



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## SUMMARY OF THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE INC FOR THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 7-17 AUGUST 1995

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Convention to Combat Desertification (INCD) met for its seventh session in Nairobi, Kenya, from 7-17 August 1995. Unlike the previous six sessions, this meeting took place almost without event. With the Convention completed, the INCD has now embarked on activities that will facilitate the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties. During the course of the session, delegates reviewed the status of ratification and implementation of the resolution on Urgent Action for Africa, as well as actions in other regions. The Working Groups also began their work, tackling such issues as the designation of a permanent secretariat and arrangements for its functioning, identification of an organization to house the global mechanism, draft financial rules, programme and budget, the Committee on Science and Technology, draft Rules of Procedure for the Conference of the Parties, and Communication of Information and Review of Implementation. While there clearly remains concern about the periodicity and length of future sessions of the INCD, it is clear that the INCD has become an effective forum for preparing for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties of the Convention to Combat Desertification.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INCD

Desertification affects about one-sixth of the world's population, 70 percent of all drylands, and one-quarter of the total land area in the world. The most obvious impact of desertification, in addition to widespread poverty, is the degradation of 3.3 billion hectares of the total area of rangeland, decline in soil fertility and soil structure, and the degradation of irrigated cropland.

The Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) was formally adopted on 17 June 1994, and opened for signature at a ceremony in Paris on 14-15 October 1994. This first post-Rio sustainable development convention is notable for its innovative approach in recognizing: the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of desertification; the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand driven; and the involvement of local populations in the development of national action programmes. The core of the Convention is the development of national and subregional/regional action programmes to combat desertification. These action

programmes are to be developed by national governments in close cooperation with donors, local populations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The Convention currently has 107 signatories and has been ratified by five countries. The Convention will enter into force 90 days after the receipt of the 50th instrument of ratification.

While the idea of a convention to combat desertification was discussed during the UNCED preparatory process, it was only in Rio where language was adopted requesting the General Assembly to establish an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the purpose of negotiating a convention. The General Assembly, during its 47th session in 1992, adopted resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of the INCD, with the aim of finalizing the Convention by June 1994.

The organizational session of the INCD was held in January 1993. At that meeting, delegates elected Bo Kjellén (Sweden) Chair of the Committee, elected the remaining members of the Bureau, adopted the rules of procedure, set the schedule of meetings and established two working groups.

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### **FIRST SESSION**

The first session of the INCD was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 24 May - 3 June 1993. The first week of the session focused on the sharing of technical information and assessments on various aspects of drought and desertification. Divided into seven sections, the information-sharing segment provided an opportunity for scientists, technical experts, delegates and NGOs to share relevant experiences and learn more about the scourge of desertification and its global dimensions. The second week focused on the structure and elements to be contained in the Convention. Delegates also exchanged ideas about the Convention and its objectives.

Negotiations stalled in Nairobi over the issue of related regional instruments, while still giving priority action to Africa. Kjellén proposed that an instrument on Africa, such as an annex, be negotiated once the main structure of the Convention had been defined, and that similar instruments for other regions be negotiated subsequently. This proposal met with resistance from several countries in regions other than Africa. They felt that their own problems with desertification deserved attention and that similar instruments for their regions should be negotiated simultaneously with the instrument for Africa. The decision was deferred.

### **SECOND SESSION**

The second session of the INCD met in Geneva from 13-24 September 1993. The Committee considered the compilation text of the Convention prepared by the Secretariat and agreed on the future programme of work of the Committee, including the elaboration of regional instruments for Africa, Asia and Latin America. At the conclusion of the second session, the two working groups completed their discussion of the Secretariat's compilation text and identified areas of convergence and divergence. There appeared to be consensus on the need for implementable commitments that are central to the Convention and articulated at different levels (national, regional and international). Delegates stressed the need for a public awareness strategy, improved education, and increased cooperation and coordination between the North and the South, South and South, and among donors.

### **THIRD SESSION**

The third session of the INCD was held at UN Headquarters in New York from 17-28 January 1994. At this session the two working groups focused on the draft negotiating text of the Convention that was prepared by the Secretariat. By the end of the two-week session, the working groups were able to complete at least one and sometimes two readings of each draft article. Progress was made in shaping the Convention and in identifying the areas of convergence and divergence. The INCD also discussed the regional instrument for Africa for the first time. After an initial discussion of the nature of this instrument and its relationship to the Convention as a whole, delegates requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft text for consideration at the fourth session.

### **FOURTH SESSION**

The fourth session of the INCD was held in Geneva from 21-31 March 1994. The two working groups continued negotiating the draft text of the Convention. By the conclusion of the session the substantive problems that remained included: the need for an article on principles in the text; all matters related to financial resources and mechanisms; categories of countries; subsidiary bodies; reservations or exceptions open to the Parties; and the obligations of a withdrawing Party.

The fourth session was also the first time that delegates formally considered the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa. In general, developed countries thought that the annex was too long and contained a number of articles that were better suited to or already contained in the main Convention. The Africans felt that the level of detail was essential, otherwise the instrument would not

achieve its objective of providing priority treatment for Africa. The Asian and Latin American regional groups also produced their own draft regional implementation instruments. Although these annexes were not discussed in detail, initial reaction was positive.

### **FIFTH SESSION**

The fifth session of the INCD was held in Paris from 6-17 June 1994. During this session, delegates worked through many long nights to reach agreement on the remaining bracketed text in the Convention and to finalize four regional implementation annexes for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia, and the Northern Mediterranean. They also adopted resolutions that recommended urgent action for Africa and interim arrangements for the period between adoption of the Convention and its entry into force, which could take at least two years. There were times during this session that delegates thought they would never reach agreement on the financial provisions of the Convention. After three all-night sessions capped by a closing Plenary that did not even begin until 4:00 am, the Convention was finally adopted.

### **SIXTH SESSION**

The sixth session of the INCD was held in New York from 9-18 January 1995. While this session was more of an organizational session than anything else, it served two important purposes. First, the Committee reached agreement on the work programme for the interim period and the mandates of the two working groups and the Plenary, which will carry out the post-agreement negotiations that will push forward the development of the Convention and its implementation. Second, it alerted delegates, the Bureau and the Interim Secretariat to some of the challenges that lie ahead. These challenges include: reaffirming the equal status of the Convention with other environmental conventions; implementation of the resolution on urgent action for Africa; raising awareness; popular participation; preparation for the first Conference of the Parties (COP); scientific and technical cooperation during the interim period; and funding.

## **REPORT OF THE SEVENTH SESSION**

The seventh session of the INCD opened on the afternoon of Monday, 7 August 1995. During the two-week session, four plenary sessions were held and the two Working Groups held their first meetings to prepare for the first Conference of the Parties.

