



## *Address by Alejandra Garcia Ramirez*

To a Major Group/Government Consultation about:  
National Sustainable Development Strategies (NSDS)

13 May, 2008 New York

[http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO\\_8Ad3.EN.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_8Ad3.EN.pdf)

Five main messages about what trade unions are doing with respect to NSDS are presented here.

**1. The first is contextual in nature** and it relates to the development of our own indicators for sustainable development. We have circulated a summary of a bright yellow document which summarises the indicators that have been brought into scope so far by our “Sustainable Development” that was created for this purpose. See: [http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpS\\_1.EN.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpS_1.EN.pdf)

For the first time this year ALL of the UN indicators used by NSDS that relate to this year’s CSD themes have been brought covered, especially those that relate to agriculture, health, and other issues.

If this proves useful over the next few years we would aim to integrate ALL the remaining indicators used by NSDS into our terms of reference.

While the yellow document highlights the “backbone” of our work we have also circulated to you what relates to my second message.

**2. We have given everyone attending this event, ONE double-sided sheet** – which is one example of what we gave each government attending the CSD these last few days, in a special kit along with a covering letter, highlighting the importance of NSDS.

See: [http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO\\_8Ab.EN.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_8Ab.EN.pdf)

The one sheet looks like this, and it gives you an idea of how our backbone of indicators is able to produce special “Windows of information”, such as this one to serve many purposes

You will see it provides a storehouse of data and information that relate to this year’s themes of CSD, but for the first time also, wherever possible they make the link to UN indicators and to NSDS.

**3. My Third message is about the country analysis** we have done about the countries that have or have not subscribed to NSDS and about the countries that have or have not produced a report for this year’s CSD.

As control groups for our sampling we compared country adherence to NSDS and their adherence to three other programmes:

- the ILO Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP);
- the Poverty Reduction Strategy Reports (PRSR); and
- a combined third group of countries (mostly industrialized countries that are either linked to the OECD Environment Performance Reviews or the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Council (EEAC). (Note: See last page of SDUnit Indicators on reference #5)

We compare the relations these have with NSDS and with each other. We also compared them to the countries that are CSD members this year and to whether or not they actually filed a report to CSD this year. If anyone has questions about our sampling and statistical method for analysing our information, we can answer questions afterwards.

These are some of our conclusions

1. That despite some indicator commonalities the association between NSDS and other programmes remained rather weak, overall.
2. The strongest association remained with 3.2/10 NSDS<sup>1</sup> countries that are also industrialized countries, i.e. those that have a programme and are in the process of implementing.
3. A weak association exist with 3.7/10 NSDS countries that with developing countries with the ILO Decent Work Programme, and PRSP. The association is weak because the grouping is a random one, which takes place mostly with countries that have recently indicated they will work toward NSDS, which few of them actually implementing them yet. There are a few very notable exceptions, like Indonesia who was asked to join us today.
  - This means there is a margin of difference in involvement between developed and developing countries but there are encouraging signs to show the gap can be made to narrow.
  - This is especially true when cluster countries according to DW or PRSP and examine their relations as CSD member states and whether or not they have produced a national report.
4. The greatest factor in whether or not a country will produce an annual CSD report is whether or not it has signed up to NSDS. In fact 9.1/10 countries that have produced a report this year are NSDS countries compared to only 4.1/10 countries that are merely members of CSD, while 6.2/10 industrialised countries doing the same.

In fact in all of our comparisons being a member of CSD seems not to matter much on anything (beyond random chance) that they would join NSDS or produce a report.

**4. Now, My 4<sup>th</sup> message is about the random nature of the NSDS** compared to all the other programmes we analysed. And that is that their association is indeed very random. The organizations and people that work on them do not seem to know very much about each other (except for a cluster of industrialized countries about NSDS). My conclusion would be that bringing together actors could mutually strengthen programmes.

In our case trade unions will try to connect the actors of NSDS countries with actors in the same governments that are involved with the ILO DWCP and PRSR.

**Now my 5<sup>th</sup> message is about the quality of the CSD reports:**

Except for two countries (Mali and Croatia) all the reports submitted to the CSD Secretariat by governments have or recently agreed to subscribe to SD strategies and these reviewed a wide variety of policies worth mentioning.<sup>2</sup> Also worth noting that nearly half the countries that submitted CSD16 reports also have a Decent Work Country Programme.

In this sense, the quality of analysis in the national reports is highly influenced by the country's specific activities to foster sustainable, such as the improvement of renewable energy, poverty reduction for developing countries, and other strategies.

Issues relating to agriculture, drought and desertification, rural development (mainly for eradicating poverty), were presented in reference to the country's accomplishment through (e.g.):

- ✓ the diversification of rural activities;
- ✓ the enhancement of the market distribution;

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<sup>1</sup> All comparisons have been rounded out to over 10 and tested for statistical significance.

<sup>2</sup> Thirty reports were submitted, including the one of the European Union, therefore, our findings and remarks correspond only for those reports.

- ✓ economic and social development propellers in rural areas;
- ✓ the efficient use of soil and water resources;
- ✓ the improvement or the provision of environmental services, and;
- ✓ **the involvement of stakeholders and civil society for the enhancement of capacity building, knowledge transfer and active participation**, were well-emphasized.

Although the latter, on stakeholder involvement is highlighted, it remains unclear how stakeholders (or Major Groups) were involved, in practice, through SD partnerships, or otherwise, with UN Bodies, Governments or other entities, for sharing experiences and coordinating any actions. This meeting is therefore a good opportunity within the UN and CSD to help clarify what roles do Major Groups or SD stakeholders might assume with governments and other partners in achievement goals and improving the means of implementation.

Exploring these questions can help: firstly, to identify what efforts each of the parties might assume towards meeting SD goals; and secondly, to agree the means for reaching joint goals regarding NSDS. In submitting yearly CSD reports Major groups want to know how they can become involved – through partnerships, through separate reporting, through meeting with CSD contact points at the national level or other means, such as monitoring and assessment of policies, with sector or other approaches.

On this final point, Trade Unions will plan to continue our contribution by yearly updating our country profiles and promoting NSDS.

Next year we plan to work with our national affiliates in 142 countries and for them to submit their own country profile to CSD contact points for inclusion in their government's national report. We hope this will encourage more governments to report, if they have not already done so. We would like as well some feedback on this idea.

We would also like to work towards better linkages between NSDS and the ILO Decent Work Country Programmes and to help refine tools of analysis that might be mutually beneficial to both agendas. We hope to continually emphasize the relevance of the coordination between stakeholders – from individuals and communities, major groups such as Trade Unions, governments and international organisations – for the fulfilment of Agenda 21's goals and the efficacy of well-diagnosed and integrated strategies.

1. CSD Grid of issues

English: [http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO\\_8Ad.EN.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_8Ad.EN.pdf)

2. TU Grid of CSD 2008 National reports (For 30 countries and the European Union)

English: [http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO\\_8Ad1.EN.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_8Ad1.EN.pdf)

3. TU NSDS Country Table Comparison (ILO Decent Work Country Programme and Poverty Reduction Strategies with regard to NSDS Status)

English: [http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO\\_8Ad2.EN.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_8Ad2.EN.pdf)

4. SDUnit Indicators and checklists

English: Indicators [http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpS\\_1.EN.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpS_1.EN.pdf)

5. TU Country Profile CSD 2008

English: [http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO\\_8Ab.EN.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpO_8Ab.EN.pdf)

6. UN NSDS Indicators

English: [http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpA\\_3a.EN.pdf](http://www.global-unions.org/pdf/ohsewpA_3a.EN.pdf)

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