

**Administrative Committee
on Coordination**ACC/1995/17
28 August 1995

ENGLISH ONLY

REPORT OF THE SIXTH MEETING OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

(GENEVA, 12 TO 14 JULY 1995)

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) held its sixth meeting at the headquarters of the World Health Organization (WHO), Geneva from 12 to 14 July 1995. The agenda for the meeting, as adopted by the Committee, is contained in annex I; the list of participants, in annex II; and the list of documents, in annex III.

I. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEE ON COORDINATION

A. Review of IACSD: phase II

2. The Committee adopted a note on the review of its functioning, which is contained in annex V, for consideration and approval by ACC.

3. The attention of ACC is also drawn to paragraphs 47 to 49 of the present report.

B. Follow-up to the outcome of meetings of ACC and other intergovernmental bodies

1. Review of the ACC standard classification relating to financial reporting by the United Nations system on the implementation of Agenda 21

4. The Committee resumed discussion on its review of the ACC standard classification, in particular the sectors and subsectors relating to sustainable development. The ACC Organizational Committee had expressed the view that, in the light of the requirements for following up and reporting on a number of recent or forthcoming global conferences, a more general review of the ACC standard classification might be required. Agreement had been reached that the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (Financial and Budgetary Questions) (CCAQ (FB)) should be consulted on the need for and feasibility of such an overall review. The Committee had before it a background document (ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.4) prepared by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat as a basis for discussion, annex I to which contained some suggestions on possible changes/additions to the ACC classification on the programmes and expenditures of the United Nations system, by sector and subsector, to reflect changes in resources allocations and progress in the implementation of Agenda 21.

5. The Committee recognized that it was not fully competent to deal with ACC standard classifications, which should more appropriately be addressed by meetings of programme planners convened by CCPOQ and/or CCAQ (FB). The Committee, therefore, limited its comments to a number of suggestions contained in the above-mentioned document and additional sustainable development concerns, including education for sustainable development, issues related to small island

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developing States, and information issues contained in chapter 40 of Agenda 21. It was also suggested that the above-mentioned document be modified to include more guidance on the interpretation of the concept of sustainable development.

6. In the light of the discussion, the Committee agreed to convey document ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.4 and annex I to CCPOQ, indicating that they contained no more than suggestions for possible changes.

2. Relevant decisions in the context of reporting requirements and of their implications for IACSD and the Commission on Sustainable Development

7. The Committee was informed that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Governing Council, at its eighteenth session, had adopted an issues-oriented work programme with four major areas of priority: sustainable management of natural resources, sustainable production and consumption, a better environment for human health and well-being, and globalization and the environment. The total budget figure endorsed for the implementation of the programme had significantly decreased from the approved figure of \$120 million for the current biennium to \$90 million. The Committee was also informed that the Governing Council had requested the preparation of a system-wide strategy in the field of environment for 1997.

C. Proposed agenda, dates and venue for the seventh meeting of the Committee

8. IACSD agreed to recommend that its seventh meeting be held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 5 to 7 February 1996.

II. WORK OF IACSD

A. Third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and follow-up action

1. General considerations

9. The Committee felt that the deliberations of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its third session had advanced international understanding and had promoted discussion and consensus on a number of sustainable development issues. An encouraging development was that the third session of the Commission had attracted the attention of a broader range of national policy makers and ministers. Whereas the first two sessions of the Commission had been attended mainly by environment ministers, about one third of the high-level officials and ministers who attended the third session represented other sectors of government, such as the ministries of agriculture, forestry, development cooperation and finance. The establishment of the open-ended ad hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the adoption of work programmes in the areas of changing consumption and production patterns, the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and sustainable development indicators, as

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well as progress towards a more integrated approach to various land-related provisions of Agenda 21, had implications for the work of IACSD.

10. The Committee felt that the inter-agency process established by IACSD had provided an important input to the work of the third session of the Commission. It noted that the conclusions, recommendations and proposals for action contained in the reports before the Commission, which had been prepared by the task managers in collaboration with other organizations of the United Nations system, had generally been well received by member States and other participants and had provided the basis for the Commission's own decisions.

11. The members of the Committee concluded that the system of task managers had so far provided an effective and adequate mechanism to support the work of the Commission. While the system of task managers had led to greater synergy and less duplication, the preparation and follow-up work requirements related to the Commission also had budgetary implications for various organizations and agencies at a time of severe financial constraint. It was felt that the system of task managers operated particularly well when the requests from the Commission coincided with the programme priorities of the task manager's organization, especially if such priorities were reflected in the approved programme budget of the organization.

12. The Committee felt encouraged that members of the Commission had expressed their satisfaction with the fact that the Commission, through IACSD and its system of task managers, enjoyed coordinated support from the United Nations system. The visibility of United Nations system-wide partnership in support of the Commission was enhanced not only through the preparation of the reports but also through the active involvement of task managers in the deliberations during the session, as well as various presentations and side-events organized by organizations and bodies of the United Nations system.

13. The Committee noted that the division of labour between the Commission and its ad hoc inter-sessional working groups remained unclear. While the Ad Hoc Group on Sectoral Issues provided the basis for the Commission's decisions on relevant areas under review, the outcome of the Ad Hoc Group on Finance had to a certain degree been modified during the session. The members of the Committee expressed their overall concern that in the field of financing sustainable development, little practical progress had been achieved so far.

14. Concern was expressed about the work programmes adopted by the Commission. In the case of specialized agencies, their governing bodies decided upon their programmes of work and budgets. Unprogrammed, unbudgeted requests from other intergovernmental bodies were becoming increasingly difficult to accommodate within the zero-growth budgetary scenario under which most agencies were now operating. It was stressed that new work programmes should be built to the extent possible on existing programmes, otherwise the question of the need for additional resources would need to be addressed.

15. The Committee took note of the concern expressed by a number of Commission members about the length of reports prepared for its consideration; specific arrangements to improve that situation are contained in paragraphs 22 to 28 of the present report.

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2. Intergovernmental Panel on Forests

16. IACSD expressed strong support for the work of the newly established open-ended ad hoc Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. The Committee underscored the fact that support for the Panel would require both a consistent system-wide approach and active collaboration among the organizations of the United Nations system.