During the opening Plenary, INCD Chair Bo Kjellén (Sweden) outlined a tentative agenda for the two weeks and said he hoped to conclude the work a day early. The delegates adopted the agenda and organization of work (A/AC.241/32). The Plenary also accredited another 10 non-governmental organizations (A/AC.241/9/Add.9 and Add.10).

Kjellén then made his opening statement in which he noted that conclusions of the CSD's third session represent a clear political signal that the Convention is integrated with the follow-up to Rio and that it emphasizes connections between dryland issues, land use, food security and socio-economic factors. He said that discussion of a Permanent Secretariat and Rules of Procedure were complex issues that could benefit from the work of other conventions. The Global Mechanism, articles on scientific and technical cooperation, the bottom-up approach and local participation and action are important innovations beyond this Convention with respect to development practice and theory.

Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo reported that 107 States and regional economic integration organizations have signed the Convention. Five States, Cape Verde, Egypt, Mexico, the Netherlands and Senegal, have deposited their instruments of ratification and a number of countries have initiated the ratification process. He reported that the Interim Secretariat has compiled seven documents, A/AC.241/33 to A/AC.241/39, covering the issues the Committee intends to address.

UNEP Executive Director Elizabeth Dowdeswell said UNEP would be honored to host the Secretariat, but feels it is not the best equipped to house the Global Mechanism. It is better able to contribute to the development of a scientific knowledge base and indicators, push for land degradation to be considered within the main GEF criteria, identify, evaluate and publish success stories in combating desertification and support the Committee on Science and Technology.

UNDP/UNSO Director Sam Nyambi, on behalf of UNDP Administrator James Gustave Speth, said the agency is available to host the Global Mechanism. UNSO now supports all affected countries, not only Africa, and the organization has changed its name to Office to Combat Desertification and Drought, but retains its acronym.

IFAD noted that national action programmes (NAPs) should not be shopping lists, but dynamic plans that continuously evolve as experience is gained.

Spain, on behalf of the European Union, said the EU attaches highest importance to the CCD and encouraged speeding the process of entry into force. The EU may try to turn in all of its ratifications at once. Switzerland, speaking on behalf of Australia, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States, stated that these countries are firmly committed to effective implementation of the CCD. Their national authorities are working to ensure speedy ratification of the Convention. Pakistan, on behalf of the G-77 and China, stated that it views the Global Mechanism as an institution to mobilize resources for the Convention. Cuba said its government is prepared to cooperate in scientific and technological matters, while Bangladesh reported that its government had decided to ratify the Convention.

CONGAC, on behalf of the NGOs, emphasized the importance of the funds of the Global Mechanism reaching the grassroots level. She added that the necessary resources should be provided to enable the involvement of NGOs and community-based organizations (CBOs) in the decision-making processes and development of NAPs.

### **STATUS OF RATIFICATION**

The Executive Secretary, Hama Arba Diallo said five countries, Cape Verde, Egypt, Mexico, the Netherlands and Senegal had deposited their instruments of ratification. In addition to these, the Secretariat has information that Tunisia has completed the national procedures, and that documents are on their way. The Secretariat is also waiting for communication from countries that are in the process of signing the instruments.

Mauritania, Mali, and Lebanon said they expect to ratify the Convention by the end of 1995, while France, Peru, Germany, Portugal and India expect to do so by the end of 1996. Although Iran, Colombia and Morocco have initiated the ratification process, they were not specific on when they expect to complete it.

### **URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA AND ACTION IN OTHER REGIONS**

This agenda item was considered during two plenary sessions. The first session was devoted exclusively to reports on the implementation of the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa. The second session, which was held during the second week, provided an opportunity to report on the work done in other regions based on the regional implementation annexes. The countries covered by the various regional implementation annexes held a half-day of informal consultations prior to the Plenary. During the closing Plenary, Kjellén circulated a paper containing his conclusions on this subject (A/AC.241/CRP.15).

**URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA:** Kjellén said the discussion was aimed at enabling delegates to learn from African experiences, using Mali, Namibia and the CILSS region as the major examples. Those countries gave detailed accounts of their

activities. Amb. Diallo also reviewed the Interim Secretariat's role in national and regional activities in Africa, including: facilitating two subregional meetings and national seminars in 13 African countries; preparing information kits and a simplified version of the Convention; and participating in the celebration of the World Day to Combat Desertification. The environment ministers of the Central African Republic and Senegal and a Vice-Minister from Eritrea also presented statements.

Reporting on behalf of the countries covered by the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa, Uganda welcomed the priority accorded the region and assistance provided so far. He stated that focusing on Africa does not take away the global nature of the Convention.

In addition to other activities, Niger, Egypt, Morocco and Uganda have held various types of awareness raising workshops. Kenya, Ethiopia, Mauritania and Cape Verde also outlined the different activities they have undertaken. The CILSS, IGADD, UMA and SADC subregions reported on the progress they had made, especially in initiating action towards the preparation of the subregional action programmes. Niger, Kenya and Uganda are working on the ratification process. Benin and Mali expect to ratify the Convention by the end of 1995. ENDA, on behalf of the NGOs, and the OAU also reported on their regional activities.

Developed countries also demonstrated their support in Africa. Spain, on behalf of the EU, pointed out that desertification-related projects receive a large portion of the total amount of aid allocated by the EU for development projects. The Netherlands said its early ratification of the CCD demonstrates its commitment. The country will co-finance the NGO network RIOD for three years. Australia said it has set up a US\$250,000 fund for activities within the Eastern and Southern African regions, with which it shares many similarities. France can: assist in research; support CILSS member countries with funding and facilitation for action plans; assist with information, observation and monitoring; and help to mobilize NGOs. Switzerland reported that it was implementing information and awareness activities and supporting NGOs in various regions. The Club du Sahel will support a dialogue in November for regional cooperation on peace and sustainable development. Canada is supporting NAPs, research, information systems, and progress indicators, as well as awareness raising in Africa. Sweden reported that it had supported 30 projects related to desertification during the last ten years and, in consultation with IGADD, has developed four thematic programmes.

**ACTION IN OTHER REGIONS: Regional Implementation Annex for Latin America** — Several delegates, including Colombia, Bolivia, Brazil, Peru and Mexico, underscored the need to support action in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Colombia, on behalf of the group, said in view of the growing problem of desertification in the region, there is need to undertake action now to avoid the necessity for urgent action later. He added that there is a trend to focus on one single region to the detriment of others. A workshop is planned for 28 August to 3 September 1995, to discuss and examine the implementation of the regional annex. He hoped there will be an indication of support for the upcoming conference to guarantee the international nature of the CCD. Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, Chile and Argentina reported that they had started work on their national action programmes and outlined some of the activities entailed in the programmes. Bolivia said it hoped to ratify the Convention by the end of August. Cuba said a ministerial environmental meeting scheduled for September in Havana will provide an opportunity to insert language supporting CCD activities in the conference document. Mexico supported the need to convene a meeting to assess regional progress related to action plans already underway.

