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INCD-10 HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 13 JANUARY 1997

Delegates to INCD-10 met in Plenary during the morning to review the session's progress and discuss the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds. Working Groups I and II met informally during the afternoon to discuss the Global Mechanism and rules of procedure, respectively. A small core group continued discussions on the Global Mechanism during the evening.

PLENARY

INCD Chair Bo Kjellén (Sweden) opened the morning Plenary and introduced the first speaker, Bernardo Ferraz, Mozambique's Minister for the Coordination of Environmental Affairs. Mozambique has held an awareness seminar and established a committee for the National Action Programme. He said it is important to reach agreement in such a way that implementation is assured. The League of Arab States identified activities of the Arab Centre to Combat Desertification to implement the Convention and called for representation of the League in the Committee for Science and Technology and the Permanent Secretariat.

REVIEW OF PROGRESS: The Chair of Working Group I, Mahmoud Ould El Ghaouth (Mauritania), said a large portion of the text on the Global Mechanism (GM) has been accepted *ad referendum*. Certain key paragraphs remain outstanding. He was optimistic that the Group would conclude with a compromise all could accept. He said discussions on the programme and budget provided guidance to the Secretariat for its preparation of a complete draft budget, which will be presented to COP-1. The Group has considered the form but not the substance for administrative arrangements. He believed that the choice between the two organizations that have made offers would be made at INCD-10. The text on financial rules was virtually concluded at the end of INCD-9.

The Chair of Working Group II, Takao Shibata (Japan), reported that there is consensus on the rules of procedure, except for two rules, which would be addressed in an informal consultation in the afternoon. He said that the second remaining item to be resolved at this session, the preparation of the organizational aspects of the scientific and technological cooperation, has been concluded successfully. Formal decisions related to these issues will be made

on Tuesday afternoon, 14 January.

INCD Chair Kjellén stressed that it is hard to make the GM perfect from the beginning, which is why there is a provision for its review at COP-3.

DESIGNATION OF A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUNCTIONING:

PHYSICAL LOCATION: Introducing the subject of physical location, as contained in document A/AC.241/63, Chair Kjellén reported that, as agreed at INCD-9, discussions have continued informally. During the first week of INCD-10, the informal group comprised of the three Governments involved, Canada, Germany and Spain, members from the main Bureau and the Chairs of the two Working Groups met and expressed satisfaction with the document and the way the exhibitions from the three countries have been handled at the current Session. The group requested further clarification on footnote 7 (UN Consolidated Post Adjustment Calculation) relating to the Canadian offer, to enable precise comparison with Murcia, which will be issued as a corrigendum at COP-1. The informal group agreed on the selection procedure used at COP-1 for the Biodiversity and Climate Change conventions and will consult further on the modalities for follow-up and the details of the procedures to be followed at COP-1. No questions were raised from the floor.

REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS REGARDS

EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS: Executive Secretary Arba Diallo introduced the relevant documents. A/AC.241/69 contains a report on the financial expenditures from the UN regular budget up to September 1996, mainly used for: staff, experts and consultants' salaries; communication; travel of Secretariat staff to INCD-8 and 9; official travel for consultations with members of the Committee; and meetings of interest to the Secretariat. Appendix F contains the table on staffing. He noted that the table is only indicative because staff are often called upon to undertake activities that are not their responsibility. Annex B provides the status of contributions to the Trust Funds up to 24 October 1996. An update on the contributions made to date is contained in A/AC.241/69/Add.2. Pledges made but not received by countries and other UN organizations and agencies are contained in A/AC.241/69/Add.1.

Table 1 of Appendix C indicates the expenditures from the Trust Fund, most of which were used for awareness raising, information dissemination and support to NGOs. Table 2 indicates expenditures from the Special Voluntary Fund through which delegates from 61

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affected developing countries were supported. A corrigendum, A/AC.241/69/Corr.1, contains corrections of errors.

The G-77 and CHINA expressed appreciation to the countries and agencies that have contributed to the extrabudgetary funds, and appealed to countries, agencies and NGOs for contributions. The EU said that, with the CCD's entry into force, the bottom-up approach of the Convention should be kept in mind. Ownership belongs to the implementing countries and the driving force should not be external. He noted that the COP will give more guidance to the Secretariat on ways and means to perform its role.