17. The Committee was informed that more specific arrangements for administrative and substantive support for the Panel, as well as proposals for its programme of work, would be considered by the inter-agency meeting to be convened by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development in Geneva on 20 and 21 July 1995. The Committee felt that meetings of the organizations most directly concerned with forest issues, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) as task manager, UNEP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO), should be held as required by the work programme of the Panel and should serve as a mechanism for providing and mobilizing substantive support for the work of the Panel and its secretariat. The Committee encouraged all interested organizations to consider supporting the secretariat through such secondment and/or through assigning competent staff members who would support the secretariat operating from their own organizations. The Committee expressed its appreciation to UNDP for taking early steps in that direction.

3. Establishment of common compatible data systems

18. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the decision of the Commission on chapter 40 of Agenda 21, "Information for decision-making". The Commission had noted the importance of developing, among the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, a common or compatible system of access to their respective databases in order to share data fully, streamline the collection and interpretation of data and identify data gaps, so as to provide more comprehensive and integrated data to decision makers at the national, regional and international levels. The Commission had also invited IACSD to refine measures for establishing such a system and to report to it thereon at its fourth session. The Committee had before it a background note (ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.3) prepared by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, in which the Committee was invited to take action in the areas of data collection and access to systems with a view to achieving greater coherence within the United Nations system.

19. The Committee agreed that there was a need for further action, bearing in mind the role of the International Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC) ^{1/} and the International Computing Centre (ICC). It was important that ISCC and ICC be made fully aware of activities and requirements in the field of sustainable development and the concerns expressed by the Commission.

20. The Committee invited the task managers (the Department and UNEP) to continue to take the lead on that topic. The task managers, in consultation

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with focal points in concerned United Nations organizations and bodies, should consider how to:

(a) Identify relevant socio-economic data systems to complement Earth Watch and provide input into the work on projections and models in the context of the work programme on changing production and consumption patterns;

(b) Develop modalities for cooperation between the generators of the data and models with a view to allowing better accommodation, where possible, of the requirements related to sustainable development;

(c) Continue their substantive review of information systems related to sustainable development, as initiated in the report to the Commission at its third session on chapter 40 of Agenda 21, with due regard for the roles of and necessary interaction with ISCC and ICC;

(d) Address the issue of the home pages related to sustainable development on the world-wide web and the development of "hot links" between them.

B. Preparations for the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

21. The Committee, on the basis of the experience gained so far, felt that in principle preparatory arrangements agreed earlier in IACSD had proved to be effective and adequate and should be maintained. It proposed a number of modifications to increase their effectiveness, as described below.

1. Preparation of reports for submission to the Commission and its ad hoc working groups

22. The task managers should prepare concise reports (up to six pages) that would contain a brief updated assessment of the current state of relevant problems and main relevant policy issues. The reports should also contain recommendations and proposals for action, possibly in the form of draft decisions for the consideration of the Commission and suggested actions at the international and national levels as well as by major groups. The concise reports should be supplemented by addenda containing more detailed information on the activities carried out, difficulties encountered and progress achieved. They should also include sections on activities and progress at the international and national levels (with subsections on various groups of countries, including small island developing States and by major groups, as well as sections dealing with the means of implementation, including finance, technology and capacity-building.

23. In preparing their reports and respective addenda, the task managers should not necessarily attempt to solicit inputs from all organizations of the United Nations system but should rather limit their consultations to organizations that had particular relevance to the subject-matter to be examined or that had expressed an interest in contributing to the report. The preliminary list of intentions of various organizations on possible inputs to such reports is

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contained in annex IV to the present report. It should be noted, however, that the process of the preparation of the reports should continue to be transparent and open-ended, enabling all interested organizations to make their comments/inputs, bearing in mind the time-frame outlined in paragraphs 27 and 28 below.

24. The Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development should continue to circulate to the task managers, as quickly as possible, all relevant information received from national reports and from major groups. However, since such information usually became available at a very late stage, in the preparation of their reports task managers should also, where possible, make full use of information available from their own sources. Furthermore, the Committee encouraged all other organizations to share relevant information at their disposal with the task managers.

25. It was felt that the reports, though covering all relevant programme areas of Agenda 21, should focus on areas in which the Commission could make a difference or where it served as a unique forum for intergovernmental negotiations and policy formulation, and should avoid giving too detailed attention to areas in which other intergovernmental processes were currently under way.

26. It was stressed that the role of task managers did not imply an exclusive role for the organization concerned, since often other organizations had a strong commitment to the issues, based on their programmes. It was suggested that the Department, as a task manager for changing consumption and production patterns, should actively cooperate with UNEP and others; UNEP, as the task manager for atmosphere, should actively cooperate with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

Time-frame

27. The following time-frame was agreed upon for the preparation of reports and corresponding addenda for the fourth session of the Commission:

1 September 1995	Circulation of draft outlines by task managers to relevant/interested organizations of the United Nations system with a view to soliciting their comments/inputs by 1 October 1995
1 November 1995	Circulation of first drafts
Late November 1995	Meeting of the working group of the task managers to consider the first drafts and to identify and agree on the main policy issues and recommendations and other matters to be included in reports, as well as what additional information and/or analysis needs to be added to corresponding addenda

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End of December 1995 Completion of reports and corresponding addenda dealing with:

(a) Finance and changing production and consumption patterns

(b) Atmosphere and oceans and seas

End of January 1996 Completion of other reports

28. In view of the above time-frame, the ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas might wish to explore the possibility of moving forward its session currently scheduled for January 1996. The outline of the report, as included in the report of the second session of the Subcommittee, needed adjustments, such as incorporating sections on national progress and progress achieved by major groups. There was no need for a separate section on small island developing States; that issue should be included in other relevant sections of the report, as described in its paragraph 41.

2. Participation of United Nations agencies and organizations in the meetings of the Commission and its ad hoc groups

29. It was felt that the practice of organizing advance briefings on documentation for Commission sessions by task managers should be reconsidered in the future in the light of their overall cost-effectiveness. It was suggested that briefings could be organized or scheduled in such a way that they coincided with other activities taking place in New York involving relevant task managers; circulation of written briefs could also be considered. In any case, it was felt that if the practice of such briefings were to be maintained, they should not describe the reports in detail but rather focus on a limited number of key policy proposals that might require early attention by Governments; in addition, more emphasis should be given to possible questions and answers. The final decision on holding such briefings should be made at the meeting of the task managers to be held in November 1995.

30. It was agreed that the practice of presenting reports by task managers during sessions of the Commission and its ad hoc groups had proved useful and should continue. Furthermore, it was agreed that the task managers, within their resource capability, should be more actively involved in the work of Commission sessions, including in the formulation of Chairman's drafts for Commission conclusions and recommendations. It was felt that it would also be useful for the task managers who had prepared the reports to attend Commission sessions.