**Regional Implementation Annex for Asia** — India, reporting on behalf of countries covered by the Regional Implementation Annex for Asia, said he hoped to present an action-oriented concept paper at INCD-8. The Asian group will hold expert meetings

before the next session. China also reported on the activities it had initiated. The Russian Federation, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan called for financial support to redress the problems related to drought and desertification in their region. The Republic of Korea said it was committed to the implementation of the Convention.

Turkey said the conference held in Almería, Spain, from 26-28 June 1995, established a dialogue that will facilitate the coordination of NAPs. He said all regional annex groups should be represented on the Bureau. Governments should designate a focal point for implementation of NAPs. Regional information networks should also be established. Israel described a Middle East joint subregional project with Jordan and the Palestinian autonomous region to seek development options without the risk of desertification.

While reporting on their activities, Lebanon and Armenia said they expected to ratify the CCD by October and December 1995, respectively. Iran reported that during its last session, ESCAP supported the strengthening of the Asian regional network on training and research in desertification and provided funds for its office in Tehran. ESCAP has also requested the convening of a high-level meeting to develop a regional programme of action for the network. TEMA, a Turkish NGO, said the NGOs have been involved in awareness raising.

### **SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS**

On Monday, 14 August 1995, Executive Secretary Arba Diallo presented the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds, as contained in documents A/AC.241/41 and A/AC.241/41/Add.1. He said that for greater transparency, the document contained a report on the use of funds provided through the regular budget of the UN. These expenditures were disbursed in accordance with the programme budget implications (PBI) statement. The report also highlights expenditures from the Trust and Voluntary Funds, as well as the staffing situation. He said the situation regarding staffing was precarious. The six staff members funded from extrabudgetary resources have contracts that are linked to specific government contributions that are running out. The Voluntary Fund, through which participants from developing countries are funded to attend the INCD sessions, is almost exhausted.

Several delegations said the document was transparent and well prepared, however, Canada would like to see the costs listed by activity.

A few countries made financial pledges. Germany will provide DM70,000 for the participation of developing country delegates in future sessions of the INCD. Japan is committed to providing US\$700,000 for both the Trust and Voluntary Funds. However, its voluntary contributions should fund LDC delegates. Israel pledged US\$3,000 and the European Union pledged ECU50,000. Canada said it will continue funding the legal officer for another year and will donate funds for the participation of LDCs. France said it will soon pay the FF300,000 pledged at INCD-6 for the participation of LDC delegates. Sweden will continue to support the work of the Secretariat and contribute to the Voluntary Fund for LDC delegates. Mauritania said it was considering making a contribution to the Trust Fund. Egypt, supported by Benin, urged the Secretariat to look into the possibility of tapping into private funding sources.

Some developing country delegates expressed concern about the Secretariat's funding situation, noting that this differed from the situation of other secretariats. Others drew attention to the need to fund developing countries delegates as well, not just those from the LDCs. Algeria called for the provision of funds to affected developing countries to enable them to prepare their reports for the first COP.

The question of funding drew greater attention towards the end of the two week session, which resulted in protracted debate during the closing plenary, after the Chair presented two papers:

Conclusions by the Chairman (A/AC.241/CRP.15/Add.1) and the Chairman's revised proposal for a draft decision (A/AC.241/L.27) on dates and venues of future sessions of the INCD.

## **WORKING GROUP I**

Working Group I, chaired by Mourad Ahmia (Algeria), addressed four issues: identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism; designation of a Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning; draft financial rules of the COP, its subsidiary bodies and the Permanent Secretariat; and programme and budget.

### **DESIGNATION OF A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUNCTIONING**

Delegates considered document A/AC.241/34, which analyzes two separate but related issues: administrative arrangements for the functioning of the Permanent Secretariat (PS) and its physical location. The document requests that organizations interested in providing administrative arrangements and countries wishing to host the Secretariat should submit their written offers, using criteria contained in the two annexes to A/AC.241/34. Germany, Kenya, Spain and Switzerland have so far indicated their interest.

There was general consensus to follow the Secretariat's proposals, but deadlines should be set for written submissions and when the Secretariat should report back to the INCD. Some delegations also suggested that the two processes of identifying the organization and the location be considered separately. Morocco, Spain and the WMO proposed additional criteria to be included in the annexes.

During debate on the amendments to Annex II (categories of information which might be requested from countries interested in hosting the Permanent Secretariat), Germany proposed deleting all amendments to the selection criteria because each would give advantage to one candidate or another. There was general agreement on this proposal, except regarding paragraph 10 of Annex II, which addresses contributions from the host government to help defray operating costs. The amendment to this criterion added host country financial support for the Permanent Secretariat as a factor in selection. Some developing country delegates felt this would discriminate against poor countries' offers to host the PS. Others felt that host country contributions were covered elsewhere in the CCD. Delegates agreed to keep the amendment, but it now refers to "support" in general, rather than specifically to financial support.

Uganda, on behalf of the G-77 and China, presented a draft decision that focuses on the administrative arrangements. The decision would: suggest that the PS should be linked to the Secretariat of the UN; invite all international institutions to support the PS including by secondment of staff; request that the GA transfer the financial costs of the core staff and operating expenses of the Interim Secretariat to the PS; and that the GA should consider providing conference services for the COP and its subsidiary bodies. These arrangements should be reviewed at COP-3.

Although several delegations considered the G-77 and China's proposal "interesting" and worthy of consideration, they viewed the recommendations as premature. G-77 members argued that this was necessary in view of the fact that the CCD may enter into force in 1996 and the 1995 General Assembly will consider the biennial work programme that would cover CCD activities.

The Group agreed to delay consideration of the G-77 and China draft decision and adopted A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.1 in its place. The decision retains the G-77 and China draft decision for future consideration. It also "requests the Secretary-General of the UN to submit to the Committee, at its next session, a report on the nature of administrative arrangements that can be provided and on support

from the UN to the Permanent Secretariat without being fully integrated in the work programme or management structure of any particular programme.”

Delegates also adopted a draft decision on the location of the Permanent Secretariat (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.5) inviting interested governments to submit written offers to the Interim Secretariat.

### **IDENTIFICATION OF AN ORGANIZATION TO HOUSE THE GLOBAL MECHANISM**

The Chair introduced the documents including the request for proposals to host the Global Mechanism (GM) and replies received from IFAD, UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank (A/AC.241/33) and the reply of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (A/AC.241/33/Add.1).

Uganda, on behalf of the G-77 and China, supported by Guinea, Benin, Mali, Senegal, the Philippines, Lesotho, Ethiopia, Bolivia and Syria, said the proposals to host the GM responded to insufficient guidance with limited information. He said the INCD should request further information from interested organizations. Spain, on behalf of the EU, supported by Switzerland and Australia, said the GM is not a fund in itself but a facilitator of existing finances. Delegates must decide on modalities and the GM's detailed functions, taking into account the resources and capacity of interested organizations.

