

Minutes of the

Briefing Meeting of African Diplomatic Missions Accredited to Ethiopia on the Sixth Session of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable and the Africa Regional Implementation Meeting for the Eighteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

Date: 7 October 2009
Time: 10:00 to 12:00hrs
Venue: United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC)
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

In attendance (Please refer to Annex)

I. Welcoming remarks

1. In opening the meeting, H.E. Mr. Franklis Esipila, the Ambassador of Kenya representing the Chair of the Bureau of the Fifth Session of the Africa Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development, commended the Secretariat for organizing the Briefing Meeting, and welcomed his fellow ambassadors, as well as all representatives of African Diplomatic Missions to the meeting.

2. Mr. Josue Dioné, Director of ECA's Food Security and Sustainable Development Division (FSSD), speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Commission, welcomed all representatives of African Diplomatic Missions in attendance. He explained that the objective of the briefing meeting was to update Missions on preparations towards the Sixth Session of the Committee on Food Security and Sustainable Development and the Africa Region Implementation Meeting for the Eighteenth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CFSSD-6/Africa RIM). He then provided an overview of progress towards CFSSD-6 and appealed to Mission representatives to sensitize their Capitals on the importance of attending the meeting and in this connection, to confirm their participation in a timely manner.

II. Remarks by Chair of the Bureau of the Fifth Session of the Africa Committee on Sustainable Development (ACSD-5)

3. Ms. Beatrice Karago, Councillor at the Kenyan Embassy, spoke on behalf of the Chair of the Bureau of ACSD-5. She briefed representatives on the outcomes of the Bureau Meeting held at the UNCC on 1 October 2009. She provided an overview of the Secretariat's briefing on progress made in the implementation of activities of the Food Security and Sustainable Development subprogramme of ECA during the 2008/2009 biennium. This included: Highlights of the Land Policy Initiative; Support to the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP); Implementation of the Sustainable Modernization of Agriculture and Rural Transformation (SMART) project; Progress towards producing the Sustainable Development Report on Africa (SDRA).

4. Ms. Karago informed representatives about the briefings on progress in the implementation of the Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev-Africa) Programme and

towards establishing its African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC), as well as on the outcomes of the 17th Session of CSD. She also informed representatives about the briefing on preparations towards CFSSD-6 and the submission of the proposal on the theme of the Seventh Session of CFSSD. The minutes of the Bureau meeting she said, were being considered by members for finalization and posting on the CFSSD-6 website.

Following Ms. Karago's presentation, the Chair conveyed his apologies to the meeting, as he had to leave to attend to urgent commitments. He then invited H.E. Mr. Wilfred Emvula, the Ambassador of Namibia, representing the First Vice Chair of the ACSD-5 Bureau, to chair the meeting.

III. Preparation towards CFSSD-6 and suggested theme for CFSSD-7

5. Ms Isatou Gaye, Chief, Environment and Sustainable Development Section (FSSD)/ECA, briefed the meeting on preparations towards CFSSD-6. She started by recalling the objectives of the Session as stated by the FSSD Director. She informed representatives that the RIM was being organized in collaboration with the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). She also informed representatives about the two side events to be held in the margins of the CFSSD-6, namely; the UNDESA-led CSO Side Event on CSD processes and the World Bank Side Event on Consultations on its Environment Strategy.

Invitations and responses

6. Ms. Gaye indicated that 166 invitations had been sent out to all 53 ECA member States, the African Union Commission, NEPAD Secretariat, African Development Bank, Regional Economic Communities, UN agencies, bilateral agencies and major groups. In terms of responses, she indicated that 10 Member States had so far confirmed, that participation by major groups would be strong given the strong interest demonstrated in the meeting, particularly the CSO side event, and that participation by UN agencies was promising. She expressed hope that more confirmations would be received from member States following the briefing meeting.

Member States that are current members of UNCSD

7. Ms. Gaye informed representatives that 13 African countries were members of UNCSD, namely; Cape Verde, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, The Gambia, Guinea Conakry, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Nigeria, and South Africa. She said that on account of their membership of UNCSD, UNDESA would provide a return air ticket for one member of their delegation to attend the meeting. She urged representatives from those countries to take advantage of the tickets that were being provided and confirm their participation in a timely manner.

Documentation

8. Ms. Gaye informed the missions that all background documents had been prepared and were available online (<http://www.uneca.org/csd>). She indicated that most of the technical reports, which were being produced in collaboration with UNEP and UNIDO, were ready and

that some had been posted on the meeting website. The rest she said would be posted as they became available. She also said that translation into French was ongoing.