31. The Committee felt that various side-events should be planned well in advance and in a coordinated way so as to ensure the availability of meeting rooms and better attendance. Due to the limited amount of time usually available for such events, informal inter-agency consultations could be held prior to the session with a view to determining possibilities for joint undertakings and priority themes to be addressed; the meeting of the working

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group of the task managers could provide a useful opportunity to discuss that matter.

32. The Committee took note of the intention of UNDP to organize, in cooperation with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development and other interested bodies, a half-day workshop on energy. It was felt that the preparations for the 1996 session of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development, which would provide a substantive input into the fourth session of the Commission, should be taken into account in organizing such a workshop.

33. A number of participants expressed their strong support for organizing panel discussions on oceans and on education for sustainable development during the fourth session of the Commission. Accordingly, it was agreed that the Department would refer that request to the Bureau of the Commission.

34. As to possible agency presentations at the fourth session of the Commission, it was generally felt that such presentations should not describe past activities and achievements but should rather be forward-looking and focus on intentions for future activities and joint programmes to implement Agenda 21. Such presentations could thus also serve as mechanisms for soliciting additional funding and support from interested Governments.

C. System-wide coordination in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

35. As agreed at its fifth meeting, the Committee discussed this matter as a separate agenda item. Discussions focused on a paper (ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.6) prepared by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development on progress and outlining proposals for reporting on issues related to small island developing States to the fourth session of the Commission, at which such issues would be the subject of a separate agenda item.

1. Progress on implementation

36. The Committee noted that progress on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States continued to be uneven and agreed that there was a need for much greater emphasis on action at the national level. It was stressed that the focal points for small island developing States within the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system had a major role to play in promoting that renewed emphasis, in cooperation with the Department's Small Island Developing States Unit. At the regional level, the Pacific Operations Centre for the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) region had been established to further reinforce programme delivery to the Pacific small island developing States. The Special Body on the Pacific Island Developing Countries had been meeting annually and a ministerial conference on environment and development in Asia was being planned that would, inter alia, address the follow-up to the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing

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States. In the case of the Caribbean region, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) had organized a meeting earlier in 1995 at the headquarters of its subregional office in Port of Spain, Trinidad in order to define, explore and discuss option strategies for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Small Island States of the Caribbean.

37. The Committee was also informed of developments taking place within other organizations of the system, including proposals by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for possible joint ventures among several groups of small island developing States; relevant statistical data published by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in the World Children's Report; the focus on small island developing States issues in the preparation for the Second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II); the emphasis in the development of the small island developing States technical assistance programme (SIDS/TAP) on the formulation of bankable projects or activities (UNDP); and ongoing work on indicators of vulnerability (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)). It was considered important by the Committee for the work on vulnerability indicators to be coordinated between UNCTAD and the Department in order to ensure coherence and consistency.

2. Reports for submission to the Commission on Sustainable Development at its fourth session

38. In line with the decision of its fifth meeting, the Committee agreed to invite relevant task managers to:

(a) Include a separate section on small island developing States in all reports on cross-sectoral issues on the agenda of the fourth session of the Commission in clusters A-E, taking into account the provisions on those issues in the Programme of Action;

(b) Include in the report on capacity-building an account of the progress made by UNDP in refining and implementing SIDS/TAP;

(c) Include in the report on information for decision-making an account of progress by UNDP in refining and implementing the small island developing States information network (SIDS/NET). It was noted that that issue would require further discussion;

(d) Incorporate in the report on protection of the atmosphere a section on small island developing States, taking into account the issue of climate change and sealevel rise;

(e) Prepare a separate report on coastal zone management in small island developing States, in view of the central importance of this issue for such States;

(f) Prepare separate reports on the following issues:

(i) Tourism resources (Department, with assistance from UNEP and the World Tourism Organization (WTO));

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- (ii) Air transport (ICAO);
- (iii) Telecommunications (International Telecommunication Union (ITU));
- (iv) Natural and environmental disasters (Department of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in collaboration with WMO);
- (v) Energy resources (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, with the assistance of UNDP);
- (vi) Maritime transport (UNCTAD, in collaboration with the International Maritime Organization (IMO));
- (g) Invite the regional commissions to:
 - (i) Coordinate and monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action at the regional level;
 - (ii) Prepare a comprehensive report that would include their findings on each sectoral and cross-sectoral issue on the agenda of the fourth session of the Commission and on each of the additional sectoral issues mentioned in the note not included in Agenda 21, and make the report available to the Department, which would circulate their findings and recommendations on each issue to the relevant task managers for information, so as to ensure overall consistency in reporting;
 - (iii) Provide information on the implementation of the Programme of Action in specific sectoral and cross-sectoral areas directly to task managers on request;
- (h) Submit such findings and recommendations of the regional commissions in their entirety to the Commission at its fourth session to provide it with regional perspectives on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

39. The Department's Small Island Developing States Unit would assume responsibility for the following:

- (a) Preparation of the report to the General Assembly on action taken by United Nations organizations to implement the Programme of Action;
- (b) Preparation of a report on current donor activities in support of the Programme of Action;
- (c) Convening an expert group meeting on approaches to a vulnerability index and preparing a report of the meeting;
- (d) Collaborating, as necessary, with UNEP in the preparation of the report on the sustainable development of tourism;
- (e) Development of an information/database on small island developing States for use by task managers and other interested parties;

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(f) Collaboration with UNCTAD in the organization of an in-session panel discussion on trade-related issues affecting small island developing States.

D. Support for Agenda 21 coordination and planning activities at the national level

1. Task Force on National Strategies

40. As agreed at its fifth meeting, the Committee received an oral report on progress from UNDP. A meeting on capacity-building had taken place in Geneva on 10 July 1995, which had heard an account of the status of Capacity 21 and had discussed how to ensure better integration with and involvement of United Nations agencies at an earlier stage. Plans were in hand for the completion of five monographs by the end of 1995, as well as for the completion of United Nations agency capacity-building profiles.

