



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## SUMMARY OF THE TENTH SESSION OF THE INC FOR THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 6-17 JANUARY 1997

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Convention to Combat Desertification (INCD) met for its tenth session at UN Headquarters in New York, from 6-17 January 1997. This was the last scheduled session before the first Conference of the Parties (COP-1), which will be held from 29 September to 10 October 1997 in Rome. At the end of the session, however, delegates felt it was necessary to hold a resumed session of INCD-10 from 18-22 August 1997, in Geneva, to address technical issues related to outstanding arrangements for COP-1.

INCD-10 was devoted to the preparation for COP-1. Although most delegates were pleased with the progress made at this session, some participants also sensed a lot of ambivalence. The sense of urgency that the coming into force of the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) on 26 December 1996 should have brought about was absent. Key issues, such as functions of the institutions to host the Global Mechanism, the physical location of the Permanent Secretariat and the size and composition of the COP Bureau, were passed on to the COP.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INCD

The Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) was adopted on 17 June 1994, and opened for signature in Paris on 14-15 October 1994. The Convention entered into force on 26 December 1996. The CCD takes an innovative approach in recognizing: the physical, biological and socioeconomic 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 by national governments in cooperation with donors, local populations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

### NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION

During its 47th session in 1992, the UN General Assembly, as requested by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), adopted resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of the INCD. At the organizational session of the INCD in January 1993, delegates elected Bo Kjellén (Sweden)

Chair of the Committee. The INCD met five times between May 1993 and June 1994, during which delegates drafted the Convention and four regional implementation annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean. The Convention was adopted on the closing day of INCD-5 in Paris, along with resolutions recommending Urgent Action for Africa and interim arrangements for the period between adoption of the CCD and its entry into force.

### POST-AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

INCD-6 was held in New York from 9-18 January 1995. The Committee reached agreement on its work programme for the interim period and the mandates of the two Working Groups and the Plenary.

Delegates at INCD-7, which took place in Nairobi from 7-17 August 1995, reviewed the status of ratification and implementation of the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa and Interim Measures. The Committee discussed and provided input on

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the structure and elements that should be considered in preparation for COP-1.

INCD-8, held from 5-15 February 1996 in Geneva, reviewed the status of ratifications and the implementation of the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa and Interim Measures. The Committee began negotiations on some of the Secretariat's texts on preparations for COP-1. Delegates requested the Secretariat to prepare new texts for negotiation at INCD-9, based on their discussions and on the programme and budget for INCD-10. Some delegations revisited the question raised at INCD-7 regarding the need for two-week sessions of the Committee in the future.

INCD-9 was held in New York from 3-13 September 1996. During this session, the working groups continued to prepare for COP-1. Delegates addressed outstanding issues related to preparation for COP-1, except for programme and budget. Delegates' general impression was that good progress was made, especially concerning scientific and technological cooperation, even though several of the most important, primarily financial, issues remained unresolved.

## REPORT OF THE TENTH SESSION

Monday, 6 January 1997, marked the beginning of the tenth session of the Committee. It was the INCD's first meeting since the Convention came into force and the last scheduled meeting prior to the first Conference of the Parties, which will take place from 29 September - 10 October 1997 in Rome, Italy. At the conclusion of the two-week session, delegates agreed to resume INCD-10 for five days in August 1997 in Geneva.

One Bureau member, René Valéry Mongbé (Benin), was not able to continue his functions on the Bureau and was replaced as Vice-Chair by Fassassi Yacoubou (Benin). The other Bureau members continued to be: Bo Kjellén (Sweden; INCD Chair); Alok Jain (India; Vice-Chair); José Urrutia (Peru; Vice-Chair); Anatoli Ovchinnikov (Uzbekistan; Rapporteur); Mohamed Mahmoud ould El Ghaouth (Mauritania; Working Group I Chair); Mohammad Reza Jabbari (Iran; Working Group I Vice-Chair); Erwin Ortiz-Gandarillas (Bolivia; Working Group I Vice-Chair); Franklin Moore (US; Working Group I Vice-Chair); Takao Shibata (Japan; Working Group II Chair); David Etuket (Uganda; Working Group II Vice-Chair); and Samvel Baloyan (Armenia; Working Group II Vice-Chair).

The INCD-10 agenda included preparations for the first Conference of the Parties on the following issues: physical location and administrative arrangements for the Permanent Secretariat; the Global Mechanism; financial rules; programme and budget; rules of procedure; and scientific and technical cooperation.

## PLENARY

INCD Chair Bo Kjellén (Sweden) opened the session on Monday morning, 6 January 1997. He noted with satisfaction that the Convention had entered into force since the last INCD session. The programme of work and agenda (A/AC.241/62) were adopted. The Plenary was then adjourned until Tuesday afternoon so that regional groups could meet.

When the Plenary reconvened, Under-Secretary-General Nitin Desai, UN Department of Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, said that the CCD deals with core development issues, provides the opportunity to integrate environment and development at the point at which action takes place and provides a test case of our capacity to implement the ambitious programmes that are negotiated at the international level.

Chair Kjellén noted that the CCD had entered into force on 26 December 1996, 90 days after the 50th ratification by Chad. He noted that the central issues at this session were: the functioning and host organization of the Global Mechanism; the work programme, budget and role of the Permanent Secretariat; and the

enabling of the Committee on Science and Technology to meet in conjunction with COP-1. Kjellén pointed out the link between the INCD process and the meeting of the Commission on Sustainable Development in April, and the UN Special Session of the General Assembly for review of the implementation of Agenda 21, to be held in June.

Salif Diallo, Minister of Environment and Water of Burkina Faso, noted that action in Africa had been slow, but said that African ministries were committed to implementing the CCD. He urged developed countries to raise awareness about the CCD and called for the realization of the spirit of partnership in the Convention. He also highlighted the importance of the Global Mechanism. Without it, the CCD would lose its innovative character and sisterhood with the Conventions on Biodiversity and Climate Change.

Mongolia's Minister of Nature and the Environment, Tsohiigiin Adyasuren, noted the importance of the World Food Summit, which was held in November 1996, and emphasized the strong link between poverty alleviation, food security issues and desertification. In Mongolia, combatting desertification, biodiversity and decentralization are being dealt with in an integrated manner.

INCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo said 60 countries have acceded to or ratified the Convention. He updated delegates regarding preparatory measures and national and subregional action in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Thirty African countries are already at work establishing national frameworks. An Asian regional meeting will take place in Beijing in May 1997.

The Assistant Administrator and Director of UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, highlighted aspects of UNDP's CCD-related support. She said the Global Mechanism should be viewed as a flexible and dynamic instrument that can be used by the Parties to anticipate emerging and changing priorities. She reiterated UNDP's readiness to host the Global Mechanism, or any other hosting arrangement that may be decided upon.

IFAD's Assistant President, Economic Policy and Resource Strategy Department, Shigeaki Tomita, reviewed IFAD's CCD-related activities. He said IFAD has been supporting the establishment of enabling frameworks at the local level and that investment in research and technology transfer for the drylands has become an increasingly significant part of IFAD's operations. He said the Global Mechanism must go beyond a clearing house function to actively solicit and facilitate the participation of financing institutions and the private sector in implementing the Convention. The IFAD Executive Board has taken note of the possibility that IFAD might be called upon to consider a more detailed proposal from the INCD.

Tanzania, on behalf of the G-77 and China, stated that the test of the partnership called for in the CCD lies in the mobilization of sufficient financial resources, provision of new and additional funding, and the transfer of ecologically sound technologies. Comparing the CCD to the Conventions on Biological Diversity and Climate Change, he stated that the CCD should not be relegated to a second-class convention. Thus, establishing a global financial mechanism for the CCD, with interest and priority equal to the GEF, will place the CCD on a par with the other two conventions.

