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INCD-10 HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 14 JANUARY 1997

Working Group I met briefly in the morning, to allow more time for the core group to continue consultations on the Global Mechanism (GM), and informally in the afternoon, to consider the progress of negotiations. Working Group II met in the afternoon to consider draft decisions for the Conference of the Parties (COP) on issues related to the rules of procedure and scientific and technological cooperation.

WORKING GROUP I

Chair Mahmoud Ould El Ghaouth recalled that decisions have to be made by the Group at this Session on the outstanding issues of: the GM; the designation of the Permanent Secretariat; programme and budget; and financial rules. He encouraged delegates to try to resolve the latter three and not leave them pending until the GM issue is resolved. The Chair then announced that the Group's work would be postponed and concluded on Thursday. He quickly adjourned the meeting to allow for the core group that began work on Monday, 13 January, to continue negotiating the GM's function of mobilizing and channelling resources.

The informal working group met briefly in the afternoon for a progress report on negotiations on the Global Mechanism and the administrative arrangements for the Permanent Secretariat. The Chair reported that the core group had not completed its work and that it would continue to meet for the rest of the afternoon and report back at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, 15 January. The meeting was suspended for half an hour and reconvened for the discussion on administrative arrangements for the Permanent Secretariat.

DESIGNATION OF A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUNCTIONING:

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS: The informal working group met for less than three minutes. The Chair reported that no agreement had been reached on the informal consultations on paragraph 3 of the Chair's draft decision, circulated Thursday, 10 January. The paragraph refers to the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention being institutionally linked to either the UN or UNEP, "while not being fully integrated to the work programme and management structure of any particular department or programme." The Chair urged delegates to continue with the

informal consultations on the subject, and expressed hope that consensus could be reached by Wednesday evening.

WORKING GROUP II

The Group met in the afternoon to consider draft decisions emanating from its work at this session, A/AC.241/WG.II(X)/L.1-6.

Document L.1 (Rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties), which now contains an additional rule, was adopted with the amendment that the number of the document that will contain the final decision will be left blank so that an amendment can be made orally in the INCD Plenary when all, or parts, of the outstanding issues in Rule 6, paragraph 1, Rule 22, paragraph 1, Rule 31 and Rule 47, paragraph 1, have been sorted out. Results from informal consultations on these issues were expected to emerge.

Document L.2 (Committee on Science and Technology: reports on modalities and timing of future work on inventories of research, traditional and local technology, knowledge, know-how and practices and on the establishment of research priorities) was adopted without comment.

Document L.3 (Report on work of other bodies performing work similar to that envisaged for the Committee on Science and Technology) was adopted without comment.

Document L.4 (Report on work being done on benchmarks and indicators) was adopted with amendments. The UK proposed references to: the valuable assistance provided by the competent organizations already working on this topic; the Interim Secretariat continuing the "facilitation of" work on benchmarks and indicators; participation of "competent organizations, regional and/or subregional groups and interested INCD members;" and putting "emphasis on the further elaboration of implementation indicators and the development of a methodology for determining impact indicators." NIGER called for a reference to the pre-established programme of work for the group. CANADA added a reference to NGO participation in the consultation process. BENIN and CHINA did not support calling for the Interim Secretariat's "facilitation of" work, and the UK did not insist. Delegates agreed to note that participation would be by interested members of the Committee from any regional or subregional group and competent governmental and non-governmental groups.

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SOUTH AFRICA noted the importance of the bottom-up approach and supported the NGO proposal calling for a small working group on local area development. The group would work in the same manner as the group on benchmarks and indicators and begin to develop a survey for input to the CST. The Chair stated that if a group is established, participants would have to pay for it, which is why an informal consultative process has been used for benchmarks and indicators. He thought the NGO proposal was for the CST to deliberate at its first meeting. The UK also suggested that the proposal should be discussed at the first session of the CST, and noted that L.2 invites members to make written submissions on, among others, inventories of traditional and local technology and knowledge, for discussion at that session.

Document L.5 (Committee on Science and Technology: work to be undertaken on networking of institutions, agencies and bodies) contains four parts: the draft decision of INCD-10; a recommended decision for COP-1 to adopt; the terms of reference for work to be undertaken on networking of institutions; and a list of organizations that could be asked to draft proposals for conducting the networking survey.

