

## **IFSA Participates in the 16<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development**

**New York, USA May 5 – 16, 2008**

The voices of the youth have never been so vibrant or well articulated as it was at the 16th session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (UNCSD). Held every year at the United Nations Secretariat in New York, the event draws government representatives, diplomats, policy makers, environmental agencies and technocrats in the field of development to the heart of New York to deliberate on key global issues. This year, tagged as the “review year”, focused on six thematic issues – Rural Development, Drought, Desertification, Land, Agriculture and Africa.

IFSA holds an ECOSOC consultative status at the UNCSD and this has been in effect since 2006. This year, IFSA sent two student representatives, Patience Mayaki, Regional Representative for North Africa and Pierre-Joseph Hatton, IFSA member from France. The two representatives made acquaintance at the secretariat and joined over 100 youth delegates from all over the world in making interventions and lobbying for youth involvement in important areas of development under the umbrella of the Children and Youth Major Group.

Highlights among the interventions made by the youth caucus include the following:

- A call to Ministers to target rural education programs that engages youth at the community level.
- The importance of agricultural education system that incorporates entrepreneurial approaches and is relevant to meeting the practical needs of beneficiaries.
- A call for governments to take action in providing basic infrastructures that will support and enhance economic growth across developing economies.
- A need to tackle urgently the issue of water and sanitation by using education and awareness campaigns, making sanitation a policy priority and using successful case studies of sustainable business practices in the provision of sanitation infrastructure as reference points for future actions.

- Wellbeing of children and Youth affected in the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) owing to climate change dislocation.

Not only did we as youth delegates display tremendous passion about global issues that affected our future sustainability but our commitment and active engagement were evident through our clear and concerted efforts in working together to make our voices heard. At the end of the event, our voices were not heard alone but mainstreamed into major documents set for policy making at CSD-17 next year. Beyond preparing documents for plenary interventions, various youth delegations engaged in lobbying events, talking with government representatives and policy makers on various issues deemed to deserve more attention at the national levels.

Every hard day's work was often rewarded with complimentary comments from country delegates who believed that the youth had made significant effort in articulating their positions and bringing to the floor plausible opinions and strategies for governmental actions. It was a great milestone achieved which showed tremendous improvements over past youth participations at CSD meetings. On the social side, the youth Major group did not fail to commemorate the many successes we achieved during the CSD. Each night was celebrated with group dinners, social outings and sightseeing around New York, an act that drew many of us closer together and created new inspiring friendships.

The CSD finally ended with strong reminders from many of the major groups, including the children and Youth on the need for global action to promote sustainable development across the world. In closing and for the first time since inception, the CSD elected its female chair for CSD-17 in the name of Minister Gerda Verburg from Netherlands, the Dutch Minister for Land, Nature and Food Quality.

It was a rewarding experience as IFSA once again stamped its relevance as an active International student body committed to sustainable development at the local, regional and global levels. In closure, it is important to highlight that there is more than ever room for discussions and constructive dialogues in foras like this. To become more relevant, the youth caucus requires young talented individuals who are skilled in their fields of

specializations and have the required background to make representations at the different plenary sessions that often take place simultaneously. IFSA members have shown over the years to have the technical expertise to debate important global issues relevant for sustainable development. In the light of this, our presence at CSD becomes even more imperative in the future. It is therefore our hope that as an international student organization that is highly recognized and well respected in the international community, we will continue to convey, express and defend our positions on key issues that border on sustainability.

**NB**

CSD-17 will take place from May 4-15, 2009 with an earlier intergovernmental preparatory meeting scheduled for February 23-27, 2009. For more information about the UNCSO-16, please visit the following web links:

-Interventions from the Children and Youth Major Group:

[http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/mgroups/about\\_mgroups/amg\\_youth\\_main.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/mgroups/about_mgroups/amg_youth_main.htm)

- Official Statements and Presentations

<http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/statements.htm>

- CSD-16 Chairman's Summary (Part 1 & 11)

[http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/documents/chairs\\_summary.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/documents/chairs_summary.pdf)

[http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/documents/chairs\\_summary2.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd16/documents/chairs_summary2.pdf)

- CSD-16 Documents from the secretariat

[http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/docs\\_csd16.htm](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/documents/docs_csd16.htm)

- UNCSO -16 Webcasts (Archived Video)

<http://www.un.org/webcast/csd16/>