The Netherlands, on behalf of the EU, along with Cyprus, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Iceland, was pleased that the Convention had entered into force. All the necessary preparations for the implementation of the CCD should be made before the UN Special Session in June 1997.

On behalf of the International NGO Network on Desertification (RIOD), Michael Angstreich of the Norwegian Forum for Environment and Development stressed that past efforts to mitigate desertification were negatively influenced by: the minimal allocation of resources by national governments to environmental

programmes; a legacy of colonial legislation; the introduction of market economies through economic structural adjustment programmes; and limited participation by local populations. He pointed out that partnership-building processes have not even started in many countries and stated that the Global Mechanism can ensure a result-oriented implementation of the CCD.

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

Delegates considered the resolution on urgent action for Africa and interim measures taken in other regions during two Plenary meetings on Wednesday, 15 January. Delegates heard 47 statements from country delegates, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Russia stated that desertification is taking place in Europe and suggested adding an Annex on European countries.

**URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA:** Executive Secretary Diallo called delegates' attention to an overview he had prepared that takes stock of actions taken.

Activities on the development and implementation of National Action Programmes (NAPs) were the central issues addressed in most statements. Morocco is setting up a NAP and a partnership between the State and groups of villages. The Gambia has conducted zonal and divisional level consultations for the NAP. Botswana said its NAP process will culminate in a national forum process to discuss arrangements for its implementation. South Africa is creating capacity to plan and monitor its NAP. France is supporting NAPs in Burkina Faso, Senegal, Cape Verde, Mauritania and Chad, with co-financing from the French Global Environmental Facility.

Delegates also discussed specific CCD-related projects. Egypt said projects, including better water harvesting and irrigation techniques, will increase the country's inhabited area from five to 25 percent by 2025. Denmark and Burkina Faso presented their joint Burkinabe Sahel project, which gives high priority to the participation of communities and uses an integrated approach in addressing issues on food security and environmental restoration. A student campaign in Eritrea included the planting of millions of trees. Algeria carries out research on desertification trends using satellite imagery and plans to develop government-NGO partnerships. Senegal has created a desertification information system on the Internet. Norway is funding UNSO, the ILO and LDCs, especially in Africa, on desertification initiatives linked to poverty reduction, food security and the participation of women, indigenous peoples and grassroots organizations. Japan is developing desertification control technologies appropriate for local communities, such as underground dams, in Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali.

National Environmental or Desertification Funds (NDFs) are being considered or established in a number of countries, including Niger, Kenya and Senegal. Benin has set up an NDF and is eager to mobilize funds to translate plans into reality. Uganda, among others, called for support for the development of an NDF.

Many called on partners to provide financial assistance and coordination of their NAPs. Zambia and others stated that efforts have been constrained by a lack of resources. The EU encouraged African countries starting NAPs to explore the advantages of the *chef-de-file* concept. Canada said it is a donor country's responsibility to play the role of *chef-de-file* at a technical and political level. Germany noted the growing willingness of donors to become genuine partners and regretted that official bilateral and multilateral negotiations on development cooperation often do not properly refer to the Convention.

NGO efforts were recognized by some, such as Cameroon, which paid tribute to its new, but energetic, NGOs. Switzerland suggested a greater role for universities, scientists and NGOs.

Public awareness campaigns are underway in most of the African countries that spoke. In many cases, these were connected with World Desertification Day. Togo said it has launched a national information and sensitization programme, but the NAP is still in the identification phase.

Legislative changes or reviews are contemplated or in force in a number of countries. The Gambia has revised its national forest policy to enable community forest management. Ethiopia reviewed all policies and strategies by the Environmental Protection Authority. Eritrea's national activities include decentralization and further democratization of the political system. New government structures have also been contemplated or created, including Ghana's national committee on desertification.

The integrated nature of the Convention and implementation was noted by a number of speakers, including Burundi, who noted close connections between biodiversity, climate change and desertification. His country has integrated the implementation of the three conventions into a national strategy.

Subregional activities were also discussed. CILSS noted activities to devise a subregional action programme and to consider a methodology for organizing transborder village projects. The OAU noted that participants in subregional meetings appreciated the value of the exchange of experiences. IGAD is planning two subregional workshops on science and technology and regional prioritization. France is supporting regional scientific cooperation in West Africa. Mauritania brought together 15 African focal points in a workshop.

Additional comments included the EC's statement that the Commission is undertaking a review of the various Community CCD-related policies. Sweden said the commitments made at the World Food Summit relate to desertification problems and how to solve them. He also said the concept of environmental refugees has become more crucial and that the Convention has a role to play.

**NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION:** Portugal, on behalf of Italy, Spain, Greece, Turkey and France, described coordination of activities under Annex IV. A meeting will be held in 1997 on benchmarks and indicators. Spain said it is preparing a NAP and is committed to the CCD process.

**LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGION:** Five delegates from Latin America and the Caribbean discussed national and regional activities. Haiti takes a comprehensive approach to sustainable development, after ratifying the biodiversity, climate change and desertification conventions. Brazil is elaborating a National Plan to Combat Desertification and establishing a National Network on Desertification. Brazil has been active in fostering technical cooperation with other affected countries. Argentina's national activities have included bringing together NGOs involved with desertification and developing an advisory group in the area of science and technology. Mexico has adopted a new environmental law, and is drafting a forest law and a technical assistance agreement. A committee to combat desertification is being coordinated by an NGO. Bolivia's national actions include: ratification of the Convention; establishment of a NAP; work to mitigate poverty; and organization of awareness campaigns.

**ASIAN REGION:** Four delegates from the Asian region reported their activities. Kazakstan called attention to reports on the national preparatory activities to combat desertification and the international conference to combat desertification in countries with economies in transition. Israel highlighted national, subregional, regional and international activities, including development of orchards that will be irrigated by waste water, the experts meeting on synergies in implementing the Rio Conventions and the Rio Forest Principles, and the creating of an international school for desert studies. China has reviewed its projects to combat desertification, which resulted in increased funding for those projects that performed well. Syria's ratification instrument will

soon be deposited. National activities include a greenbelt and an afforestation project.

#### **INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND NGOS:**

UNDP, UNEP and NGOs also made statements on this agenda item. UNDP stressed the importance of ensuring coordination, capacity building and local participation. With the financial assistance of Denmark, Norway, Luxembourg, France, Australia, Sweden, the Netherlands and Switzerland, UNDP is facilitating projects in Africa, Latin America and Asia including: small grants for local community and public education initiatives; 20 NAPs; and 18 NDFs, mainly in Africa. UNEP said it is still an active participant in support of the CCD and, in particular, to the interim and urgent measures in Africa. UNEP is in the process of revising its desertification atlas and continues to serve as the secretariat for the African Deserts and Arid Lands Committee. The Nigeria Environmental Study Team, on behalf of RIOD (NGO Network on Desertification), called on Governments of affected developing countries to allow NGO participation in the NAP process and of developed country partners to provide funds.

#### **STATUS OF SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION**

The Convention entered into force on 26 December 1996, 90 days after the fiftieth country ratified it. Burundi and Argentina submitted their instruments of ratification on the first day of INCD-10, bringing the total number to 60. Executive Secretary Diallo pointed out that in order for countries to participate as Parties to the Convention at COP-1, they have to submit their instruments of ratification by 29 June 1997. A number of countries indicated that their ratification processes were being completed. The countries that have ratified or acceded to the Convention, in chronological order, are: Mexico, Cape Verde, the Netherlands, Egypt, Senegal, Ecuador, Lesotho, Finland, Togo, Tunisia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Peru, Sudan, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Niger, Mauritius, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Spain, Micronesia, Israel, Portugal, Panama, Lebanon, Algeria, the Gambia, Malawi, Germany, Libya, Oman, Bolivia, Mauritania, Eritrea, Benin, Norway, Mongolia, Central African Republic, Gabon, Botswana, Turkmenistan, Zambia, Laos, Haiti, Chad, Swaziland, Nepal, the UK, Jordan, Morocco, India, Ghana, Myanmar, Burundi and Argentina.