Senegal called for a study to clarify some vague aspects of the GM. For the GM to only forward information is not enough; it must also play a role in ensuring necessary funds, even if it is not called fundraising. Tunisia, supported by Ethiopia, expressed concern over the discussion of modalities of the GM only as facilitator and clearing house for financial resources. China, supported by Algeria and Iran, said the GM's function is to ensure affected countries are easily able to obtain financing. Delegates cannot consider the GM without its role as a funding mechanism. The US said the Interim Secretariat, with input from a small informal group, should write a guidance document to deal with the scope, functions and modalities of the GM, drawing from relevant convention provisions.

The IFAD said the GM's role can be cast as low or high potential. A minimalist GM would identify resource gaps but would not be able to do anything more. The high potential approach would encompass active efforts to mobilize, catalyze and leverage financial resources. UNDP said it needed indications from the Working Group on the role and functions of the GM. He hoped the selection would not be a bidding process but an interagency partnership. ELCI, on behalf of NGOs, said the GM should mobilize funds for a process approach, not just projects, including awareness raising and popular participation.

Mauritania called for IFAD to try a high intensity proposal, but he added that a quick decision was not necessary. Benin said it was not the time to assess specific offers. Morocco said existing offers could provide ideas for defining and selecting the GM.

The G-77 and China submitted a draft decision (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.2), which invites institutions to transmit additional and complementary information. Areas of additional information include modalities of operations, the relationship between the COP and host institution, and financial mobilization and accountability according to the institution's governing bodies. It also mandates a review of the GM according to a Secretariat report.

In the end, delegates adopted a revised version of the G-77 and China draft decision, A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.2/Rev.1. The decision notes the responses by potential host organizations and welcomes the positive character of UNDP and IFAD's responses. It also requests that the Interim Secretariat should prepare: a compilation of references to the GM in Convention articles and annexes; a compilation of inputs from member States; and a

preliminary draft list of selection criteria for a host institution. The decision invites interested organizations to continue consulting with their governing bodies and plans a review of the GM selection for INCD-8.

### **DRAFT FINANCIAL RULES**

Delegates considered the draft financial rules of COP, its subsidiary bodies and the Permanent Secretariat, as contained in A/AC.241/35. The Secretariat noted that: the method of adopting the budget and determining the scales of assessment and size of working capital are political issues; the currency in which budget estimates are constituted and denominated needs to be determined carefully due to exchange fluctuations; a structure of three funds would be best; and a way to reimburse the administrative costs incurred by the host institution has been provided.

Spain, on behalf of the EU, said details of the document should be dealt with at INCD-8 by a group of financial experts provided by delegations.

**Currency of denomination:** Mauritania, Canada, Lebanon, Uganda, Saudi Arabia, Brazil and Niger prefer the use of the US dollar. Canada, supported by others, said this may also be determined by the location of the Permanent Secretariat.

**Method of adoption:** There was protracted debate on whether consensus, or a two-thirds majority vote should be used. Bolivia noted that Rule 2(e) of the draft Rules of Procedure for the COP provides for decision-making by consensus, but is not specific in Rule 2(g) relating to the adoption of the programme and budget. The UK said there is an emerging trend in recent environmental conventions to use consensus, mainly due to the size of their budgets. This was done for the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC). Antigua and Barbuda disagreed, noting that the decision on consensus the UK was referring to related to the financial rules governing the financial mechanism of the FCCC, not the financial rules of the COP and its subsidiary bodies. The issue of consensus versus majority decisions appeared in other areas of the document, including the annex language on scope, on establishing a capital reserve, regarding the scale of contributions and on the budget. Mauritania, supported by Benin, suggested adding language that the budget be “adopted by consensus wherever possible. In the absence of consensus the two-thirds majority would be needed for adoption.” Germany, the US and the UK said the budget should be adopted by consensus. The US, the UK and Germany added “by consensus” to the annex on a capital reserve. Benin bracketed the change.

**Transfers between budget lines:** Several delegations questioned who authorize transfers, under what rules and conditions transfers should be permitted, and whether limits should be set for amounts moved between budget lines.

**Types of funds:** Delegates discussed whether three funds or one fund with separate accounts would be more economical. They also debated whether all developing countries' participation or only that of LDCs should be supported, and by which funds. Norway, supported by Sweden, said support for participation should be for LDC delegates only. The Philippines said other developing countries should be covered as well. Benin suggested that the text should specify which funds would provide assistance to developing countries and NGOs and that a reference to Africa should be added.

**Working capital reserve:** Mauritania, the Congo, Benin and Uganda supported the idea of a working capital reserve, as it has a precedent in the FCCC. Canada said a capital reserve would have to be negotiated, but an alternative would be for the host organization to have bridging funds.

**Scale of contributions:** Several countries, including the Congo, Bolivia, Colombia, Bangladesh, and Antigua and Barbuda, said Parties should make contributions based on the UN scale of assessment, as was the case with the FCCC. Switzerland, the US and Japan added the word “voluntary” before annex references to

contributions and “indicative” before references to the scale. Other delegations bracketed the changes. Some delegations said that language on “other contributions” covered voluntary contributions, so the main language should not be phrased as voluntary. The US and the UK said the COP should determine the scale by consensus. Several delegations bracketed the change. Colombia proposed a ceiling on contributions of 30% of the total and limits on developing country contributions. Japan bracketed the maximum contribution.

The Working Group adopted a draft decision on financial rules (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.3), inviting a revised draft of the rules from the Interim Secretariat.

### **PROGRAMME AND BUDGET**

The Secretariat introduced the document (A/AC.241/36) and its annex of sample tables, noting that it was an outline. Budget figures and more specific programme categories could be filled in once decisions are made on a programme of work.

Several delegations suggested additions or changes to the sample tables provided, including the addition of an organizational chart explaining the number of posts in the Secretariat. Delegates debated whether travel costs should be paid for developing countries or only LDCs, with donor countries proposing greater restrictions and developing countries noting that a decision was already in place on the subject. The Group agreed that travel costs would be supported for “delegates of developing countries, in particular LDCs.”

The draft decision on the Programme and Budget (A/AC.241/WG.I(VII)/L.4) was adopted. It invites the Interim Secretariat to prepare a revised version of the document. Delegates agreed that written submissions could be included in the revised draft but should be indicated as not having been previously discussed by the INCD.

### **WORKING GROUP II**

Working Group II, chaired by Takao Shibata (Japan), addressed: organization of scientific and technological cooperation; draft rules of procedure of the COP; and procedures for communication of information and review of implementation.

### **THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

The informal paper prepared by a group of OECD scientific advisers on the terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), the roster of independent experts and *ad hoc* panels, was used as the basis for discussion, after which the Secretariat compiled a new paper, A/AC.241/WG.II(VII)/CRP.1, including the conclusions of the informal discussions. Part of this paper will serve as the negotiating text at INCD-8.