41. A subsequent meeting had taken place on 11 July 1995 on strategies for sustainable development at the national level. A discussion on lessons learned and recommendations for the United Nations had been enriched by contributions from the World Resources Institute (WRI), the World Conservation Union (IUCN) and the International Institute on Environment and Development (IIED). The meeting had discussed a paper on principles and lessons learned, based on the document to be discussed at the fifth meeting of IACSD. It was considered a good basis for a common approach document that could be tested at the national level in four pilot countries. The experience gained would then be included in the document, which would also benefit from further discussion with bilateral donors in the context of the Working Party in Environment and Development of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC). It was anticipated that the document could be finalized in time for the sixth session of the Commission, in 1997; a progress report would be submitted to its fourth session.

42. A joint meeting of the DAC Working Party and IACSD would be held on 26 October 1995 in Paris. The Task Force discussed the agenda for that meeting, which would focus on coordination and harmonization.

43. The issue of national strategies would revert to the agenda of the seventh meeting of IACSD.

2. Streamlining requests for national reports

44. The Committee considered that there was a clear need for an overview of all current requests arising from global conferences, international conventions related to sustainable development and other sources with a view to streamlining the need for information, making it more focused, and ensuring its availability and distribution as widely and effectively as possible. The United Nations system as a whole had an important role to play to that end, with UNDP having a particularly significant contribution to make.

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45. It was agreed that to take matters forward, a two-stage approach should be adopted, as follows:

(a) The Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, in close cooperation with UNDP, was invited to undertake an inventory of all reporting requirements with a view to presenting the results to the Committee by means of a matrix based on the format of Agenda 21. It was agreed that all members of the Committee had a specific commitment to ensuring the successful completion of such an exercise, and that the Department should follow up with each organization on a bilateral basis for that purpose;

(b) IACSD would undertake an in-depth review of the issue at its next meeting in order to determine how best to streamline the many different requirements by identifying areas of overlap, duplication or gaps.

46. The Committee also noted the links between that issue and agenda items 2 (b), "Establishment of common compatible data systems", and 7, "Review of IACSD: phase II"; it agreed that, as a matter of priority, work needed to be undertaken on how best to organize, utilize and share information at the national level.

E. Review of IACSD: phase II

47. It was felt that while IACSD had established itself as an effective mechanism for ensuring coordinated support by the United Nations system to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development, more needed to be done to enhance the Committee's important role in support of ACC through the identification of main policy issues related to the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) and the elaboration of recommendations on ways and means to address such issues.

48. It was underscored that effective implementation of the Committee's functions would require a coherent approach on the part of the United Nations system to the follow-up of other main international conferences that had taken place since UNCED and that had adopted specific programmes of actions in areas related to Agenda 21 and sustainable development in general, namely the International Conference on Population and Development, and the World Summit for Social Development, as well as the forthcoming Fourth World Conference on Women and Habitat II. It was felt that while Agenda 21 had provided the broadest general framework for activities aimed at sustainable development, specific programmes of action adopted by other conferences had substantively supplemented, enriched and given greater detail to the provisions of Agenda 21 in their respective areas.

49. Although matters related to intergovernmental machinery for the follow-up to such conferences were still under review in relevant bodies, it would be important for the United Nations system to ensure, from the very outset, greater coherency in the inter-agency approach to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of other conferences. It would be essential that coordination within the system was carried out in a non-duplicative and mutually supportive way. Although the implementation of specific programmes and activities might

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require the adjustment of existing and/or the establishment of additional arrangements for the coordination of joint action, IACSD should be kept informed on the work of all relevant inter-agency mechanisms in order to be in a position to effectively promote consistency in advancing sustainable development. It was agreed that the draft ACC report on coordination in the field of environment should be submitted by UNEP to its Governing Council through IACSD.

50. The Committee considered documents ACC/IACSD/1995/CRP.8 and Add.1, which had been prepared by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development for the second phase of the review of IACSD. The Committee revised document ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.8 and agreed to submit it for approval to ACC; the text is contained in annex V to the present report. It decided that document ACC/IACSD/1995/CRP.8/Add.1 would serve as background for ACC discussion on the matter but would not be submitted for approval or endorsement. The following changes were made to that document:

Paragraph 6 should read:

At the same time, the point was made that there is a need to ensure that substantive coordination functions of IACSD do not duplicate UNEP's mandate to coordinate environmental activities in the United Nations system. In this context, one should note that the Governing Council of UNEP, at its eighteenth session, welcomed the establishment of the Inter-Agency Environment Coordination Group (IECG) as a flexible consultative and advisory body, meeting as and when required to discharge UNEP's coordination mandate; decided that IECG should focus on assisting the Executive Director of UNEP in coordinating the activities of the United Nations system in addressing the major challenges, as set out in the programme of work for 1996-1997; and stressed that in determining the terms of reference and future activities of IECG, full account should be taken of the role, responsibilities and work of IACSD.

Paragraph 17 (second indent) should read:

- coordination of global activities through an innovative arrangement based on central coordination functions vested in the mandate of IACSD, taking due account of existing arrangements for cooperation and coordination, and decentralized allocation of coordination responsibilities to the task managers.

Paragraph 28 should read:

What seems clear is that IACSD and its system of task managers provides an effective and at the same time flexible mechanism to tackle the complex issues of sustainability, encompassing economic, social and environmental goals in an interrelated way, and to avoid the potential dangers of duplication of coordination responsibilities where mandates may seem to overlap. IACSD, by providing an umbrella framework for ensuring policy coherence in United Nations system-wide approaches towards sustainable development, could be seen as a promising mechanism for identifying overall policy issues, major gaps and constraints, and for formulating recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of cooperation and

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coordination within the United Nations system in sustainable development. It is essential to ensure better communication and interaction between IACSD and existing coordination mechanisms that focus on specific economic, social and environmental components of sustainable development. IACSD should carry out an assessment of existing and proposed United Nations system coordinating mechanisms related to social, environmental and developmental objectives, at the inter-agency, intergovernmental and national levels, with a view to clarifying IACSD's role and priorities in support of the overall ACC responsibility for coordination. Such an assessment will also provide an input in the review of the implementation of UNCED commitments in 1997.

Add a new paragraph after paragraph 28:

Following the outcome of the discussion, at the coordination segment of the substantive session of 1995 of the Economic and Social Council, of the coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system and the implementation of the results of the major international conferences organized by the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, it may be useful for IACSD to review the possible implications of this discussion for its future role and support to ACC.

Paragraph 57 should read:

When intergovernmental bodies are considering the preparation of new reports, every effort should be made to keep them informed of any related reports already available or under preparation within the United Nations system.