#### **NGO ACCREDITATION**

On Wednesday, 15 January, delegates considered NGO accreditation. INCD Chair Kjellén noted that the accreditation of the 23 new NGOs contained in documents A/AC.241/9/Add.13 and Corr.1 would bring the total to 360. The accreditations were approved. Following adoption, Oman, on behalf of the Arab countries, and supported by Syria and Iran, expressed their reservation on the decision to accredit EcoPeace because it has activities in Arab countries under occupation.

#### **REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS**

On Monday, 13 January, delegates addressed the extrabudgetary funds. Executive Secretary 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; a table on staffing; a report on the status of contributions to the Trust Fund up to 24 October 1996; and the expenditures from the Trust and Special Voluntary Funds. An update on the contributions made to date is provided in document A/AC.241/69/Add.2. Pledges made but not received by countries and other UN organizations and agencies are contained in document A/AC.241/69/Add.1. Document A/AC.241/69/Corr.1 contains corrections.

Diallo thanked several countries, including Antigua and Barbuda and China, for their financial contributions to the Funds,

as well as the UN System, bodies and agencies that have provided other forms of resources and support to the Secretariat.

Delegates' comments related to the role of the Secretariat, in particular awareness raising. The EU said the countries should own the Convention and the driving force should not come from outside a country. He noted that the COP will give more guidance to the Secretariat on ways and means to perform its role. The G-77 and China thanked countries that made contributions. Benin added that nothing in the CCD indicates that the Secretariat should play a subsidiary role. Bolivia thought resources were well spent and said desertification has to become part of countries' political agendas. The three countries that are bidding to host the Permanent Secretariat also highlighted their contributions, in particular their history in anti-desertification activities.

In response to the comments, the Executive Secretary stressed the need to ensure that activities at national and regional levels are effective, and added that the Interim Secretariat was awaiting a decision from COP-1 on the Permanent Secretariat's role. Chair Kjellén said the Secretariat's role will be clearly spelled out once the still pending issues are resolved, but there is still time since the Permanent Secretariat will start its operations no later than 31 December 1998, as decided by the General Assembly.

The Plenary adopted a draft decision mandating the Executive Secretary to make use of the Special Voluntary and the Trust Funds to support the participation of developing country delegates and NGOs at COP-1.

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

Consideration of the physical location for the Permanent Secretariat primarily took place in the corridors. Multimedia displays for the bidding countries, Canada, Germany and Spain, advertised the benefits of each country's bid. In addition, each country hosted a reception for Heads of Delegation, where mayors and other dignitaries gave slide show presentations and otherwise promoted their offers.

One Plenary was dedicated to the issue. Chair Kjellén said that, as agreed at INCD-9, discussions had continued informally. During the first week of INCD-10, an informal group comprised of the three Governments involved, members from the main Bureau and the Chairs of the two Working Groups met and expressed satisfaction with the relevant document (A/AC.241/63) and the way the exhibits from the three countries had been handled. The contact group requested further clarification on footnote 7 (UN Consolidated Post Adjustment Calculation) relating to the Canadian offer, to enable precise comparison with Murcia. This 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 agreed to consult further on the modalities for follow-up and the details of the procedures to be followed at COP-1. During the closing Plenary, Chair Kjellén noted that the contact group would continue to discuss the matter at the resumed session of INCD-10.

#### **WORKING GROUP I**

Working Group I, chaired by Mahmoud oud El Ghaouth (Mauritania), considered four agenda items: designation of the Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning — administrative arrangements; identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism; programme and budget; and financial rules of the COP, its subsidiary bodies and the Permanent Secretariat. The Group adopted two of the draft decisions, but forwarded the decisions on the Global Mechanism (GM) and the financial rules to the closing Plenary for consideration and adoption. Most of the Group's work was carried out through informal meetings and consultations.

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

The discussion on administrative arrangements was based on document A/AC.241/64, which provides responses to the questions raised by delegates after INCD-9 regarding the offers made by the UN Secretary-General and UNEP's Executive Director. The Secretariat noted that the institutions could not address questions on the budget and staffing because they are the prerogative of the COP. The Chair also presented his draft decision from INCD-9, as well as that of the G-77 and China from INCD-7 (A/AC.241/WG.I/VII/L.1).

Through informal consultations, the Group accepted the offer from the UN Secretary-General and used the Chair's draft decision as a basis for negotiations. The focus of informal consultations was to develop text that would guarantee autonomy of the Permanent Secretariat with regard to management structure and activities, while ensuring it enjoys the benefits and privileges accorded to the UN system under the UN Charter. A legal expert from the UN Office of the Legal Counsel provided informal clarifications on this matter.

During the adoption of the report, the EU suggested replacing "administrative arrangements" with "necessary services" because the former is too narrow. Several delegations did not agree, arguing that "necessary services" was vague and that the process would also require the Secretary-General to revise his offer. It was agreed to refer to "administrative and support arrangements," as stated in the Secretary-General's offer.

The Group adopted the draft decision, which: accepts the offer of the UN Secretary-General to provide administrative and support arrangements; requests the Secretary-General to appoint the Executive Secretary of the CCD, after consulting with the COP through its Bureau; states that the CCD should not be fully integrated into the work programme and management structure of any particular department or programme of the UN; decides to review these arrangements no later than COP-4; requests the Executive Secretary to pursue the issue of allotment of overhead to defer administrative expenses and to report the results to COP-2; and expresses appreciation to the UN system and agencies that have supported the Interim Secretariat. The G-77 and China draft decision was withdrawn.

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

Discussion on the Global Mechanism (GM) was mainly conducted through informal meetings and consultations, which exclusively focused on the fourth function of the GM — mobilizing and channelling of financial resources. A core group met during the second week, chaired by Pierre-Marc Johnson (Canada). Johnson, along with Bolong Sonko of the Gambia, drafted the negotiating text on the GM when there was an impasse during negotiations on the Convention at INCD-5.

The Working Group began discussion of the GM on the basis of Annex I of decision 9/6, as contained in document A/51/76/Add.1. They agreed to start with the bracketed paragraph 4 on the functions (mobilization of resources), for which three options were transmitted from INCD-9. Delegates initially expressed different views on which text should be used for negotiation. The Group quickly decided to conduct its work in an open-ended, informal working group and started a paragraph-by-paragraph reading of all three options. Little progress was made, prompting the establishment of a core group, with representatives from various regional and interest groups. The G-77 and China and the EU each drafted and circulated a non-paper on the issue under discussion. The G-77 and China text formed the basis for discussion.

The prolonged debate was rooted in divergent views regarding whether the GM should or should not mobilize resources for the implementation of programmes and projects of the CCD. There was agreement, however, for the EU proposal that the GM could mobilize resources for activities to catalyze resource mobilization. Some delegates argued that the Convention explicitly states that mobilizing resources is the role of the Parties, not the GM. Others felt that without a proactive GM to mobilize resources, the Convention would be dysfunctional. Other concerns related to the manner in which the negotiating text was structured, despite the fact that the paragraphs were lifted from the CCD, and that having a GM that disburses financial resources for implementation would require disbursement rules, for which provisions are lacking in the CCD.

The core group informally circulated an eight-paragraph informal text just before the closing Plenary. This informal text indicates consensus on the GM's functions to: promote actions leading to the mobilization and channelling of resources at all levels; promote the use of existing bilateral and multilateral financial mechanisms; encourage the provision of support at all levels to enable countries to meet their obligations; increase the efficiency and effectiveness of existing financial mechanisms; play a catalytic role in ensuring the availability of resources for projects and programmes; and promote and facilitate the transfer, acquisition and adaptation of technologies, as well as the use of indigenous and traditional knowledge. Three paragraphs remain unresolved regarding whether the GM can: direct resources mobilized through multilateral and bilateral organizations to countries, including new and additional resources; mobilize its own resources; and mobilize resources from the Global Environment Facility.