**General terms of reference of the CST:** Developed country delegations said the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) should provide advice, evaluate institutions and networks, recommend areas of research appropriate to support the CCD and evaluate the scientific aspects of implementation. Although open to all, the CST needs a smaller Bureau or core group to direct its operations. The COP should specify criteria for the roster of experts, possibly including membership in international scientific associations, degrees, and field experience. Others emphasized that the CST should not conduct or fund new research. It should provide advice to the COP and distribute information based on the past 20 years of research. The CST should be multidisciplinary and diverse, but its size and cost should be kept to a minimum — one member per Party. Developing country delegations did not want to restrict or limit CST membership. It must be open, multidisciplinary and contain regional representation. Requiring international scientific membership would be discriminatory to developing country scientists.

**Functions:** There were a number of conflicting proposals regarding sections on evaluation of networks and institutions, research and review activities, technology transfer, and evaluation and exchange of information. It was finally suggested that all these paragraphs be merged into one section called “Evaluation.”

**Structure and Membership:** There was general agreement that CST membership should be limited, drawn from representatives of the Parties to the CCD, and multidisciplinary. Experts also can be designated by governments. Some delegates suggested the inclusion of sectoral groups such as women, regional and international organizations, and NGOs. There seemed to be consensus on the need for a Bureau for the CST.

**Transparency:** One delegation suggested deleting the reference to the accessibility of the work of the CST to all those who are interested, because it would be too costly for the CST to publish its work.

**Programme and budget:** There was no agreement on whether the CST should develop a plan of action and a budget, which should be part of the overall budget of the COP. It is unclear how the plan of action can be separated from the budget. Some suggested that the COP should make available sufficient funds for the CST to enable it to carry out its activities, while others stressed that the CST should not give any directives to the COP.

**Sessions of the CST:** Delegates discussed the timing of CST meetings relative to those of the COP. It should be possible for the CST to meet just before the COP meetings. Others questioned whether the CST should be presenting reports at COP meetings.

**The CST and the roster of experts:** It was proposed that the CST shall advise the COP on the structure and membership of the Roster of Independent Experts. Some delegations suggested deleting this, since the INCD can only state that the CST will have, among its functions, that of updating the roster of experts. One of three alternatives said that “The CST shall propose the selection and evaluation criteria of members in the roster of experts, take decisions on the nomination of candidates and propose the removal of any candidates on the basis of evaluation or assessment.” Some delegates noted that only the COP has the authority to determine who is placed on or removed from the roster.

**The CST and *ad hoc* panels:** Delegates pointed out that the Convention provided for the COP, not the CST, to establish *ad hoc* panels. Thus, the CST can only be “invited to advise” the COP on this matter.

**Relations with other conventions and international organizations:** It was generally accepted that the CST should keep itself informed of the activities of the scientific advisory committees of other conventions and of relevant international organizations to ensure that its work does not duplicate the work of these committees.

**Areas of activities of the CST:** There were objections to listing activities because it is difficult to include all the disciplines.

To conclude this agenda item, the Working Group introduced a draft decision on the terms of reference that instructs the Secretariat to prepare a document that will contain two sections. The first section, which will be negotiated at INCD-8, will cover the terms of reference of the CST based on the discussions at this session and written comments that are received before 15 October 1995. The second section, which will only be discussed at INCD-8, will be a compilation text on the *ad hoc* panels and roster of experts as contained in the current CRP.1 document, as well as additional comments received by 15 October 1995.

### **DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES**

The discussions were based on document A/AC.241/38, which was largely drawn from other Conventions and the CCD.

In **Rule 2** on definitions, delegates agreed that a sub-paragraph is needed referring to the date of entry into force of the CCD. With respect to **Rule 3**, place of sessions, Benin said the decision on where the COP holds its meetings should be decided by the UNGA. Regarding **Rule 4**, dates of sessions, Benin suggested that an extraordinary session be held not more than 45 days after the submission of a written request, instead of the proposed 90 days.

With respect to **Rule 22**, election of officers, Benin suggested the addition to the Bureau of a seat for the small island developing States. Iran wanted each geographical region to have two representatives on the Bureau and proposed that the Chair of the CST also have a seat on the Bureau. The UK proposed that **Rule 27** read: "Save as provided in Rule 28-31, the present rules shall apply" to all bodies.

Protracted debate followed Canada's proposal with respect to **Rule 47**, which deals with the majority required to make various decisions. Spain said the rule does not provide a procedure where two alternatives have been proposed. The US, supported by the UK, Japan and Canada, proposed that financial decisions should be made by consensus. Uganda, supported by Benin, said the proposal should be bracketed. The Chair pointed out that the financial rules being dealt with here are not the same as those under discussion in Working Group I. The Secretariat clarified that the rule suggests that on all matters of substance for which consensus is not obtained, the decision shall be made by a two-thirds majority vote, except in three instances: when the Convention provides an alternative; in cases where the financial rules provide guidance; and under the proposed Rules of Procedure.

**Rule 53** addresses the method of voting. Uganda said the rule should be cross-referenced to Rule 47, paragraph 2. South Africa said the drafting of paragraph 2 does not vest power in the President of the COP to rule on the roll-call vote, since a provision is made for secret ballot. A supplementary procedure should be provided. **Rule 56** provides for the procedure of elections in the absence of a majority. Benin, supported by Egypt, amended paragraph 1 so that if votes are equally divided in the second and third ballots, the President shall "draw lots to decide between the two candidates."

Japan suggested a reduction of the official languages to three to reduce costs. This was contested by several delegations including Spain, China, Benin, Cuba, Kazakhstan, France and Mexico. On amendments to rules of procedure and status, Benin proposed a deletion in **Rule 62** of the words "by consensus," since other parts of the Convention do not say that amendments have to be adopted by consensus. Uganda suggested putting "by consensus" in brackets. The Chair commented that if consensus is deleted, then Rule 47 will apply instead and said that it makes sense to adopt the Rules of Procedure by consensus.

Finally, the Group adopted the draft decision on the Rules of Procedure of the Conference of the Parties. It states that the INCD should use the draft Rules of Procedure of the COP prepared by the Interim Secretariat (document A/AC.241/38) as the basis for future negotiations and requests the Secretariat to prepare a revised text for the eighth session.

## **COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AND REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION**

The discussions on communication of information and review of implementation were based on document A/AC.241/39. The NGO network RIOD emphasized the importance of NGO participation and contribution to the whole process of communication of information. RIOD offered to prepare a list of NGOs worldwide with relevant expertise, which could be used by the Secretariat to serve on the Committees.

**Objectives and criteria:** Uzbekistan, supported by the Netherlands and Iran, noted that unlike in other environmental conventions, there is a distinction between affected and unaffected

countries and this must affect information sharing. Canada, supported by the Netherlands and Spain, noted the need for standardization of communications and the importance of including analysis.

