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HIGHLIGHTS OF CCD COP-1 THURSDAY, 9 OCTOBER 1997

Delegates met in Plenary to hear statements from government officials and international organizations and to exchange views with NGOs on partnerships. The COW also met during the morning and evening.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Five ministers, one deputy minister and thirteen other officials addressed Thursday's Plenary meeting of the High-Level Segment.

RATIFICATION: SOUTH AFRICA announced its recent ratification of the CCD and simultaneous ratification of the FCCC. KYRGYZSTAN hosted a seminar on combating desertification that provided the impetus to ratify the CCD. He supported RUSSIA's statement that the COP should specifically address desertification in the countries with economies in transition. KAZAKHSTAN said accession to the CCD by other countries in its region will aid in efforts to combat desertification. UKRAINE said the CCD should be universal and consider the effects of desertification and drought in Central Eastern Europe and the Black Sea region.

GLOBAL MECHANISM: LESOTHO looked forward to the functioning of the CST with financing from the GM. PERU stressed the need for the COP and GM host institution to coordinate implementation in a transparent and balanced way. NIGERIA urged adequate funding for the Secretariat and GM so the CCD's objectives can be accomplished. The GAMBIA wants to see a GM that actively mobilizes resources for desertification activities.

RESOURCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION TRANSFER: CUBA recalled Fidel Castro's statement from the same rostrum at the World Food Summit, asking why US\$700 billion is spent annually on military purposes rather than to combat hunger and prevent soil degradation. INDIA offered the expertise of its research institutions to other countries. SOUTH AFRICA is keen to share its knowledge with others in the Southern Hemisphere.

INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE: CANADA, JAPAN, the REPUBLIC OF KOREA and SWITZERLAND reviewed the CCD-related projects they are funding. JAPAN will host the Second Tokyo Development Conference on African Development. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA is enlarging cooperation with neighboring countries. SWITZERLAND said the private sector should be more involved in the CCD's objectives. More than 50 percent of NORWAY's bilateral assistance is allocated to sub-Saharan Africa. ISRAEL has engaged in training projects with countries from all

regions. BELGIUM's CCD bilateral efforts have centered on the most disadvantaged, the role of women and the fight against land degradation and desertification.

IMPLEMENTATION: National, subregional and regional activities were highlighted by most speakers. LESOTHO will hold local government elections as one of the initiatives to involve local communities. It will also hold a national forum early next year. ETHIOPIA has been self-sufficient in food production for the last three years and has even begun exporting. MOZAMBIQUE has initiated the preparation of its drought and desertification programme and has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Secretariat. SWITZERLAND reviewed the Swiss model of political decentralization.

NORWAY endorsed the Secretary-General's strengthening of the resident co-ordinator system. INDIA would be happy to host a future COP.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION'S STATEMENTS

UNEP Executive Director Elizabeth Dowdeswell said UNEP will: raise awareness; encourage a better assessment of desertification; and support the CST and help coordinate scientific activity in the assessment and implementation of desertification control worldwide. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands said its Strategic Plan urges it to strengthen and formalize linkages with other international conventions and organizations. He urged delegates to communicate with their colleagues that are following the Ramsar Convention as they elaborate their NAPs.

IGAD's mandate has been expanded to include all aspects of sustainable development in the subregion. Priority areas and projects will be presented to donors in March 1998. The FAO has strengthened many of its activities, including: land use planning methods; early warning systems for food security; and the inventory of water resources programme. He said FAO's decentralization should allow for more participation with grassroots organizations.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE CCD

COW Chair El-Ghaouth opened the Plenary dialogue with NGOs on building partnerships for the CCD. He said the group was making history and other UN bodies would note the CCD's example. NGO representative Souma Diallo (Niger) said the CCD clearly defines the spirit of partnership in Article 3. She said the NGO session is an important step forward in the UN system and shows that civil society has an important role to play in building international agreements.

Delegates and NGOs broke into small groups to discuss the definition of partnerships in the context of three issues: their understanding of partnerships; characteristics of strong partnerships; and

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expectations of partnerships. An Argentine case study on building partnerships for NAPs was presented, following which NGOs and delegates discussed NGO participation. Several also spoke about the need for and methods to bridge the activities of local and national NGOs and North-South and South-South exchanges. The Argentine delegation presented a draft decision to include NGOs in the official programme of future COPs, with two half days of open discussion scheduled at each session.

Key issues noted by the closing speaker, Supriya Akerkar, included: the degree to which NGOs participate in the broader NGO community; the degree to which partnerships lead to community involvement; a place for women and gender issues in NAPs; defining the roles and responsibilities of all partners involved; the need for time, respect and awareness of the legitimate role of all stakeholders; and the political will on the part of implementing agencies.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW convened for an hour in the morning. It met from 6:15 until 9:00 pm to consider the outstanding issues in some draft decisions.