UGANDA questioned the wisdom of the INCD recommending a draft decision for COP-1 to adopt. He stated that the list of organizations is not exhaustive and asked what the implications would be for other organizations if the list were adopted. The Secretariat noted that the terms of reference and the list of organizations contain recommendations from INCD members. The UK agreed it is premature to decide on a draft for the COP to adopt. She noted that the terms of reference proposed would not be the final ones, but may be reconsidered based on the proposals submitted by the bidding organizations. She also stated that the disadvantage of a long list of organizations is that the group would have to look at a large number of proposals. A number of new organizations were suggested, including the OSS (Mauritania) and CILSS (Senegal). MEXICO suggested that the organization selected "develop a database with the possibility of remote consultation using infrastructure that already exists." He noted that such a database is being developed in the Latin American and Caribbean region. SOUTH AFRICA and BENIN suggested that regional groups should be given time to consult prior to taking a decision on L.5, and the Group adjourned.

IN THE CORRIDORS I

Despite numerous pleas from Working Group II's Chair during the first week and an informal consultation on Monday of the second week, delegates in the Group have seemed reluctant to resolve the issue of the composition of the Bureau in the rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties (COP). Although the issue has several facets, a possible solution may yet emerge on this intricate matter. According to some delegates, a possible agreement might be for eleven COP Bureau members (nine Vice-Chairpersons, Rule 22, paragraph 1) if it is stated in Rule 31 that subsidiary bodies' bureaux would have five members (four Vice-Chairpersons). Some also suggested there is agreement to leave out the bracketed text stating that "every geographical region shall be represented by at least two members" (Rule 22, paragraph 1), since there is a reference to equitable geographical distribution in the already agreed, unbracketed text. They suggested that these

solutions, however, depend on the deletion of the reference to ensuring "adequate representation of affected Country Parties in regions referred to in the implementation annexes of the Convention." Some delegates indicated that if that text could not be deleted, negotiations would be back to square one.

IN THE CORRIDORS II

The core group discussing the Global Mechanism (GM) continued negotiations all day and into the evening. Canada's Pierre-Marc Johnson, who, with Bolong Sonko of the Gambia, co-chaired the difficult negotiations on the GM before the CCD was adopted at INCD-5, returned to INCD negotiations and was promptly made Chair of the core group. In the morning, various proposals from different regional groups were not accepted by others, which was reported to have generated a discussion on whether the GM could fund implementation or not. No consensus was reached in this discussion, which also became the basis on which proposals from the different groups were assessed. Although by early afternoon some delegates expressed doubt about the possibility of reaching agreement, in the evening they felt that progress was being made. Agreement was reported to have been reached for one of the outstanding paragraphs.

IN THE CORRIDORS III

Discussion on the Chair's draft decision on administrative arrangements for the designation of the Permanent Secretariat was postponed twice, due to informal negotiations that have been going on for two days. The text in question relates to the proposal to not have the Permanent Secretariat fully integrated into the work programme and management structure of any particular department or programme of the host institution. Legal experts argued that, while this language was adopted in the conventions on climate change (FCCC) and biodiversity (CBD), the relationship between the Secretariat and its institutional host (the UN or UNEP, respectively) had to be revisited at later meetings of the COP. By the late afternoon, alternative text that was drafted through informal consultations was reportedly acceptable to the negotiators.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary is expected to meet at 10:00 am and 3:00 pm to hear approximately 40 country reports on Urgent Action for Africa and Interim Actions in the Asian, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Northern Mediterranean regions.

WORKING GROUP I: The informal working group will convene at 6:00 pm for a report on the informal consultations on the GM and administrative arrangements for the Permanent Secretariat.

WORKING GROUP II: The Working Group is expected to meet in the afternoon to continue its consideration of draft decisions.

NGO PRESENTATION: Dr. Walter Menicocci of the Panamerican-Panafrican Association will make a presentation on combatting desertification by improving soil fertility and recovering organic waste through earthworm technology at 2:30 pm in Conference Room 9.