**Communication from Parties:** Kazakhstan suggested issuing a bulletin based on the communication.

**Other review materials:** The UK, supported by Germany, suggested the deletion of paragraph 13 because it is undesirable to evaluate activities of sovereign States. He applied the same argument to paragraph 14, on reviews by the CST. Israel, supported by Germany, suggested that the Parties themselves should provide summaries.

**Guidelines for review materials:** Benin suggested that the Secretariat should prepare a reporting manual for review by the Working Group and adoption at COP-1. He expressed concern for the developing countries who need hardware and software to be able to transfer quantitative data. On paragraph 21, indicators and financial flows, the UK suggested that the Secretariat should compile work on already devised indicators. Regarding the financial flows, the Secretariat could contact OECD, which has worked on identifying such flows.

**Timing of communication:** Regarding paragraph 23, Benin, supported by the UK, Portugal and China, suggested that reports should be presented every two or four years. On paragraph 24, rotation of communications, Benin, supported by the UK, Israel and Peru, noted that it is important to combine reporting from affected and non-affected countries. The UK suggested 20 reports as the limit for consideration at one meeting. Israel requested that the Secretariat prepare proposal formats for consideration at INCD-8.

**Modalities of review:** Benin, supported by Sudan and the Congo, suggested that review materials should be distributed six weeks before the session of the COP. The UK doubted whether the Permanent Secretariat should assist developing countries in obtaining funds from donors. This might be a role for the Global Mechanism.

**Products of review:** Benin suggested that the periodic report should be published every two years.

The Group adopted a draft decision on communication of information and review of implementation. The decision asks for the submission of further views on procedures for communication of information and review of implementation by 15 October 1995. The Secretariat should prepare a draft decision of the Conference of the Parties on this subject, based on document A/AC.241/39 and on comments and suggestions from INCD-7 for consideration at INCD-8. It was also decided that the Chair of INCD should send a letter to the Chair of the GEF inquiring if developing countries could get funding for communication of information.

## **CLOSING PLENARY**

Kjellén called the final Plenary to order at 12:30 pm on Thursday, 17 August 1995. After statements from several delegates, the Chairs of the Working Groups presented their reports.

**WORKING GROUP I:** The Chair, Mourad Ahmia, said the Group had conducted six formal and two informal meetings that resulted in the adoption of six draft decisions. Two draft decisions were submitted by the G-77 and China — the Permanent Secretariat (A/AC.241/WG.I/(VII)/L.1) and identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism (A/AC.241/WG.I/(VII)/L.2/Rev.1). Three were submitted by the Working Group Chair: financial rules (A/AC.241/WG.I/(VII)/L.3); programme and budget (A/AC.241/WG.I/(VII)/L.4); and location of the Permanent Secretariat (A/AC.241/WG.I/(VII)/L.5). He pointed out two amendments. The second part of decision L.4 now reads, "invites the Interim Secretariat to submit a revised version of document A/AC.241/36 related to programme and budget at the eighth session, taking into account the views expressed by

delegations at its seventh session, as well as views communicated to the Interim Secretariat of the Convention." With respect to decision L.5, the Group had agreed to add the phrase "as well as support provided for the INCD," to paragraph 10 of Annex II of document A/AC.241/35.

The sixth draft decision, also submitted by the Chair, deals with the designation of a Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning (A/AC.241/WG.I/(VII)/L.6). This document decides to transmit to its next session the draft decision L.1, submitted by the G-77 and China.

Delegates noted that the reference to the United Nations in draft decision L.1 should be understood to mean the UN system. Spain noted that one of the mandates given to the Group was the election of a Vice-Chair for a WEOG representative to the Bureau, which the Chair had not reported on. Kjellén said he had not received any nominations so the issue would be addressed at the next session.

All the draft decisions were adopted by the Plenary without further comments.

**WORKING GROUP II:** The Chair, Takao Shibata, said the Group's deliberations had resulted in three draft decisions: on the draft rules of procedure for the COP (A/AC.241/WG.II/(VII)/L.1); on communication of information and review of implementation (A/AC.241/WG.II/(VII)/L.2); and on organization of scientific and technological cooperation (A/AC.241/WG.II/(VII)/L.3).

Shibata pointed out that the Group had also made a recommendation for the INCD Chair, which was not in the form of a draft decision. The Group requests Kjellén to explore the possibility of financial assistance from the GEF for the compilation and communication of information. This recommendation was considered within the context of draft decision L.2.

The Plenary adopted all the draft decisions and noted that Kjellén will report his findings with respect to the GEF at the next session.

**DATES AND VENUES OF FUTURE SESSIONS OF THE INCD:** The Chair then introduced draft decision A/AC.241/L.27, which was his revision of a G-77 and China draft on future sessions of the INCD. He said it is highly desirable that the INCD give full recommendations to the General Assembly on when and where future sessions should be held.

The decision bears in mind the need for sufficient extrabudgetary resources to support developing country participation and expresses concern at the present level of the Special Voluntary Fund. It then appeals to governments and organizations to make contributions and calls for a report to the General Assembly on the extrabudgetary funds. The decision recommends to the General Assembly that two sessions of the INCD, each of up to two weeks duration, should be held in 1996 — the eighth session in Geneva from 5-16 February and the ninth session in New York from 3-13 September. The decision also recommends that the General Assembly authorize two additional sessions, of up to two weeks duration, in 1997 — the tenth session in New York from 6-17 January and the eleventh session in April, the exact dates and venue to be decided at a later stage. It requests the General Assembly to review the financial situation of the funds in light of the report and to take appropriate decisions, and it suggests two dates for the first COP in June or August 1997.

Tunisia said the paragraph asking the General Assembly (GA) to review the funding situation should invite the GA "to take appropriate decision regarding future sessions of the Committee" rather than unspecified decisions. The Chair said the language was aimed at allowing the GA to take broader action to support the trust funds, not only to decide on dates. Benin said the Chair's wording reflected the workings of the GA. Japan said the amendment could question all future sessions, which could undermine the support of donors. He proposed deleting the paragraph.

The Chair said it is important that governments should not have any doubt on the venue of the next session so that donations are

possible. He appealed to Tunisia to withdraw his amendment. India said the Chair's language speaks of appropriate decisions, not excluding the venue and dates, but that it should not specifically link availability of funds with length and venue.

The Chair made a statement for the record renewing his appeal for contributions, promising the review of funds and an additional appeal to governments, if necessary, and explaining that the decision referred to a review of the financial situation of the funds but also to proposals on a programme of work. He asked Tunisia to accept his assurance.

The decision was adopted, after which Tunisia, supported by Pakistan, made a statement for the record. He said his interpretation of paragraph 5 is that the GA will take an appropriate decision including on the future sessions of INCD, as well as the substance and venue, depending on the contributions to the Voluntary Fund and with respect to the participation of developing countries.

**ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR INCD-8:** Colombia, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, suggested that item 3, urgent action for Africa and action taken in other regions should be subdivided into two. Benin went on to suggest "Special action: a) urgent action for Africa; and b) Action taken in other regions." With this amendment, the draft provisional agenda was adopted.