When Chair El Ghaouth presented his draft "enabling decision" for adoption to Working Group I, the G-77 and China asked for time to study it. Instead it was transmitted to the Plenary where it was adopted. The decision: approves the text in Annex I, with the exception of paragraph 4, on the functions of the GM and selection criteria for the host institution; transmits the Annex to COP-1; invites IFAD and UNDP to submit to the Secretariat revised versions of any new elements of their offers, including the proposed administrative operations, proposed budgetary implications for the functioning of the GM, and the possibility of co-hosting, by 1 May 1997; and requests the Interim Secretariat to compile these submissions in a document for presentation at COP-1.

## **PROGRAMME AND BUDGET**

The Executive Secretary introduced the draft programme and budget (A/AC.241/65), which seeks further guidance from the INCD to help shape the Secretariat's final budget proposals. 1999 is expected to be the first full year in which the Secretariat would be financed by a "core" budget. Envisaged staffing requirements for 1999 are 34 posts. The budget includes two special-purpose funds, the Supplementary Fund, to support the participation of NGO representatives, and the Special Fund, which would finance travel of affected developing country delegates.

The G-77 and China had not developed a common position yet, but later made a statement indicating they approved of the Secretariat's document.

Staffing requirements were a concern for the OECD group of countries. They supported current staffing levels as the basis for the establishment of the Secretariat. Uganda, Benin and Antigua and Barbuda noted the expanded activities that are envisaged and called for a larger staff. Bolivia and Brazil were concerned about the criteria for determining how many staff would focus on each region. The Executive Secretary responded that the criteria took into account the number of countries covered in each regional annex. Tunisia said more staffing was needed for the implementation of the regional annexes.

The OECD group of countries and Benin requested information regarding seconded staff from international organizations. The Executive Secretary noted that international organizations are currently cutting their staffs.

In response to several inquiries about costs for the Global Mechanism, the Executive Secretary noted the need to know who is responsible for the costs. The G-77 and China proposed that the cost of the Global Mechanism be met by the host institution. The OECD group of countries and the G-77 and China looked forward to a fully-costed preliminary budget.

The OECD group of countries noted several times that the participation of NGOs is important, but expressed unease with the creation of a special fund for their participation. Benin, Tunisia, Haiti and Indonesia stressed the importance of support for NGOs and the Executive Secretary noted that someone must shoulder the responsibility for NGO participation. The G-77 and China supported both the Special and Supplementary Funds.

The OECD group of countries supported the establishment of a working capital fund, the level of which should be reviewed regularly. Benin, supported by Tunisia, said UN practice is well established and should be retained. Antigua and Barbuda stated that the problem experienced by the Convention on Biological Diversity with its working capital fund was due to host institution-Executive Secretary relations. Benin asked what the link between the Regional Coordination Units and the Secretariat would be, and the Executive Secretary asked for suggestions for arrangements.

The Chair concluded that he would prepare a procedural draft decision taking into account the views expressed and inviting the Secretariat to submit a full-fledged budget to COP-1. The decision (A/AC.241/WG.I(X)/L.3) requests the Secretariat to circulate, at least 90 days before COP-1, the necessary draft decisions related to the programme of work and budget of the COP, as well as detailed budget estimates for the biennium 1998-1999. The Interim Secretariat will take full account of comments made at INCD-10 and earlier sessions as well as any comments from Member States received by 15 February.

### **FINANCIAL RULES OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES, ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT**

The financial rules, as contained in Annex I of decision 9/8, in document A/51/76/Add.1, were considered briefly during one meeting. The only substantive discussion related to Russia's suggestion to amend Rule 10. The amendment would provide for delegates "in special cases of other particularly interested and affected Parties" to receive support for participation at meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies, from the Special Fund to be created to meet this need for representatives of developing countries. The Rule was not amended, but it was agreed that consultations on the issue should continue. In view of the consensus reached to take the offer of the UN to host the Permanent Secretariat, delegates deleted all references to UNEP and its Executive Director. The rules were adopted, as amended, by the Working Group.

The draft decision (A/AC.241/WG.I(X)/L.4) recommends that COP-1 should adopt the financial rules attached to the decision.

### **WORKING GROUP II**

Working Group II, chaired by Takao Shibata (Japan), addressed the rules of procedure of the COP and the organization of scientific and technological cooperation. During meetings of Working Group II, Uganda spoke on behalf of the G-77 and China. Overall, the documentation provided by the Secretariat was commended for its high quality.

### **RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COP**

Delegates considered the outstanding language in the revised negotiating text of the rules of procedure of the COP (A/AC.241/48/Rev.2). Seven rules contained bracketed text. The rules on notification of sessions, participation of specialized agencies, method of voting for general matters and the determination of the authentic text in case of differences in the translations were resolved. The question of the size and composition of the Bureau attracted protracted debate, including several informal consultations.

Under the notification of sessions (Rule 5) it was agreed that the Permanent Secretariat shall notify all Parties of the dates and venue of "an ordinary session," and that notification of the date and venue of an extraordinary session shall be pursuant to rule 4, paragraph 3 (when extraordinary sessions can be held) "and paragraph 4" (if held at written request). On the participation of UN specialized agencies (Rule 6), it was agreed to keep the brackets until it has been decided whether the Global Mechanism should be housed by one or several organizations.

The method of voting for general matters (Rule 51) shall be "in the order used or established by the rules of procedure of the General Assembly," which is in English alphabetical order. Rule 58 now states that official documents of the sessions shall be drawn up in one of the official languages and translated into the other official languages.

The Chair opened debate on: Rule 22, paragraph 1, election of officers to the COP Bureau; Rule 31, election of officers to subsidiary bodies; and Rule 46, on majority voting. He had hoped that by resolving Rule 22, the other two would be solved automatically. However, delegates seemed reluctant to resolve the issue of the size and composition of the Bureau. Initially, there was disagreement on whether there should be three or nine Vice Presidents on the COP Bureau, as suggested by the UK and US and the G-77 and China, respectively. This would make the total number of Bureau members five or 11, including the COP President and the Chairperson of the Committee on Science and Technology. The UK pointed out that the number would then also be the same for bureaus of subsidiary bodies, such as the Committee on Science and Technology or *ad hoc* panels, and suggested adding the specification of "four" Vice-Chairpersons to Rule 31. The US could agree to nine members if it was also agreed that "every geographical region shall be represented by at least two members" in Rule 22, paragraph 1. The G-77 and China objected, stating that, considering the aims of the Convention, Africa should not be restricted to only two seats on the Bureau. Spain wanted to retain "adequate representation of affected Country Parties in regions referred to in the implementation annexes of the Convention." Some delegations from countries that are affected but not included in any annex disagreed with Spain's proposal because it is exclusive and conflicts with the geographical representation mentioned above.

During the second week of the session, informal consultations appeared to be moving toward 11 Bureau members, if it were stated in Rule 31 that subsidiary bodies' bureaus would have five members (four Vice-Chairpersons). There also seemed to be agreement to delete the reference to two members per geographical region, since there is a reference to equitable geographical distribution in the already agreed, unbracketed text. Despite numerous attempts by the Chair in formal and informal talks, these issues were not resolved and were passed to the COP.

The draft decision, A/AC.241/WG.II(X)/L.1 (Rules of procedure of the COP), 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 later when all, or parts, of the outstanding issues in Rule 6, paragraph 1, Rule 22, paragraph 1, Rule 31 and Rule 47, paragraph 1 (previously Rule

46), are resolved. Delegates also added language that the bracketed language on Bureau size be provisionally applied.

