucial to protect biodiversity and ensure a sustainable use of natural resources to be able to eradicate poverty.
- The WTO regulations must not limit a country's ability to protect the environment and ensure sustainable development. Services covering basic needs and rights as well as measures to protect the environment must not be a part of an agreement. The WTO negotiations must result in:
  – the prohibition of export subsidies and of the dumping of goods from rich to poor countries,
  – increased market access for developing countries in rich countries, including duty free access for industrial products.
  – a genuine transfer of technology from North to South.
- The World Bank and the IMF should put forward environmental responsibility as a condition for credits and not support policies and strategies with negative environmental impacts.
- All illegitimate debt must be abolished.
- There is a need for a global and legally binding framework for corporate social responsibility, agreed by the UN, and which goes beyond the UN Global Compact and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises in terms of specification of requirements, reporting, monitoring and sanctions. A specific UN body should have the capacity and authorization to review companies and make them accountable for law enforcements.

2. CSD - Climate, energy and technology transfer

- The global mean temperature increase should be kept below 2 °C compared to pre-industrial levels.
- To avoid a global temperature increase exceeding 2 °C, the global GHG emissions should be reduced in the order of 50% compared to 1990 by the middle of this century.
- The industrialized countries must reduce their emissions of greenhouse gases by 30% by the year 2020 as a first vital step in achieving the main objective of the UN FCCC: to avoid dangerous human interference with the climate system. By the year 2050 the reductions should be 80%.

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- There is a need for an effective international financial mechanism and development assistance to fund energy efficiency and renewable energy. A global fund for investments in developing countries would be of great importance for poor people without access to electricity or suffering from air-polluting cook stoves. Action should be taken to forge international partnerships drawing on local instruments. To facilitate a shift towards more sustainable energy solutions, emphasis should be given to initiatives where improved energy efficiency is coupled by renewable energy technologies.
- Public authorities should assume obligations to implement standards for public buildings and procurement. This could assist in developing markets for new technologies, whilst achieving long term cost savings.
- In the transport sector there is a need for a modal shift away from aviation and road transport to rail and waterways. It is necessary to include emissions from airplanes and vessels in the international framework for reduction of GHG.
- In accordance with the UNEP Bali Strategic Plan for Technology Support and Capacity-building, effort should be made to promote and facilitate South – South transfer of technology.[1]

3. UN reform – report of the SG High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence

- UNEP should be changed into a new World Environmental Organization to strengthen the environmental pillar of sustainable development.
- The UN role of setting the standards should be strengthened. It is important to keep UN intact as a democratic decision-maker giving opportunities for NGOs to participate in the process.
- The linkage between development and environment must be strengthened. Environmental issues should be mainstreamed in the poverty reduction strategies and the development strategies, and the principles for sustainable development should in the activities of the different UN organizations.
- The baseline for the UN reforms should be what is needed to meet the challenges in the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. It is important to enable UN to take back power and positions on areas where the WTO and the Bretton Woods institutions now dominate.
- It is important to ensure a stringer and more stabile financing of the UN to enable UN to do their tasks.

4. International Chemicals Management

- There is a strong need for more rapid progress to stop uncontrolled production, trade and use of chemicals with dangerous impacts on environment and human health.
- The governments must agree on a new convention for mercury, cadmium and lead.
- Restrictions should be placed on the marketing and use of mercury in measuring and control equipment for consumer and professional use, mercury containing sphygmomanometers, and manufacturing of new barometers containing mercury should not be allowed.

5. Water policy and strategy

- Access to water is a human right and should be clearly acknowledged in international agreements
- Water resources are not commodities for commercial actors, and therefore water resources should not be subject to commercialized private ownership or trade.

[1] http://www.gpa.unep.org/bin/php/legislation/c&ml/bali.php

- Liberalization of water should not be a condition for loan and debt cancellation from multilateral finance institutions.
- Support and scaling up of well-functioning local initiatives like roof top rainwater harvesting and riverbed sub-surface dams for agricultural and environmental purposes.
- Tailor technology to local needs (small scale, low cost and low technology)
- Women have a fundamental and central role in water management, water supply and sanitation, and implementation of measures must take this into account. Participation of women in decision-making is crucial.
- There is a need to emphasize the diversity of culture and to utilize and apply traditional knowledge and skills, especially the knowledge of indigenous people, in providing safe drinking water.
- Eco-based management of water and other natural resources, and sustainable production- and consumption patterns, are necessary to reduce negative environmental impacts and contribute to poverty reduction. Water for ecosystem functions and basic human needs should be prioritised.
- There is a need to accelerate efforts to implement integrated water resources management and efficiency plans (IWRM) in line with the 2005 WSSD target.
- Revision of treaties and protocols for transboundary water resources is necessary in order to meet the needs of the local community
- The importance of forests as catchment areas should be highlighted
- A proposal for a global tariff/ fee on water consumption should be developed. . To ensure water supply for the poor, water consumption up to a certain level should not pay any tariff/fee. The incomes could be earmarked for national water supply and/or for one of the existing UN fund.