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS SEVENTH SESSION:** The report (A/AC.241/L.28) was presented by Vice-Chair José Urrutia (Peru), on behalf of INCD Rapporteur Nikita Glasovsky (Russian Federation). The report was adopted with the amendment that a third Vice-Chair will be elected at the eighth session.

Finally, the Chair made minor amendments to his conclusions (A/AC.241/CRP.15) in paragraph 5. The paragraph deals with the implementation of Resolution 5.1 on Urgent Action for Africa and underlines the global character of the problem of desertification and drought. This led the Latin American and Caribbean countries to question whether the global nature of the Convention was properly emphasized and stressed that if the CCD was to deal with Africa solely, they would have problems ratifying the Convention. After some discussion, the document was accepted.

Some delegates made closing statements. South Africa made a statement on behalf of the Temperate Southern Hemisphere Countries on the Environment, known as the Valdivia group, which includes Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa and Uruguay. The Group was formerly established in Chile on 10 March 1995 to foster exchanges on scientific and environmental matters. In view of the importance of traditional knowledge, NGOs and CBOs were crucial to the process, thus the group will be working in collaboration with them.

The Sudan Environmentalist Society, on behalf of women, appealed for: women to participate at all levels in the preparation of NAPs; the allocation of designated funds by potential Parties for women's programmes; and increased numbers of women in the official delegations at INCD-8. She expressed disappointment at the lack of a female member of the Bureau. A representative of the RIOD NGO network urged governments to consider providing NGOs access to funding through the Global Mechanism. He also requested that the Secretariat should raise funds for NGO participation in the INCD during the interim period.

The Chair concluded INCD-7 by noting that: the purpose of this work is to improve conditions of the men and women living in the dryland areas; this session has resulted in negotiation texts for INCD-8; and it is encouraging to see so much action in the interim period, making the CCD a living convention. The four pillars of the Convention are: its participatory character; the creation of partnerships; the multidisciplinary approach; and the aim to fully use the scientific and technological knowledge available. Finally, the CCD is an important part of the Rio process. He closed the session at 3:30 pm.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF INCD-7

In working smoothly through a modest agenda, INCD-7 achieved its goals. As Chair Bo Kjellén explained in his opening and closing remarks, the idea in Nairobi was to make progress for upcoming sessions, to take the next measured steps toward a first COP that is at least a year and as many as four more meetings away. Mostly procedural decisions resulted, as delegates gently broached dialogues on potentially difficult areas such as the Global Mechanism and financial rules that most agree cannot be negotiated fully until closer to the first session of the COP. Defining parts of the Committee on Science and Technology and reviewing early efforts to implement the resolution on Urgent Action for Africa, delegates and NGOs also opened conversations on more concrete issues of implementation, participation and partnership.

This session was the second one to be held in the interim period before the Convention comes into force. At this stage, often referred to as "post-agreement negotiations," continued dialogue can push forward the Convention to ensure that the negotiated outcome is well implemented. Thus, the objectives of INCD-7 were to follow up on the quick implementation of urgent action in Africa and not to lose momentum in the interim period. While most agreed that continuity in negotiations has value, the relaxed pace of negotiations — INCD-7 wrapped up in about eight unhurried working days — left some delegates wondering whether less frequent or shorter sessions are in order.

Difficulties appeared on only two issues: finances and the activities under the Convention outside Africa. The lack of firm donor commitments raised delicate questions about the availability of funds and where the next INCD will be held. And throughout the negotiations, non-African delegates were skeptical of how far the CCD would go toward its global objectives.

### THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

The greatest strides at INCD-7 were taken in discussions on the informal paper on the terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), the roster of independent experts and *ad hoc* panels. These negotiations were limited to dealing with the CST, because the decisions on the roster and panels are not required at the first COP. While there was satisfaction with the fact that a negotiating text is available for INCD-8, some issues remain to be settled.

First, opinions differ on the size of the CST. A number of delegations say that the CST membership cannot be limited, based on CCD language that the CST is open to the participation of all Parties. Some are arguing that it should be a small group of 15 persons, three from each region. They fear that in trying to establish a multidisciplinary and representative group, the Committee in the end will become bureaucratic, politicized and much too large. That would leave substantive work to the *ad hoc* panels and could make the CST itself superfluous. NGOs suggested that their knowledge and experience at the community level were essential to the CST's effectiveness and the incorporation of participatory practices into the CST's work. Some delegations stressed that if NGOs are to be involved, their representatives must provide some substantive knowledge and not participate only because they live in the field. The size of the CST, however, can only be appropriately determined once its functions are clear.

Another point of divergence emerged with regard to the relationship between the CST and the COP. All agree that the CST is a subsidiary body to the COP, but some favor tying the CST closely to instructions from the COP, whereas others want to give the CST more flexibility and independence. There are two outstanding questions: how much initiative should the CST be able to take and should the CST carry out its own research or simply collect research results, summarize and disseminate them.

The critique was also voiced that the comments at this session on the terms of reference of the CST were mostly of a legal character, copying text from the Convention, and that persons with

scientific competence need to make comments of a more substantive nature. This opportunity will be provided. It was agreed that views and suggestions about the text should be made available to the Secretariat by 15 October 1995. The idea to have a CST was driven largely by the presence of similar bodies in the Climate Change and Biodiversity Conventions. But the complex interface between the social and scientific causes of desertification will require a unique and innovative approach to determine the CST's character, composition and functions.

**URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA:** Delegates and NGOs had an opportunity to share experiences on the first concrete attempts to implement the Convention. Just as important were discussions on the financial aspects of implementation. Donor countries expressed a willingness to support activities under the Convention, along with some surprise that available resources had not been fully utilized. Affected countries said they were disappointed by poor responses to their efforts to combat desertification. They felt the field offices of donor countries had not yet heard the message that the CCD had their countries' support.

Yet the difference in perceptions seemed to raise awareness in both groups of where the communication gaps lie. It points to the need for donors and developing countries to find new ways of working on relevant development activities and to seek agreement on which activities are worthy of support. NGOs and developing country delegates stressed that money was needed — and worthwhile — to initiate and support process-oriented activities. Some donor country delegates said it would take some time for their agencies to adapt to the new demands of the CCD. In spite of the initial counter accusations, this discussion seems to have been catalytic to in-the-corridors partnership building between all players.

**PREPARATION FOR THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES:** Almost all the issues under this agenda item were addressed in decisions requesting the Interim Secretariat to prepare or revise reports. On designation of a Permanent Secretariat, financial rules, the Global Mechanism and programme and budget, Working Group I Chair Mourad Ahmia frequently reminded delegates that their discussions were preliminary, that the task was not to make major decisions immediately. The Working Groups occasionally spoke of delaying reconsideration of certain issues until INCD-9 or 10.