### **SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION**

Document A/AC.241/66, on a draft proposed programme of work for the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), suggests four priority areas: networking of institutions; benchmarks and indicators; inventories of traditional and local knowledge; and establishment of research priorities. Regarding networking, the G-77 and China suggested identifying potential networks in addition to existing networks. India called attention to regional networks.

Document A/AC.241/INF.4 reports on work being done on benchmarks and indicators. The UK suggested that the informal group that prepared the report: be continued and expanded; extend its work to other regions in addition to Africa; and develop guidelines on ways to apply and use indicators. The Working Group decided to ask delegations, international and non-governmental organizations to send the Interim Secretariat views on how to conduct work on inventories of traditional and local technology, knowledge, know-how and practices as well as on the establishment of research priorities. The NGO working group on the CST proposed a group to focus on local area development. South Africa noted the importance of the bottom-up approach and supported the NGO proposal calling for a consultative group on local area development. It would work in the same manner as the group on benchmarks and indicators and give input to the CST. The Chair and the UK suggested that the CST could discuss the proposal at COP-1.

Document A/AC.241/67, report on the work of other bodies performing work similar to that envisaged for the CST, contains: two areas of cooperation (Convention provisions and methods of cooperation); and bodies identified for cooperation purposes (scientific committees and panels, international organizations and NGOs).

Egypt, supported by Tanzania, Kenya and Senegal, suggested the appointment of a group of experts to take an inventory on how the CST could benefit from other bodies. Tanzania, supported by Kenya, Senegal and the UK, suggested that the report should include regional and subregional bodies and that the Interim Secretariat could forward an inventory of such bodies to COP-1. The UK said there were international organizations missing from the list and noted that the methods of cooperation need to be examined by the COP before giving them to the CST. India suggested that the CST should be instructed to facilitate the transfer of environmentally sound technology.

The Chair said that the INCD could ask the Interim Secretariat to call together an expert group to take an inventory and to consider regional and subregional bodies. This group could operate similarly to the open-ended consultative process on benchmarks and indicators. Delegations were asked to submit their suggestions on this issue to the Interim Secretariat by 15 March.

Working Group II adopted draft decisions A/AC.241/WG.II(X)/L.2-6. Document L.2 reports on modalities and timing of future work for the CST on inventories of research, traditional and local technology, knowledge, know-how and practices and on the establishment of research priorities. Document L.3 is a report on work of other bodies performing work similar to that envisaged for the CST. Document L.4 is a report on work being done on benchmarks and indicators.

Document L.5 addresses work to be undertaken by the CST on networking of institutions, agencies and bodies. It requests the Interim Secretariat to solicit proposals from an indicative list of competent organizations, contained in Annex II of the same document, to undertake a survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies willing to become units of a network that shall support the implementation of the

Convention. The decision also requests the Interim Secretariat to circulate summaries of proposals from such organizations before COP-1. It finally recommends that the CST review the terms of reference in Annex I and make any recommended changes to the COP, and that the CST recommend for COP consideration and approval an organization to complete the survey. Annex I contains the draft terms of reference and the proposed organization of work to be undertaken on networking of institutions, agencies and bodies.

Document L.6, on the organization of the work of the CST, invites delegations to contribute comments on subjects to be discussed at the first meeting of the CST by 17 March 1997.

### **CLOSING PLENARY**

INCD Chair Kjellén called delegates to order at 11:55 am on Friday, 17 January. He announced that the core group negotiating the Global Mechanism, chaired by Pierre-Marc Johnson, was still meeting and that the G-77 and China had requested time to meet during the morning. The Plenary would therefore reconvene at 3:30 pm to consider the draft decisions and report of the session.

Equatorial Guinea elaborated on the environmental activities and problems in his country. Improper land use is a threat to the forests and the country experiences months of great precipitation as well as of serious drought. He stated there is a shortage of data and few NGOs are involved in their efforts.

The Plenary reconvened at 4:30 pm. Delegates first considered the draft decisions forwarded by the Working Groups.

**WORKING GROUP I:** Working Group I Chair Mahmoud Ould El Ghaouth introduced the Group's draft decisions, as contained in A/AC.241/WG.I(X)/L.1/Rev.1, L.2, L.3 and L.4.

Decision L.1/Rev.1, Designation of a Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning: administrative and support arrangements, was adopted.

The Chair said the Working Group used two mechanisms to negotiate text on the Global Mechanism, the full Group and a core group. Pierre-Marc Johnson reported on the work of the core group. The group met regularly for three days, but the text will require further work at COP-1. They produced nine paragraphs of text for the bracketed paragraph 4, regarding mobilizing and channelling financial resources. Three issues remain outstanding. One contains the options "as agreed in the Convention"/"consistent with the Convention" in reference to new and additional resources. The second contains options for qualifying the mobilization of funds, undertake actions "leading to" or "for" the mobilization. The third is more substantive because it relates to the functioning of the Global Mechanism as it intervenes in the flow of resources. The G-77 and China and EU and like-minded countries each submitted a formulation. One calls for the Global Mechanism to "direct and guide the resources mobilized for the purpose of the Convention, including its own resources, made available from bilateral and multilateral sources,..." The other for it to "guide and direct, as requested and as appropriate, the allocation of resources mobilized for the purpose of the Convention, including resources made available...by bilateral and multilateral sources through the host or other organizations..." The decision notes that the INCD approved the text in Annex I "with the exception of paragraph 4." Chair El Ghaouth said the paragraph was transmitted from the core group to COP-1.

During adoption of L.2, Identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism, the G-77 and China proposed asking IFAD and UNDP, in the revised versions of their offers, to include "the proposed budgets for the functioning of the Global Mechanism they would provide on a biennium basis." Greece said the OECD and like-minded countries were not prepared to accept the new proposal. Following a 40-minute break, agreement was announced to include "proposed budgetary implications for the functioning of the Global Mechanism."

The G-77 and China then asked if any consultations would be taken on paragraph 4 of Annex I and, if so, when. Chair Kjellén said he has a mandate to undertake consultations, but could not say what form they would take. Bolivia indicated concern that the Annex was being sent directly to the COP while he had understood that there was a possibility that it could be completed at a resumed session of INCD-10. The Chair said he did not think there was much possibility for the Committee to make any more progress. Delegates adopted L.2.

The procedural decision in L.3 on the programme and budget, calling on the Interim Secretariat to submit a draft in mid-July, was adopted.

The UN planning and budget division issued an oral statement during adoption of L.4, Financial Rules of the COP, indicating that it was the UN Secretariat's understanding that the reference to the UN in paragraph 7 (contributions to a general fund) does not imply any obligation on the UN to contribute to the core budget, subsidiary bodies or the Permanent Secretariat. The decision was adopted.

**WORKING GROUP II:** Working Group II Chair Takao Shibata reported that the Group had successfully concluded its work in the form of six draft decisions (A/AC.241/WG.II(X)/L.1-3, L.4/Rev.1, L.5/Rev.1, and L.6).

In L.1, Rules of Procedure of the COP, delegates reached agreement on 59 of 63 rules. Chair Shibata stated there was broad agreement regarding the size of the Bureaus for the COP and its subsidiary bodies: 11 members for the COP Bureau, including the President and the Chair of the CST, and five for its subsidiary bodies. Related numbers, nine and four respectively, are bracketed. Chair Shibata proposed calling on the COP "to provisionally apply Rules 22 and 31" (regarding both bureaus). He said this was the same mechanism used in the Climate Change Convention COP and would allow a bureau to be elected. The UK suggested that the COP apply Rules 22 and 31 "in relation to the size of the Bureau." L.1 was adopted as amended.

The five remaining decisions related to the initial work programme of the Committee on Science and Technology. Decisions L.2, L.3, L.4/Rev.1, and L.5/Rev.1 were all adopted without comment. They are respectively entitled: reports on modalities and timing of future work on inventories of research, traditional and local technology, knowledge, know-how and practices and on establishment of research priorities; report on work of other bodies performing work similar to that envisaged for the CST; report on work being done on benchmarks and indicators; and preparatory measures to put in hand work on networking of institutions, agencies and bodies.