Information received during the meeting from ECE, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), UNICEF, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the World Bank, ITU and ICAO should be added to the table on reporting. The heading of the first column of that table should be changed to read "Secretary-General's report to the Commission on Sustainable Development". Furthermore, a reference to the Commission on Science and Technology for Development should be added.

Paragraph 71: delete last sentence.

Paragraph 77 should read:

IACSD can give greater visibility to the contributions of the international financial institutions to the implementation of Agenda 21 and to their contributions to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the reports of IACSD task managers related to the economic, social, environmental and institutional aspects of sustainable development, especially in the cross-sectoral areas, including critical elements of sustainability, finance and technology. A flexible networking system, which was recently proposed to replace the Committee of International Development Institution on Environment (CIDIE), could make a contribution to this process. Opportunities should be sought for amplifying cooperation between international financial institutions and IACSD to support

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Governments in their pursuit of sustainable development strategies at the national level. One should note in this context that at the fifth meeting of IACSD it was agreed that the Chairman of Committee would explore with the secretariat of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) their participation in a discussion on strategy coordination in relation to GEF during the seventh meeting.

51. When discussing paragraph 77 of the above-mentioned document, IACSD welcomed the initiative of the World Bank to address the theme "Effective financing for environmentally sustainable development" at its Third World Bank Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Development (4-6 October 1995).

F. Discussion of policy and coordination on specific thematic areas, sustainable development indicators

52. It was agreed that the issue would be discussed in depth at the next meeting of the Committee.

G. Other matters

1. Solar energy summit

53. The representative of UNESCO informed IACSD that a world summit on solar energy was being organized by UNESCO, upon the invitation of the President of Zimbabwe, to be held in Harare in September 1996, and invited the organizations of the United Nations system with relevant programmes to support the event. UNESCO also informed the Committee that it would organize an ad hoc consultation at the beginning of September 1995, to which agencies/organizations were invited to participate. The objective of the consultation was to examine and identify a United Nations system-wide input to the planned world solar summit.

2. Preliminary discussion on planning for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly

54. The importance of the special session and the need for high-quality preparations were underscored by the Committee. It was agreed to include a special item on that matter in the agenda of IACSD, starting from its next meeting.

55. It was felt that the special session should be seen as a self-standing event that would take place before the regular fifty-second session of the Assembly, and that both its preparations and proceedings should actively involve all relevant partners, including international organizations and major groups. Due to procedural limitations for the participation of non-governmental organizations in General Assembly sessions, some informal arrangements would need to be considered with a view to incorporating the perspectives of major groups in the 1997 review and the special session.

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56. The Committee welcomed the idea of a report that would review progress and, based on that review, provide projections in a few key areas. The Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development would set up a small open-ended working group for that purpose, including UNEP, UNDP, FAO, the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank. Others, such as Habitat, expressed interest in contributing to the exercise.

57. IACSD expressed its appreciation to WHO for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting.

Notes

1/ Formerly the Advisory Committee on the Coordination of Information Services (ACCIS).

Annex I

AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda and timetable.
2. Evaluation of the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and follow-up action:
 - (a) Intergovernmental Panel on Forests;
 - (b) Establishment of common compatible data systems.
3. Follow-up to the outcome of meetings of ACC and other intergovernmental bodies:
 - (a) Review of the ACC standard classification relating to financial reporting by the United Nations system on the implementation of Agenda 21;
 - (b) Relevant decisions in the context of reporting requirements and implications for IACSD and the Commission on Sustainable Development.
4. Preparations for the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.
5. System-wide coordination in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.
6. Support for Agenda 21 coordination and planning activities at the national level:
 - (a) Task Force on National Strategies;
 - (b) Streamlining of requests for national reports.
7. Review of IACSD: phase II.
8. Discussion of policy and coordination on specific thematic areas: sustainable development indicators.
9. Other matters:
 - (a) Dates, venue and provisional agenda for the seventh meeting;
 - (b) Solar energy summit;
 - (c) Planning for the 1997 special session of the General Assembly.
10. Adoption of the report.

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Annex II

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Chairman: N. DESAI (United Nations)

Secretary: C. HACKETT (United Nations)

United Nations, its entities and programmes

Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development	J. Waller-Hunter A. Vasilyev M. Monaghan
Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis	B. Herman
United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)	P. Garau L. Ludvigsen
Economic Commission for Europe	G. DeBellis D. Dreiblatt
Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia	M. A. Salam
United Nations Conference on Trade and Development	J. Cuddy D. Warner P. Encontre H. Argalias R. Mollerus C. Moreno
United Nations Environment Programme	F. Schlingemann A. Dahl
United Nations Children's Fund	M. Glasgow
United Nations Development Programme	K. Jorgensen
United Nations Population Fund	A. Jorgensen-Dahl
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	H. Mori C. Talbot

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Specialized agencies and related organizations

International Labour Organization

L. R. Kohler
C. Aalbers
G. Minet

Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

S. Bie
J. S. Camara
W. Mann

United Nations Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

G. Glaser

International Civil Aviation Organization

E. W. Faller

World Health Organization

K. Kreisel
S. Litsios

World Bank

J. Martin-Brown

International Monetary Fund

A. A. Tait
G. B. Taplin

International Telecommunication Union

J. Ernberg
J. Elotu

World Meteorological Organization

S. Chacowry

International Maritime Organization

O. Khalimonov

United Nations Industrial Development
Organization

S. A. Hasnain

* * *

International Atomic Energy Agency

M. S. Opelz

* * *

Convention on Biological Diversity

A. Djoghla
S. Bragdon

United Nations Framework Convention
on Climate Change

T. Hadj-Sadok
L. Assuncao

Annex III

List of documents

ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.1	Annotated provisional agenda
ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.2/ Rev.1	Timetable
ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.3	Evaluation of the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and follow-up action: (b) Establishment of common compatible data systems (Background note prepared by the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat)
ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.4	Financial reporting by the United Nations system on the implementation of Agenda 21 (Background note prepared by the Department)
ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.5	Preparations for the fourth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (Discussion paper prepared by the Department)
ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.6 and Add.1	System-wide coordination in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (Background paper prepared by the Department)
ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.7	Support for Agenda 21 coordination and planning activities at the national level (Background note prepared by the Department) <u>NOT ISSUED</u>
ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.8	Review of the functioning of IACSD: phase II (draft paper for the Administrative Committee on Coordination)
ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.8/ Add.1	Review of the functioning of IACSD: phase II (Background paper prepared for the sixth meeting of IACSD)
ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/CRP.9	Discussion of policy and coordination on specific thematic areas: sustainable development indicators (Background paper prepared by the Department)