Meeting servicing arrangements

9. Ms. Gaye further informed representatives that Conference Rooms with interpretation facilities had already been booked and that hospitality and logistical arrangements had been firmed up. She indicated that the Information Note sent out together with the invitation letters (and available online), provides more information on assistance that could be provided upon request.

Membership of the Bureaus of previous Committee meetings

10. Ms. Gaye brought to the attention of representatives, the membership of the Bureau of previous meetings since 1999. This information she said, was included in the briefing meeting package provided to representatives. She urged representatives to start conferring on membership of the CFSSD-6 Bureau, to facilitate the selection of Bureau Members in a smooth and timely manner.

Suggested theme for CFSSD-7

11. Ms Gaye introduced to representatives, the thematic cluster of issues to be considered during the 2012/2013 CSD cycle. These included Forests, Biodiversity, Biotechnology, Tourism and Mountains. In this respect, she presented a proposal for the consideration of representatives on the theme of CFSSD-7 “Managing Africa’s Natural Resource Base for Sustainable Development.” She explained that the theme had been introduced to ACSD-5 Bureau Members during their meeting of 1 October 2009 and that it would be desirable to agree on the theme of CFSSD-7 (2011), to facilitate the work of the Secretariat in preparing for that Session of the Committee.

Discussions

12. Algeria commended the Secretariat for the work done in preparing for CFSSD-6 and the briefing meeting. The representative enquired whether the minutes of the ACSD-5 Bureau meeting were available online, and whether the invitation letters sent out indicate the website address of the meeting. The Secretariat pointed out that the draft minutes were being reviewed by Bureau Members and would be posted on the meeting website upon finalization or sent to Embassies together with the documents for the CFSSD meeting.

13. Sudan commended the Secretariat for the excellent documentation prepared for CFSSD-6. The representative requested for clarification of a statement on Regional Value Chains Development contained in the provisional annotated agenda of CFSSD-6. Further, he shared information on confirmation of participation in CFSSD-6 from the Sudanese Capital. He proposed that the First Vice Chair of CFSSD-6 should Chair the Open Ended Drafting Committee to prepare the Africa RIM Statement. In responding to the clarification sought regarding regional value chains, the Secretariat pointed out that ECA’s support to CAADP aims at fostering the implementation of regional integration around the CAADP pillars. It was explained that the Secretariat had been advocating and providing technical support to accelerate investment through regional integration, promoting a few strategic agricultural commodities and advancing regional integration strategy through the full value chain

development, including agro-industry at input and output levels of those selected commodities. On the proposed Chair of the Drafting Group, the Secretariat took note, but said that it was up to member States to decide.

14. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) thanked the Secretariat for organizing the briefing meeting. The Ambassador requested that the meeting documents be sent to Embassies well before the CFSSD meeting. He also requested for clarifications on considerations for the selection of Bureau members. In response, the Secretariat indicated that membership of the Bureau follows subregional representation on a rotational basis and that member States were at liberty to change countries representing the different subregions from Bureau to Bureau. Further, the Secretariat assured representatives that hard copies of the meeting documents would be sent to Embassies for onward transmission to their respective Capitals.

15. Zimbabwe brought to the attention of the Secretariat the difficulty they had experienced accessing ECA premises. The representative requested that this matter be brought to the attention of ECA Security before the meeting to ensure that their access to the compound is facilitated during the meeting. Several other representatives made similar observations. The Secretariat assured representatives that the matter would be brought to the attention of the appropriate ECA authorities.

16. Sudan wanted to know whether the proposed high level meeting would consider country reports or country experiences. The Secretariat responded that the programme did not have a specific slot for presentation of country experiences, but that countries would be encouraged to share experiences of interest to the meeting. Further, it was pointed out that the regional review reports have highlighted country experiences, and in the case of the chemicals and waste management thematic areas, reports had been commissioned for selected countries. Delegates would have the opportunity to comment on the different reports during the meeting and comments provided would be taken into account in their finalization.

17. Guinea congratulated the Secretariat for the quality of documents prepared for CFSSD-6. The representative sought clarification on the role of 13 African countries that are members of CSD in the meeting, and whether they would be required to present country reports. The Secretariat clarified that country presentations were not required from those member States, but that the countries were expected to serve as an effective link between CFSSD and CSD.

IV. Any other business

No matter was raised under this agenda item.

V. Closing remarks

18. In closing, H.E. Mr. Wilfred Emvula, the Ambassador of Namibia, representing the Vice-Chair of the Bureau of ACSD-V, thanked all diplomatic missions present at the meeting. He urged all Missions to forward the meeting invitations to their respective Capitals to ensure the full representation of member States at the CFSSD-6 meeting.

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