Chair Shibata introduced a number of amendments that the Working Group had agreed to in L.6, Organization of the work of the CST, which was adopted as amended.

The Committee then considered the INCD Chair's draft decisions.

**PARTICIPATION OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS:** The Chair presented this draft decision, as contained in A/AC.241/L.36, which recommends to COP-1 procedures for the accreditation of NGOs and according of observer status to intergovernmental organizations at COP sessions. A footnote expresses a reservation on the accreditation of one NGO. Syria, supported by Oman and others, re-affirmed their reservation on the accreditation of an NGO, EcoPeace. Benin suggested explicitly naming the NGO. The Chair said the footnote would mention the name of the organization. Other comments related to corrections of the names of some subregional intergovernmental organizations. The decision was adopted.

**USE OF THE SPECIAL VOLUNTARY FUND AND TRUST FUND:** The Chair noted that informal consultations had

been held on the draft decision (A/AC.241/L.37), which is a recommendation to the General Assembly that would: enable the head of the Interim Secretariat, under the authority of the Secretary-General, to use the Special Voluntary Fund and the Trust Fund to support the participation at COP-1 of developing country delegates and NGOs, respectively. The only amendment was the specification that it is for participation at COP-1. The decision was adopted.

**DRAFT AGENDA FOR THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES:** The draft decision (A/AC.241/L.38) is the "draft provisional" agenda for COP-1. It contains seven agenda items and 20 sub-items. The former include the election of the president and other officers, rules of procedure, credentials of delegations and the adoption of recommendations to the COP. The sub-items are the recommendations, conclusions and decisions transmitted by the INCD to the COP for action. Some delegations rejected the UK's suggestion to amend sub-item (h), on the programme of work of the Committee on Science and Technology, with "approval of terms of reference for work to be undertaken on networking of institutions, agencies and bodies, and selection of a contractor to carry out this work." However, it was agreed that, this being a draft provisional agenda, the UK could raise the issue at COP-1. After a brief discussion, another UK proposal to amend sub-item (k) to replace "approval" of the roster of experts with "establishment" was accepted because the process of appointment suggests the experts must be approved by governments. It is also the language used in the Convention (Article 24, paragraph 2). The decision was adopted.

A representative of the Director-General of the FAO thanked the Committee for accepting their offer to host COP-1. He also thanked delegations that had recognized the question of food security, and the recently concluded World Food Summit, as concerns relevant to the CCD.

**RESUMED SESSION OF THE TENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE:** Chair Kjellén noted that during the Plenary, several conflicting references had been made regarding the possibility of a resumed session of INCD-10. He said although significant progress was made at INCD-10, he still needed a meeting to effectively address the outstanding technical issues in order to organize COP-1 efficiently. Although he had contemplated a two-day pre-COP meeting in Rome for this purpose, the constraints for facilities and cost of the meetings would be too high. Thus, a resumed session of INCD-10 will be held in Geneva from 18 to 22 August 1997. He noted that the 50th Session of the General Assembly had made financial provisions for such an eventuality. The EU stated that the technical issues could be effectively handled by the extended Bureau. However, if a resumed session was preferred, EU members would be represented through their Missions in Geneva. Several countries, including Tanzania, on behalf of the G-77 and China, Benin and Bolivia, agreed with the Chair, noting that not all member countries are represented in the extended Bureau. The Chair proposed a draft decision that states that "in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 4, in resolution 50/112 of the General Assembly and paragraph 3 of resolution 51/180 of the General Assembly, the Committee decides to convene a resumed tenth session between 18-22 August in Geneva." The decision was adopted.

Mauritania said he regretted the EU statement. He reminded delegates that the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) also addresses desertification issues and hoped that the willingness demonstrated in implementing the FCCC will match that directed to the CCD. Benin, as Coordinator of the African Group, said the representation of the EU at the resumed session of INCD-10 through its Missions in Geneva would be interpreted as a boycott of the Session. The Chair noted that, in accordance with their requests, the relevant statements would be put on record.

The Committee then adopted the draft report of INCD-10, prepared by Rapporteur Anatoli Ovchinnikov (Uzbekistan), as

contained in A/AC.241/L.35, and authorized him to finalize the decisions made in the closing Plenary.

Syria, supported by Iran and Oman, raised his concern regarding an informal document circulated in the Asian Group, in which Israel was erroneously included as a member. He said that since the Interim Secretariat had included Israel in the Asian Group, the Group was unable to meet during the second week. Oman added that his delegation had sent a letter to the Secretariat requesting clarification on this matter. The Executive Secretary responded that the Secretariat had not tried to establish any formal group, and stressed that countries can form any form of affiliation, such as the JUSCANZ and "jus-cannots." He said the approach of this Convention was regional and therefore Israel had been included as an affected country in the Asian Annex, not as a member of any formally established group.

Chair Kjellén concluded this "first part of the tenth session," and stated that this Convention is about the people who are living far away in the drylands. In this rapidly changing world the CCD represents the fundamentals; it is about sand, land, sun, water and people. He emphasized that the Convention is a great achievement and that through the urgent action for Africa and interim measures in other regions, it is already being implemented.

The Chair, as well as the EU and African Group, thanked all who were involved in this negotiating process. Chair Kjellén declared closed the first part of INCD-10 at 8:00 pm.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF INCD-10

Many INCD-10 participants suggested that the end of this session marks the beginning of the implementation of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, with the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP-1) only eight months away. In spite of the difficulty encountered in negotiating the Global Mechanism, many delegates felt the issue prompted them to reflect more critically on the crucial elements needed for the effective implementation of the Convention. Several delegates emphasized three aspects that they consider the foundation of the Convention: partnership, participation and resources. Delegates also reflected on decisions taken on scientific and technological cooperation, as well as those that will be taken at COP-1.

**PARTNERSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING:** Most delegates agree that partnership, as called for in the Convention, is the most significant accomplishment of the CCD. One delegate called it "the magic word." The spirit with which this Convention was negotiated demonstrates that if good projects are prepared, funds will be available. A delegate argued that, assuming no additional funds were made available, implementing the Convention can make a significant difference if the funds presently allocated to desertification and drought activities are re-directed. However, delegates also expressed caution on the need to recognize that partnership, which is also often referred to as coordination, will be constrained by certain factors.

The Convention alludes to three forms of coordination: between the countries in the South; between developing and developed countries; and with other Conventions. Combatting desertification on a small scale will have no effect. Partnership among developing countries is therefore essential, but they may find it difficult to coordinate their work because it will require improved relations on other levels. Coordination between donors will require the North to move away from the political meaning of coordination, which is viewed as a way to exercise power. Collaboration between the three Rio Conventions is necessary to ensure that they are all focused on sustainable development objectives.

Another concern is the difficulty of building partnerships between groups that have very different interests, which could easily degenerate into a battlefield. The discussion on the Global Mechanism reflected this tension.

**PARTICIPATION:** Many delegates agreed that the most innovative aspect of the Convention is the recommendation for involvement of civil society. If affected governments make genuine efforts to ensure the participation of affected populations, the impact will not only be great but there will be a real incentive for developed countries to provide resources. However, problems may arise from a number of sources.

First, the transformation in the lives of the people in the drylands will not be immediate. It will take time to convince development agencies that dryland development is not just about soil conservation and that drylands have economic value. Second, patience is a necessary element for genuine participation to take place. Third, different players in the Convention have different views about what participation is all about. The perception of participation among governments in the South differs from that in the North. These differences must be clearly understood.