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ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/INF.1

Elements of the decisions of the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development that specifically call for action on the part of IACSD
(Information note prepared by the Department)

ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/INF.2

"The environment and rural development: towards ecologically and socially sustainable development in rural areas"
(Paper prepared by the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development at the request of UNEP for discussion at the twenty-third meeting of the ACC Subcommittee on Rural Development, UNESCO headquarters, Paris, 31 May-2 June 1995)

ACC/IACSD/VI/1995/INF.3

Discussion of policy and coordination on specific thematic indicators: sustainable development indicators
(Note prepared by the Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis of the United Nations Secretariat)

Annex IV

PRELIMINARY LIST OF INTENTIONS OF VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS AND BODIES REGARDING THEIR INPUTS
TO THE REPORTS OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Title of report (Agenda 21 chapter(s); task manager/author of report)	Will contribute	Wants to be consulted/ may submit an input	Not interested at this point
Trade, environment and sustainable development (chap. 2; UNCTAD)	UNCTAD, UNEP	FCCC, ECE, ICAO, WHO, ESCWA, ITU, UNIDO, FAO, ILO, UNESCO, UNDP, World Bank	UNFPA, WMO, IAEA
Combating poverty (chap. 3; Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat)	UNCTAD, WHO, UNEP, UNFPA, Habitat, UNDP, UNICEF	ICAO, ESCWA, UNHCR, UNIDO, FAO, ILO, UNESCO, WMO, IAEA	ECE, ITU
Changing consumption and production patterns (chap. 4; Department)	UNCTAD, WHO, UNEP, UNCHS, UNESCO	FCCC, ECE, ICAO, ESCWA, UNIDO, FAO, UNFPA, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, WMO, IAEA	ITU
Demographic dynamics and sustainability (chap. 5; UNFPA)	WHO, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNCHS, UNESCO	ESCWA, ITU, FAO, UNEP, UNICEF	ECE, ICAO, UNCTAD, UNIDO, ILO, UNDP, WMO, IAEA
Financial resources and mechanisms (chap. 33; Department)	UNCTAD, UNEP, UNFPA, Habitat, UNDP	FCCC, ECE, ICAO, WHO, ITU, UNHCR, FAO, UNESCO, WB, UNICEF, WMO	ESCWA, UNIDO, ILO, IAEA
Transfer of environmentally sound technology, cooperation and capacity- building (chap. 34; Department)	ICAO, UNCTAD, IMO, UNIDO, UNEP, Habitat, UNESCO, WMO	ECE, WHO, ESCWA, ITU, UNHCR, FAO, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF, IAEA	ILO
Education, public awareness and training (chap. 36; UNESCO)	WHO, UNHCR, UNEP, UNFPA, ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, WMO	ECE, ICAO, IMO, ITU, UNIDO, UNCHS, IAEA, FAO	UNCTAD, UNDP
National mechanisms and international cooperation for capacity-building (chap. 37; UNDP)	WHO, UNEP, UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF	ECE, ICAO, ESCWA, ITU, UNIDO, FAO, ILO, Habitat, UNESCO, WB, WMO, IAEA	UNCTAD
Decision-making structures (chaps. 8 and 38 to 40; Department and UNEP)	WHO, UNEP, ILO	FCCC, ECE, ICAO, UNHCR, FAO, UNFPA, Habitat, UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, WMO, IAEA	UNCTAD, ESCWA, ITU, UNIDO
Major groups (chaps. 23 to 32; Department)	WHO, UNEP, UNFPA, ILO, Habitat, UNICEF	ECE, UNHCR, UNIDO, FAO, UNESCO, WMO	ICAO, UNCTAD, ITU, UNDP, IAEA
Protection of the atmosphere (chap. 9; UNEP)	ECE, WHO, UNIDO, UNEP, Habitat, UNDP, WMO, IAEA	FCCC, ICAO, ESCWA, ITU, FAO, UNESCO	UNCTAD, UNFPA, ILO
Protection of oceans and all kinds of seas (chap. 17; ACC Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas)	UNCTAD, IMO, FAO, UNEP, UNESCO/IOC, UNDP, WMO, IAEA	ECE, WHO, ITU, UNIDO, Habitat, World Bank	ICAO, ESCWA, UNFPA, ILO
Reports on small island developing States			

Title of report (Agenda 21 chapter(s); task manager/author of report)	Will contribute	Wants to be consulted/ may submit an input	Not interested at this point
Tourism resources (Department, with assistance of UNEP and WTO)	UNEP	ICAO, WHO, ITU, FAO, Habitatat, UNESCO, UNDP, WMO	UNCTAD, ESCWA, UNIDO, UNFPA, ILO, IAEA, ECE
Air transport (ICAO)	ICAO, WMO	WHO, ITU, UNEP, World Bank	ECE, UNCTAD, ESCWA, UNIDO, UNFPA, ILO, Habitatat, UNESCO, UNDP, IAEA
Sea transport (UNCTAD, in collaboration with IMO)	UNCTAD, IMO, WMO	ICAO, ITU, UNEP, ILO, World Bank, IAEA	ECE, WHO, ESCWA, UNIDO, UNFPA, Habitatat, UNESCO, UNDP
Telecommunications (ITU)	ITU, UNIDO	ICAO, UNEP, Habitatat, UNESCO, WMO	ECE, UNCTAD, WHO, ESCWA, UNFPA, ILO, UNDP, IAEA
Natural and environmental disasters (Department for Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, in collaboration with WMO)	WHO, UNEP, ILO, Habitatat, UNESCO, WMO	ICAO, IMO, ESCWA, ITU, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNFPA, UNICEF, ECE	UNCTAD, UNDP, IAEA, ECE
Energy resources (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat, with assistance of UNDP)	UNIDO, UNEP, UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF, WMO	ICAO, WHO, UNHCR, FAO, ILO, UNCHS, ECE	UNCTAD, ITU, UNFPA, IAEA, ESCWA, ECE
Preparation of a report on current donor activities in support of the Programme of Action (Department)	UNFPA, UNDP, UNICEF	ICAO, WHO, UNHCR, UNEP, Habitatat, UNESCO, WMO	UNCTAD, ESCWA, ITU, UNIDO, ILO, IAEA, ECE
Report on coastal zone management (UNEP)	UNCTAD, FAO, UNEP, Habitatat, UNESCO, UNDP, WMO	FCCC, ECE, IMO, WHO, ESCWA, UNIDO, UNFPA, World Bank, IAEA	ICAO, ITU, ILO