ESTABLISHMENT OF AN AD HOC PANEL OF THE CST: COW Chair El-Ghaouth noted the CST recommendation to set up an *ad hoc* panel of experts on indicators for the implementation of the CCD. The recommendation was adopted and regional groups submitted names of their proposed experts. Africa and the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) submitted three names each. The Latin American Region submitted two names. No submissions came from Eastern Europe because none from the region are listed on the roster. Asia had not identified its representatives. Protracted debate ensued regarding the agreed number of representatives from each region. Following informal consultations, it was agreed to have two representatives each from Asia and the Latin American Region and three each from Africa and WEOG.

DATE AND VENUE OF COP-2: The AFRICAN GROUP's proposal to amend draft decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.2 to state that COP-2 shall be held from 24 August to 4 September 1998 in Dakar, Senegal, was accepted.

PHYSICAL LOCATION OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT: Following informal consultations, the OECD proposed amending paragraph 3 of decision L.4. It encourages the Executive Secretary to negotiate a headquarters agreement in an appropriate manner with the government of the Federal Republic of Germany, and upon such terms and conditions as are appropriate and necessary, in consultation with the Secretary-General, and to submit it to the COP-2 for adoption. It was adopted.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE COP: In L.5 the COW Chair suggested deleting the language in paragraph 3 referring to the implementation of procedures at COP-3. The draft was adopted as amended.

COMMITTEE ON THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: The AFRICAN GROUP proposed amending operative paragraph 1 of the procedural draft decision to state, "Decides to continue to consider" draft decision A/AC.241/L.42 and to take action at COP-3, which was agreed.

RULES OF PROCEDURE: For the bracketed language in Rules 22, 31 and 47 regarding the representation of regions and affected country Parties, the Chair suggested a compromise: "...affected country Parties, particularly those in Africa, and including but not limited to affected country parties from the regions referred to in the other implementation Annexes of the Convention..." The AFRICAN GROUP and GRULAC did not agree there was consensus and Africa provided an alternative: "...those in Africa, "including affected country Parties from the

regions referred to in the implementation Annexes of the Convention." CANADA, supported by the US, said several affected country Parties do not belong to any implementation Annex and could not accept the deletion of "also but not limited to." The EU wanted to retain the text as produced in ICCD/COP(1)/2 and JUSCANNZ said negotiations were back to where they started two years ago. The issue was transmitted to COP-2 for further consultation.

ORGANIZATION TO HOUSE THE GM AND AGREEMENT ON ITS MODALITIES: Adoption of draft decision L.15 was postponed pending informal consultations on the choice of institution.

WORK OF REGIONAL ANNEXES: Decision L.14, submitted by the Latin American and Caribbean Region, was amended by the EU and later negotiated informally with regional groups. It welcomes Parties' agreements related to the regional implementation annexes and GRULAC's regional action programme, and encourages the Executive Secretary to facilitate assistance for their effective and efficient implementation. Delegates adopted the decision without objection.

BUDGET AND PROGRAMME FOR 1999: The Chair noted that the draft text was not ready but highlighted the agreements reached during the informal consultations Wednesday evening, 8 October. The programme budget for 1999 is US\$7.1 million. The COP will approve US\$6.1 million and, as with the sister conventions, request the UNGA to pay approximately US\$1 million for conference services, for a given period. He noted other aspects of the budget: the contribution to the regular budget by the COP-2 host country; post adjustment costs for Bonn because estimates were based on Geneva; and a 13 percent administration contribution to the UN Organization. He proposed the authorization of a 8.3 percent reserve fund for the Secretariat. The COW adopted the guidelines.

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND AND SPECIAL FUND: Decision L.10 deals with contributions to the two Funds. In addition to the amendments made Tuesday, 7 October, Chair El-Ghaouth suggested deleting the references to specific figures for both Funds because they are voluntary contributions. The decision was adopted as amended.

EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDING FOR THE SECRETARIAT FOR 1998: Decision L.11 stipulates how the Trust and Special Voluntary Funds should be used in 1998. The decision was adopted without objection.

BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR THE OPERATING EXPENSES OF THE GLOBAL MECHANISM: Decision L.13 requests the Executive Secretary to submit a budget for the GM. In light of the agreement that the GM's budget should be derived from the US\$7.1 million approved for 1999, the decision was withdrawn.

INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS: Decision L.3 covers various requests to the UN Secretary-General. The Chair proposed an amendment to provide for the appointment of the first Head of the Convention Secretariat at the level of Assistant Secretary-General, on an exceptional basis, with the title of Executive Secretary, for a three-year period beginning 1 January 1999. At the end of that first term, the post would be classified at the D-2 level. All other senior posts of the Secretariat should have an appropriate relationship to the D-2 level. The EU stressed that exceptional circumstances led to this decision and emphasized the importance of good management. The changes and decision were adopted.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary is expected to meet during the afternoon to consider draft decisions.