Some NGOs were critical of their participation in policy-making. They argued that if they were facing obstacles in the "NGO-friendly" INCD process, the constraints for communities and local populations would be multiplied. As in many other intergovernmental processes, NGOs were allowed to make interventions just before the close of INCD-10 meetings, often after the issues they intended to raise had been discussed and decisions taken. However, some countries have made remarkable progress. Some developing countries now have NGOs on their delegations and in one country, an NGO is the convener of the national coordinating committee. In many others, NGOs are involved in the national steering committees and desertification funds.

**FINANCIAL RESOURCES, A LEGITIMATE CONCERN?:** Apart from the lack of passion with which the subject was negotiated, the discussion on the function of mobilizing financial resources was reminiscent of the discussion on the Global Mechanism at INCD-5. While the core group was embroiled in discussions on whether or not the Mechanism will have resources of its own to fund the implementation of projects or programmes, most delegates thought the more important issue was whether there will be any resources at all, irrespective of the process of mobilization.

Many argued that donors have demonstrated during the interim period that resources will be available if affected countries can practically demonstrate their political will and develop projects within the provisions of the Convention. However, most NGOs doubted that they would be able to access funds, in particular at the national and regional levels, for activities that are within their area of competence. This concern was confirmed during the interim period. They called for a workable mechanism to be put in place.

For some delegates, underlying the debate on financial resources was the fundamental question of development assistance. The polemic displayed the long standing tensions on development assistance that are also evident in the other Rio Conventions. Thus, the Convention provides developing countries, in particular in Africa, with the opportunity to alter the game on the bilateral and multi-lateral levels, not through empowering the Global Mechanism to mobilize resources, but through the emerging concept of *chef-de-file*.

The delay in reaching agreement on this function caused some to speculate that it was a strategy to ensure that the COP would vote on this decision. Some developed country delegates expressed concern that they had convinced their governments to ratify the Convention because the GM would not be an institution that finances the implementation of programmes and projects, a position that is now being challenged.

Nevertheless, most delegates agreed that the matter, as a political issue, can only be resolved at the political level at COP-1. A few disagreed, noting that delaying important decisions, including what character the Global Mechanism assumes and the country that hosts the Permanent Secretariat, will hold the

implementation of the Convention hostage. This delay could result in some of the institutions involved in overseeing the implementation starting operations as late as 1999.

The overall impression of the INCD process thus far is that developing countries may have been too optimistic in their hopes for additional development assistance through this Convention. On the other hand, some donors had initially assumed they could provide such resources, but the economic recession has created social situations that deeply affect their foreign policies, leading to decreases in development assistance. This has resulted in a magnified North-South tug of war on financial issues during the critical stages of the negotiations. Some feel that the solution to this problem is to take what is there and make the best of it. Developing countries need to understand that more funds may not be forthcoming and developed countries need to recognize that it is difficult for developing countries to demonstrate commitment and results if they lack the necessary resources for implementation. The Convention may also assure that further cuts in official development assistance, in particular for dryland areas, are curtailed.

#### **PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS NEEDED IN THE CST:**

Although steady progress has been made since the start of discussions on scientific and technological cooperation, some delegates questioned the value of spending so much time discussing institutions and networking. First, information requested from the institutions on the projects and activities they are undertaking will take a long time to compile and, by the time it is ready, be out of date. Second, institutions are often reluctant to provide this type of information. The first priority of the CST is to survey and identify networks between existing organizations.

Some sensed a deficiency in the discussions dealing with the more practical aspects of implementation that relate to the "science of ensuring participation." They argued that although this constraint emanates from a lack of methodologies providing a logical process that would culminate in local populations' assuming ownership of the Convention, consideration of provisions to learn from success stories and experiences of local populations would be useful.

**FROM NEGOTIATION TO IMPLEMENTATION:** When INCD Chair Kjellén concluded the session, he emphasized that, despite the fact that this phase of the negotiations has focused on words, the core of the Convention really deals with people in the drylands and the improvement of their conditions. Some participants suggested that, despite the Chair's assurances, the link between the macro and micro levels was weak.

An example of where delegates seem to have lost focus on the core issue in the Convention is the negotiations in Working Group II on rules of procedure. The amount of time spent on the size and composition of the Bureau seemed disproportionate to the impact it will have on the outcome of this process. This was also one of the outstanding issues that led to the need for a resumed tenth session. Some said it was a question primarily for professional diplomats who have negotiated similar issues in the context of other conventions and who lack first-hand knowledge about the activities and conditions in the field.

The numerous criteria required for the composition of bodies working with science and technology is also a source of tension. While there is a preference for small groups to achieve efficiency, the requirements to ensure a fair representation of all interest groups will be difficult to reconcile. This difficulty led several to believe that *ad hoc* panels were not likely to be established any time soon. Scientific *ad hoc* panels in the Biodiversity and Climate Change Conventions have not been set up. NGOs recognized this fact and, in an attempt to make a contribution to the first CST session, proposed an open-ended consultative group to study local area development.

The Convention entered into force on 26 December 1996, and will now be implemented. The Convention is described as

innovative because it supports the bottom-up approach. However, the whole negotiation process is itself an example of a top-down process and in the implementation of the Convention, local populations will still have to be convinced the Convention will benefit them.

Most delegates re-affirmed the need for the involvement of all actors. NGOs and their international network, RIOD, have an important role to play linking the macro and micro levels. The affected country Parties have to ensure the necessary enabling and policy environment. Donors have to provide and assure better coordination of their resources. These are the lessons the interim measures and the urgent action for Africa have demonstrated, in addition to the need to maintain the momentum of a Convention that still seems to lack a high political profile. This momentum should enable a smooth transition into the post COP-1 implementation period.

## **THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE COP-1**

### **REGIONAL/SUBREGIONAL MEETINGS**

**FORUM ON CILSS/ECOWAS SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME:** CILSS will host a subregional forum for West African countries in Niamey, Niger, from 12-15 February 1997, to develop a subregional action programme. Contact: Aboupakai or Cissé Meriam Issa, CILSS, BP 7049, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; tel: +226 03-62-51; fax: +226 31-19-82/31-58-37.

**IGAD WORKSHOP ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:** IGAD, in collaboration with UNSO, will host a subregional workshop on science and technology in Nairobi, Kenya, from 17-19 February 1997 to create a subregional technical committee. Contact: Tekeste Ghebray, Executive Secretary of IGAD, P.O. Box 2653, Djibouti, Republic of Djibouti; tel: +253 35-40-50; fax: +253 35-69-94 or Dr. L. Deng, UNSO Bureau for Africa, Nairobi, Kenya; tel: +254 (2) 21-75-97; fax: +254 (2) 21-37-48 / 33-18-97.

**FORUM ON SADC SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME:** SADC will host a forum in Maru, Lesotho, from 3-5 March 1997, to develop a subregional action programme for Southern Africa. Contact: Mansour N'Diaye, CCD Secretariat, Geneva Executive Center, 11/13 Chemin des Anémones, CH-1219 Châteline, Geneva, Switzerland; tel: +41 (22) 979-9419; fax: +41 (22) 979-9030/31; e-mail: mn'diaye.incd@unep.ch.

**THIRD REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:** Cuba is hosting a regional conference in Havana, Cuba, from 11-12 March 1997, for Latin American and Caribbean countries to prepare for CCD COP-1 and define a regional action programme. Contact: Herminia Serrano Méndez or Maria Nery Urquiza Rodriguez, Centro de Gestión e Inspección Ambiental del Ministerio de Ciencia, Tecnología y Medio Ambiente de Cuba, Calle 20 Esq. 18A Playa, Havana, Cuba; tel: +537 22-75-73/20-70-80; fax: +537 32-18-71.

**WEST ASIAN SUBREGIONAL MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD:** The League of Arab States' Arab Center of the Studies of Arid Zones and Drylands (ACSAD) is hosting a subregional meeting in Damascus, Syria, from 9-11 April 1997, to initiate the subregional action programme for West Asian countries. Contact: Gilani Abdelgawad, Director of Soil Division, Doma-Syria, 2440 ACSAD, Damascus, Syria; tel: +249 (11) 47-21-76/47-21-83; fax: +249 (11) 471-1402.