Annex V

NOTE ON THE REVIEW OF THE FUNCTIONING OF THE INTER-AGENCY COMMITTEE
ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: DRAFT PAPER FOR APPROVAL BY ACC

INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with the decision of ACC, at its fourth meeting the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) launched a review of its functioning. This review is expected to lead to a full assessment of the United Nations system response to Agenda 21 that will be submitted to ACC in preparation for the special session of the General Assembly which will take place in 1997 to review and appraise overall progress achieved since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED). IACSD decided that the second phase of its review, which would take place during its fifth and sixth meetings, would include the preparation of a study on its functioning. The present draft of that study was considered at the fifth meeting of IACSD in February 1995; the second draft of the study a/ incorporates the specific proposals made during the fifth meeting of the Committee and the evaluation of relevant results of the third session of the Commission on Sustainable Development.

2. The present note focuses on the main findings and recommendations of the study. It has been approved by IACSD and is submitted for consideration of ACC at its second regular session of 1995.

I. OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF IACSD

3. There is a broad agreement that IACSD and its system of task managers provide an effective and at the same time flexible mechanism for system-wide coordination and promotion of inter-agency partnerships, cooperation and coordination in the follow-up to UNCED, implementation of Agenda 21 and in sustainable development work in general. The work of IACSD and its task managers has received support both from ACC and from Governments during the second and third sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development and at the forty-ninth session of the United Nations General Assembly. In particular, as was demonstrated during the third session of the Commission, member States particularly appreciate the fact that the follow-up to UNCED and the work of the Commission enjoy strong support from the entire family of United Nations organizations in a coordinated and collaborative way. In that light, it would seem that the current modalities agreed in IACSD for preparations for and participation in the work of the Commission should be maintained.

4. At the same time, it is felt that IACSD should move beyond procedural and organizational discussions and reporting arrangements and devote more time to substantive policy issues. A number of encouraging steps towards joint programming of Agenda 21 activities have recently been taken by IACSD and individual task managers. Nevertheless, additional steps are needed to ensure that IACSD effectively performs its primary roles in policy advice, strategy development and promotion of joint programmes.

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5. As agreed at the Committee's fifth meeting, the review of its functioning took into account the following:

(a) The need to clarify the coordinating mandate of IACSD in relation to the coordination mandates of intergovernmental and other inter-agency bodies dealing with specific topics related to Agenda 21. This has to be done on the basis of an "added value" approach and should take into account the need to minimize the consequences of overlaps in existing coordination mandates;

(b) The need to ensure greater balance in the coordination at the global, regional and field levels on the basis of the optimal use of all existing coordinating mechanisms available, including regional commissions and the system of United Nations resident coordinators;

(c) The need to ensure a greater balance in IACSD work in support of ACC and United Nations system requirements, and the Commission on Sustainable Development. Particular needs of specific clients of IACSD work need to be clarified;

(d) The need to involve more fully financial institutions and other relevant non-United Nations bodies that have an important role to play in regional and/or global action;

(e) The need to promote problem driven and forward-looking approaches in determining specific issues that require in-depth attention by IACSD;

(f) The need to ensure the continuity of day-to-day inter-agency coordination requirements, including the full use of various informal arrangements and the development of informal contacts among the organizations concerned.

6. Sustainable development is a broad and complex area that encompasses economic, social and environmental dimensions and their interrelationships. From that point of view, it relates to virtually the entire spectrum of activities of the United Nations system in the economic, social and environmental fields. In addition to IACSD, which was established to promote effective and coordinated response to Agenda 21 and sustainable development at a central level, there are a number of other coordinating mechanisms and arrangements that either deal with specific dimensions of sustainability or promote inter-agency coordination within specific regions and/or at the national level, including:

(a) The UNEP mandate to coordinate environmental activities in the United Nations system;

(b) Other subsidiary bodies of ACC that do not report through IACSD, such as CCPOQ (which, inter alia, deals with operational aspects of United Nations activities in the area of science and technology), and the ACC Subcommittee on Rural Development;

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(c) Coordination structures under the auspices of the regional commissions and regional offices of organizations of the United Nations system;

(d) The system of United Nations resident coordinators;

(e) A wide range of cooperative arrangements among several United Nations system bodies on a specific aspect of sustainable development (e.g., the Joint WHO/FAO/UNEP/Habitat Panel of Experts on Environmental Management for Vector Control (PEEM), the Interorganizational Programme for the Sound Management of Chemicals (IOMC), the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Facility, and the Prior Informed Consent (PIC) Joint Programme).

7. IACSD should provide an umbrella framework for ensuring policy coherence in a United Nations system-wide approach to sustainable development by identifying overall policy issues, major gaps and constraints, and by formulating recommendations to enhance the effectiveness of cooperation and coordination within the United Nations system in sustainable development, as envisaged by ACC. It should not duplicate the functions of other existing mechanisms for inter-agency coordination that also fit under the overall concept of sustainable development but that address specific developmental, social or environmental components. Similarly, IACSD should not replace or duplicate existing coordination arrangements or micro-manage coordination at the field and regional levels. What is essential is to ensure better communication and interaction between IACSD and those other mechanisms.

8. Following the outcome of the discussion at the coordination segment of the substantive session of 1995 of the Economic and Social Council, of the coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system and implementation of the results of the major international conferences organized by the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields, it may be useful for IACSD to review the possible implications of that discussion for its future role and support to ACC.

9. IACSD should carry out an assessment of existing and proposed United Nations system coordinating mechanisms related to social, environmental and developmental objectives, at the inter-agency, intergovernmental and national levels, with a view to clarifying the IACSD role and priorities in support of the overall ACC responsibility for coordination. Such an assessment would also provide an input into the review of the implementation of the UNCED commitments in 1997.

10. A harmonized United Nations system approach to national sustainable development strategies could help to achieve greater balance and coherence in coordination at the international, regional and national levels. IACSD could agree on such an approach for United Nations system assistance to countries in the elaboration and implementation of such strategies, while relevant organizations and bodies for coordination at the regional and field levels could pursue approaches that would respond to specific concerns of individual countries in relevant sectors.