GERMANY said the question of the sustainability of programmes is important. The CCD gives the Secretariat a subsidiary role that includes taking action when the Convention is stuck or ensuring that there are no overlapping activities. He also called attention to German financial contributions for CCD activities, as well as bilateral contributions. CANADA noted it has been a strong supporter of the Convention and has made contributions to its Trust Fund. It has also helped fund NGO participation. Canada recognizes the importance of local ownership.

BENIN thanked those who contributed to the extrabudgetary funds, and expressed hope that additional contributions would supplement those pledged. He stated that the Convention is clear regarding the role of the Secretariat and nothing indicates that it should play a subsidiary role after entry into force.

SPAIN said its commitment to combatting desertification is shown in its participation in INCD activities. Spain has held seminars and workshops in the Northern Mediterranean region, in Latin America and the Caribbean, and in Northern Africa. BOLIVIA thought the resources were used effectively and stressed the need for continuous support in the implementation phase. He said desertification has to become part of countries' political agendas, which is why awareness raising seminars have been held in Latin America.

In response to comments, the Executive Secretary said there was a need to make certain that activities on national and subregional levels are effective. On the role of the Secretariat, he said the Interim Secretariat was waiting for a decision at COP-1 on the Permanent Secretariat's role. He stressed that the Interim Secretariat follows instructions in the Convention to undertake public relations and awareness work.

INCD Chair Kjellén noted that the Committee will know what the Secretariat should do when other components, such as the Global Mechanism, have been designed. There is still time because the General Assembly has decided that the Permanent Secretariat should start operating no later than 31 December 1998. He also recalled the difficult situation in 1995 when funds were running low, and thanked countries who are making contributions to the Voluntary Fund. Kjellén then proposed a procedural decision to authorize the use of resources under existing funds for the participation of affected country Parties to COP-1. Finally, Kjellén said he had met with the Women's Caucus to discuss setting up a panel at COP-1 on the participation of women in the implementation of the Convention. He will also meet with NGOs this week.

WORKING GROUP I

The Group met in an informal session and delegates considered the unresolved portions of the negotiating text on the GM

distributed on Friday, 10 January. A proposal was made to add "as appropriate" to bracketed text noting that the GM's activities "could include playing a catalytic role in facilitating the availability of funds for project and programme design and development from bilateral and multilateral sources..."

Bracketed choices regarding the "mobilization/facilitation of mobilization," "promotion/promotion to ensure" and "channelling/promotion of channelling" of resources remained the focus of disagreement and discussion. The regional groups indicated a willingness to continue negotiations, but none accepted the other's alternative text. It was noted that one regional group believes the GM should have a political role while the other believes it should have a financial role. A suggested compromise was to include both roles. Another suggestion was to separate references to Parties' responsibilities to mobilize and channel resources and the organization of the GM. The informal group adjourned and a small core group reconvened to continue negotiating the text.

WORKING GROUP II

RULES OF PROCEDURE: An informal open-ended consultation was convened in an attempt to resolve the outstanding issues in **rules 22, paragraph 1** and **rule 31**. These issues deal with: the number of the COP Bureau members (three or nine Vice-Chairpersons), and Bureau members of the subsidiary bodies (four or nine); whether every geographical region should be represented by two members on the Bureau or if Africa should be allowed three members; and if due regard should be paid to the representation of regions referred to in the implementation annexes of the Convention when appointing members to the COP Bureau. Despite substantial attempts to resolve these issues, no agreement was reached. Informal consultations may continue during this week.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates reported that the core group convened by Working Group I discussed the concept of the Global Mechanism prior to adjourning to attend the Canadian-sponsored dinner. Following the dinner and discussion regarding the Canadian bid to host the Permanent Secretariat, the group was expected to reconvene. The core group, as selected last week, was to include: Australia, Benin, Bolivia, China, Cuba, France, Germany, Greece, India, Iran, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Tanzania, Uganda and the US. Russia also participated in the talks. Some remained optimistic that an agreement would be reached by the close of INCD-10.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: The Working Group is expected to meet at 10:00 am. An update on the core group's discussions is anticipated. They may also discuss the Chair's draft decision on designation of the Permanent Secretariat: administrative arrangements.

WORKING GROUP II: The Working Group is expected to meet at 3:00 pm to consider draft decisions on the rules of procedure and the Committee on Science and Technology's work programme. Informal consultations may take place during the morning.