**TECHNICAL SUBREGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD IN THE MAGHREB:** The Maghreb Arab Union (UMA) will host a subregional conference in Rabat, Morocco, in mid-April 1997, to create a subregional technical unit in support of the CST and CCD in the Maghreb. Contact: Mustapha Tlili, General Secretariat of the Maghreb Arab Union, 27 Rue Okba, Agdal-Rabat, Morocco; tel: +212 (7) 77-26-82; fax: +212 (7) 77-26-93.

**ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD:** China will host a regional ministerial conference in Beijing from 13-15 May 1997, to develop the Regional Action Framework for Asia drawing on national action programmes. Contact: Ms. Longjun Ci, China National Committee for the Implementation of the CCD, 18 Hepingli Dongjie St., Beijing, China, 1000714. For registration and logistical information, contact: Rui Zheng, Director, Division of International Programmes, Ministry of Forestry, China; tel/fax: +86 (10) 642-13184; e-mail: zhengrui@iuol.cn.net.

**FORUM ON THE MAGHREB SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME:** In May 1997 the Maghreb Arab Union will host a forum in Tunis, Tunisia, bringing together government, NGO and IGO representatives to develop a regional action programme for the Maghreb. Contact: Mustapha Tlili, General Secretariat of the Maghreb Arab Union, 27 Rue Okba, Rabat, Morocco; tel: +212 (7) 77-26-82; fax: +212 (7) 77-26-93.

**INTER-REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES:** The Commonwealth of Independent States will host an inter-regional conference in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in August 1997, to develop a subregional action programme. Contact: Anatoli Ovchinnikov, Deputy, Hydrometeorology at the Cabinet of Ministers, 72 St., Tashkent, Uzbekistan; tel: +737 (12) 35-69-56; fax: +737 (12) 33-20-25 / 33-20-50.

### CCD SECRETARIAT-SPONSORED MEETINGS

**PAN-AFRICAN CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD AND PROGRESS SINCE RIO:** The CCD Secretariat will host an African regional workshop in Geneva, Switzerland, from 18-21 March 1997, to develop a regional programme of action and prepare for the UNGA Special Session and the CCD COP-1. Contact: Mansour N'Diaye, CCD Secretariat, Geneva Executive Center, 11/13 Chemin des Anémones, CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland; tel: +41 (22) 979-9419; fax: +41 (22) 979-9030/31; e-mail: mn'diaye.incd@unep.ch.

**SECOND AND THIRD TECHNICAL WORKSHOPS FOR FIFTEEN FOCAL POINTS OF THE CCD:** The CCD Secretariat is facilitating the second technical workshop for 15 focal points in Asmara, Eritrea, in April 1997 and the third workshop in Maseru, Lesotho, in May 1997. Contact: Mansour N'Diaye, CCD Secretariat (see above).

**INTERNATIONAL FORUM OF MAYORS ON DESERTIFICATION AND URBANIZATION:** The City of Rome and the CCD Secretariat are hosting meetings in Rome, Italy, in October 1997 concurrently with COP-1, to discuss strategies for decentralized cooperation in implementing the CCD in cities. For more information, contact: N. Mattana, CCD Secretariat, (see above); e-mail: nmattana.incd.@unep.ch.

### NGO MEETINGS

**SECOND REGIONAL NGO CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN:** NGOs from the Latin American and Caribbean region will meet in Havana, Cuba, from 7-8 March 1997, to develop a regional networking mechanism, project proposals, and prepare contributions for COP-1 and the regional programme of action. Contact: Miguel Torrico, Comité Nacional Pro Defensa de la Fauna y Flora (CODEFF), Sazie 1885, Casilla 3675, Santiago, Chile; tel: +562 696-1268; fax: +562 696-8562.

**FIRST NGO WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD IN ANGLOPHONE WEST AFRICA:** Thirty NGOs from Anglophone West Africa will meet in Kano, Nigeria, in April 1997 to familiarize themselves with the CCD, set up a subregional NGO network, and prepare action plans. Contact: Dr.

E. Okpara, The Nigerian Environmental Study/Action Team (NEST), UIPO Box 22025, Ibadan, Oyo-State, Nigeria; tel/fax: +234 (2) 810-2644; e-mail: nest.nigeria@lagosmail.sprint.com.

**SUBREGIONAL NGO WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD IN NEWLY INDEPENDENT STATES:** An NGO workshop in Issyk-Kul (Warm Lake), Uzbekistan, in May 1997, will bring together NGOs from 11 countries of Central Asia and the Newly Independent States to discuss subregional NGO networking and technical cooperation. Contact: Oleg Tsaruk, Executive Director, International Central Asian Biodiversity Institute, 11a-10 Gaydar Pr., Tashkent, 700105 Republic of Uzbekistan; tel: +737 (12) 91-3935; e-mail: tashkent@glas.apc.org.

**SUBREGIONAL NGO WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD IN THE MAGHREB:** A workshop will be held in Tunis, Tunisia, in May 1997, for Maghreb NGOs to familiarize themselves with the CCD, establish a subregional NGO network, develop project proposals, and contribute to the CST, NAPs and emerging NGO-government partnerships. Contact: Michael Cracknell or Nabih Megateli, ENDA Inter-arabe, 6 Rue Imam Termadi, Ksar Said 11, 2009 Tunis, Tunisia; tel: +216 (1) 515-217; fax: +216 (1) 582-783; e-mail: nmegateli@igc.apc.org.

**NGO FORUM ON EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND INSTITUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DRYLAND DEVELOPMENT:** The International NGO Network on Desertification (RIOD) will facilitate an NGO Forum in Rome, Italy, from 29 September - 10 October 1997, to bring together NGOs as a parallel event to CCD COP-1. Contact: Baudouine Kamatari, Global Focal Point of RIOD, Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI), P.O. Box 72461, Nairobi, Kenya; tel: +254 (2) 56-20-15 / 56-04-76; fax: +254 (2) 56-21-75; e-mail: bkamatari@elci.sasa.unep.no / bkamatari@elci.gn.apc.org.

### OTHER MEETINGS

**EXPERT MEETING ON SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE CONVENTIONS ON BIODIVERSITY, CLIMATE CHANGE, DESERTIFICATION AND THE RIO FOREST PRINCIPLES:** Israel will host a meeting in the Negev on 17 March 1997, to enable 40 legal, policy making and scientific experts to discuss the synergies between the Rio Conventions and the Forest Principles. For more information and nomination of participants, contact: Prof. Uriel Safriel, Director, The Jacob Blaustein Institute for Desert Research, Ben-Gurion University, Sede Boqer Campus, Israel 84990; tel: +972 (7) 653-2010; fax: +972 (7) 655-4306; e-mail: urielsf@bgumail.bgu.ac.il.

**SECOND AFRO-ASIAN EXPERT MEETING ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD:** Niger will host a meeting on implementing the CCD in Niamey, Niger, from 27-30 May 1997 for African and Asian experts. Contact: Harouna Oumarou, Conseiller, Secrétariat Exécutif du CNEDD, P.O. Box 578, Niamey, Niger; tel: +227 72-25-59/72-31-89; fax: +227 73-58-59.

**RESUMED TENTH SESSION OF THE INC OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION:** A resumed session of INCD-10 will be held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 18-22 August. Contact: CCD Secretariat, Geneva Executive Center, 11/13 Chemin des Anémones, CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland; tel: +41 (22) 979-9419; fax: +41 (22) 979-9030/31; e-mail: Secretariat.incd@unep.ch.

**FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE CONVENTIONS TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND DROUGHT:** The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CCD (COP-1) will be held in Rome, Italy, from 29 September - 10 October 1997. For more information, contact the CCD Secretariat (see above).