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11. Improvement of IACSD functioning would, indeed, require better definition of the needs of the Committee's users and ensuring active involvement in its work of all relevant actors. The main users of the Committee's work are:

(a) ACC, for which IACSD (i) identifies major policy issues relating to the follow-up to UNCED by the United Nations system, and recommends ways and means of addressing such issues; (ii) assists in the coordination of United Nations system-wide sustainable development activities related to the follow-up of other United Nations conferences. Functions carried out in support of ACC should be seen as the primary focus of the work of IACSD;

(b) Individual organizations of the United Nations system, which can benefit from greater synergy and better use of limited resources through more effective coordination and cooperation;

(c) The Commission on Sustainable Development and other relevant intergovernmental bodies in the United Nations system, which can benefit from policy proposals and recommendations being jointly elaborated through inter-agency consultation and pooling the expert capacities available in the United Nations system;

(d) Individual countries, which may benefit from a more coordinated and thus more effective response on the part of the United Nations system to their national sustainable development requirements.

12. The actors essential for successful functioning of IACSD would include all parts of the United Nations system, with a more active and substantive than hitherto involvement of the regional commissions and financial institutions, as well as the involvement (upon invitation, as the need may arise) of intergovernmental organizations that are actively involved in sustainable development but are not part of the United Nations system. Furthermore, IACSD could consider appropriate ways and means to involve in its work relevant non-governmental organizations and major groups that carry out programmes in the field of sustainable development.

II. POSSIBLE WAYS TO IMPROVE THE FUNCTIONING OF IACSD

13. The improvement in the functioning of IACSD is to focus on achieving a better balance in its work in support of ACC and the promotion of United Nations system-wide partnership in the implementation of Agenda 21, as well as in support of the Commission on Sustainable Development and related intergovernmental processes, bearing in mind the primary function of IACSD to serve ACC. The main approaches to enhancing the Committee's functioning are described below.

Greater reliance on task managers

14. The concept of a task manager, as it has evolved over the past two years, has proved to be an effective mechanism to meet the demands related to the functioning of IACSD and the Commission. This mechanism needs to be strengthened and expressed more clearly, while taking into account current

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trends of financial constraints and decentralization of human and financial resources. Furthermore, the Committee stresses that one of the important functions of the task managers should be to facilitate the development of joint programmes and approaches for implementation at country level.

15. IACSD also recommends that in the future, task managers promote cooperative forms of implementation of Agenda 21 activities, while IACSD itself, as a rule, focus on specific problems identified by the task managers, as the need may arise. This would allow the Committee to devote more time to conceptual and policy-oriented aspects of coordination in the field of sustainable development and thus perform its functions more effectively.

16. IACSD also agrees that greater reliance on task managers for more concrete forms of cooperation would assist the Committee in promoting a more focused approach to coordination within a concrete context and elaborating action-oriented recommendations on main policy and cooperation issues. IACSD agrees to include, starting from the sixth meeting of the Committee the agenda item "Discussion of policy and coordination in a specific thematic area".

17. Task managers should facilitate better communication and interaction between IACSD and other coordinating mechanisms related to sustainable development, both from horizontal and from vertical perspectives. To achieve this goal, it would be important for the task managers to establish and/or develop direct links with relevant coordinating bodies dealing with specific sectors, as well as at the regional and field levels.

18. The system of IACSD task managers can help facilitate closer cooperation with other relevant parts of the United Nations system in specific areas that could help IACSD to more effectively implement its functions and meet the expectations of both ACC and the United Nations system, as well as of the Commission. Furthermore, the task managers, whether their work is related to promoting cooperative programmes to implement Agenda 21 or to the preparation of reports for the Commission, are in the best possible position to involve in those processes all actors who have an expertise in respective fields but who for formal reasons cannot be directly involved in IACSD meetings.

19. Furthermore, it would seem that continuing the practice of holding meetings of ad hoc groups of task managers to discuss in detail the preparations of reports and modalities of United Nations system participation in the Commission would allow IACSD itself to give more attention to policy issues related to the implementation of Agenda 21 and the coordination of inter-agency activities in the field of sustainable development.

Direct day-to-day informal contacts and better information exchange

20. An improved system of direct informal contacts and information exchange among the task managers and between the task managers and other organizations of the system, as well as other relevant parties, would highly facilitate IACSD work both in support of ACC and in the promotion of joint programmes and activities, as well as in the preparation of reports for the Commission. Further tailor-made measures could be taken with a view to enhancing and facilitating information exchange, including the use of electronic means, such

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as circulating, as expeditiously as possible, information received from national reports as well as from relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

Better preparation for the meetings of IACSD

21. It is essential to enhance the effectiveness of preparation for the meetings of IACSD. This could be done through preparing a concise focused discussion paper for each of the items (or sub-items) on the agenda, circulated well in advance to all organizations and containing text with proposed draft decisions under that item. This would greatly facilitate decision-making by IACSD, save time and avoid general discussions that tend to circle the issue rather than formulate specific conclusions and recommendations.

Restructuring the programme of work of IACSD and agendas of its meetings

22. To achieve greater balance in the implementation of Committee functions, the first regular meeting of the year of IACSD should be largely devoted to matters related to the support of ACC and the coordination of sustainable development activities in the United Nations system, while its summer meeting should focus on the assessment of the outcome of the Commission and other related intergovernmental processes and required follow-up action by the United Nations system. Specific suggestions on rearranging the agendas of Committee meetings and the format of future discussions in the Committee have been elaborated.

23. Both meetings of IACSD could address other items, either on a regular basis or at the suggestion of the IACSD Chairman and/or members, as the need may arise, such as:

- (a) Matters arising from and/or related to sessions of ACC;
- (b) Discussion of policy and coordination in a specific thematic area;
- (c) Reports of IACSD subsidiary bodies (other than reports of those bodies acting in the capacity of a task manager);
- (d) Streamlining of reporting requirements;
- (e) Matters arising from and/or related to preparations for intergovernmental bodies other than the Commission, for example the ACC report to the UNEP Governing Council;
- (f) A strategy for the involvement of major groups;
- (g) A short recent information exchange segment, in which members could brief the Committee on relevant developments.

24. Furthermore, after the General Assembly decides at its fiftieth session on the scope and format of its special session in 1997, IACSD should also include in its agenda an item related to assisting the ACC in system-wide preparations for that forum.

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Notes

a/ ACC/IACSD/1995/CRP.8/Add.1; to serve as background for ACC discussion but not to be submitted for approval or endorsement (see para. 50 of present report).