Several factors account for the deliberate pace. One was the overall objective of INCD-7 to move toward negotiating texts without actually beginning to write most texts. Another is the state of ratifications. With only five of the required 50 countries having ratified the CCD, all delegates are aware that they cannot rush decisions that ultimately must be made at COP-1. If the CCD comes into force earlier than expected, the INCD's pace would likely pick up accordingly.

Finally, there is the relationship with negotiations of other conventions, particularly the Climate Change and Biodiversity Conventions. Delegates refer often to positions in major procedural areas from those negotiations. And despite repeated proclamations that the CCD is on a par with those conventions, it may end up following decisions where negotiators have the additional strength of working under treaties already in force.

Those areas where conflicts were not completely contained in INCD-7 point to future debates in the CCD's future. Among them are the level and type of activity in the Global Mechanism. Donor countries are fairly unified in contending that the Global Mechanism should facilitate but not manage or raise funds. Some developing countries and NGOs want a more activist GM. Another issue relates to contributions to the Convention budget: which will be voluntary, which compulsory and on what scale. The voting procedure, especially regarding financial decisions, was another area of clear disagreement at INCD-7. OECD countries called for decisions by consensus while developing countries proposed two-thirds majority voting as a fallback. All of these, in addition to

unaddressed details of the programme and budget, will return as the INCD moves beyond procedure and toward the first COP.

**FREQUENCY AND EFFICIENCY OF MEETINGS:** The pace set during the negotiation of the CCD, which was concluded in a year, slowed down considerably at INCD-6 and INCD-7. This may seem natural since the negotiations have entered into a second stage, but some delegations felt that the work of INCD-6 and INCD-7 could have been done at one session or during two one-week meetings. Others felt that it was necessary to meet twice not to lose the momentum of the negotiations, so as to avoid what happened at the first Conference of the Parties of the Biodiversity Convention, which suffered from the fact that delegates met only twice during the two-and-one-half year interim period. Monitoring the implementation of urgent action for Africa and action in other regions provides additional grounds for frequent meetings.

Regarding next year's meetings, some delegations felt that one meeting would be sufficient, while others feel that since texts are going to be negotiated during 1996, two ten-day sessions would be necessary. In document A/AC.241/L.27, the INCD "recommends to the General Assembly that two sessions be held in 1996, each of up to two weeks duration." It also plans for two sessions in 1997.

**FINANCIAL SITUATION (FUNDING):** At every session the funding of the work of the INCD has been discussed, but at this meeting the funding situation reached a new level of concern. It is noteworthy that the last item addressed at INCD-7, the venue of the next meeting, was actually a strategy session on funding. If funds are not available to pay for developing country participation, the INCD may move its session. But delaying a decision also risks already committed funds.

Even if some pledges were made, the lack of funding can be precarious because of the slow pace of communication and transfers in the UN budget system. The funds may not reach the Secretariat until February 1996, when INCD-8 is scheduled to meet. In view of the fact that INCD-8 will entail negotiations, some delegates say that the crucial issue is to garner commitments and pledges so that the Interim Secretariat can prepare in good time.

While some delegates seem satisfied with the Secretariat's performance, others feel that its work could be carried out in a more efficient and less costly manner, for instance by holding meetings in Geneva where the Secretariat is based. Some feel that the work of the Secretariat should be funded by the regular budget of the UN and argue that they have already paid for it. They prefer to fund actual projects in the field. Others look at the list of donors and note that a few donors fund this process while others take an active role in the negotiations, but do not contribute to the funding. This triggered a debate on where INCD-8 should be held. Some argue that it is most economical to hold the session in Geneva, as planned, whereas some developing countries prefer New York. They already have representation there, so less money would be spent on airline tickets and hotels. This presents another problem: the alternative delegates might lack expertise on crucial subjects, which could further slow the post-agreement negotiation process.

**THE GLOBAL CHARACTER OF THE CONVENTION:** Lingering concern of Latin American and Asian delegates over their lack of priority in the eyes of the CCD returned to INCD-7. As the session was concluding, almost every delegation from Latin America expressed its dissatisfaction with the Chair's conclusions, so this debate too will likely continue.

As at the end of INCD-1 and other meetings during the process of negotiating the CCD, the Latin American countries feared that the awareness of the global character of the problem of desertification would be lost if implementation of the Convention

focuses on Africa alone. Latin Americans consistently warned against overlooking desertification problems in other parts of the world because of the possible political consequences. If governments outside Africa do not perceive equitable treatment of their concerns, they may have problems ratifying the Convention. This could prolong the interim period before the CCD comes into force. If the non-Africans are competing for support by withholding ratification, the strategy could be self-defeating. The other regions will gain priority once the CCD enters into force. The resolution on Urgent Action for Africa will remain in place regardless.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

**NGO MEETINGS:** The Asian Regional Conference of the RIOD network will be held in Islamabad, Pakistan, in mid-January 1996. The National NGO meeting for Pakistan will be held in Karachi in mid-November. For specific dates and other information on these or other RIOD activities in Asia, please contact the RIOD regional focal point, Tanveer Arif, Society for Conservation and Protection of Environment (SCOPE), B-150, Block 13-D/2, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi-75300, Pakistan, Tel. 92-21-4965042 or 4976459, Fax 92-21-4964001.

The Latin American Regional Conference of RIOD will take place in November in Puno, Peru. For dates and other details on this meeting, contact the RIOD regional focal point for Latin America and the Caribbean, Juan Palao, CAME, Jr. Arequipa, No. 120 3rd, Piso "B", Puno, Peru, Tel. 054-355481, Fax 054-355482 or 352701.

**REGIONAL ACTIVITIES:** The Maghreb Arab Union is planning to hold its meeting in Tunis, Tunisia in November 1995. The Southern Africa Development Community also plans to hold a meeting in from 16-18 January 1996. A Gulf Council (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and United Arab Emirates) and Lebanon, Syria and Yemen meeting is planned for October 1995. The meetings are aimed initiating the process towards the preparation of the subregional action programmes.

The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment (AMCEN) will be holding its next meeting on 30 October to 3 November 1995, in Harare, Zimbabwe. This will be preceded by an ADALCO meeting on 27-20 October 1995.

A Latin American environment ministers meeting is planned for September in Havana, Cuba, to examine implementation of the regional annex. Latin American countries are also planning a regional meeting 24-26 January 1996, either in Mexico or Argentina.

**SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES:** The Secretariat will mainly focus on awareness raising in Africa. If funds are made available, subregional consultations will be undertaken in the Latin American and Asian regions. The Secretariat will continue translating the publication, *Down to Earth*, into the main languages spoken in the most affected countries.

**FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN:** A Bureau meeting of the INCD is expected to take place during the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing from 4-15 September 1995.

**INCD-8:** The next session of the INCD is tentatively scheduled for 5-16 February 1996 in Geneva. The final decision on the dates, length and venue of INCD-8 will be taken by the UN General Assembly when it meets in New York this autumn.