



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Vol. 4 No. 116

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development

Monday, 13 October 1997

## SUMMARY OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 29 SEPTEMBER - 10 OCTOBER 1997

The First Conference of the Parties (COP-1) to the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) met in Rome, Italy, from 29 September to 10 October 1997. Monday, 29 September, was used for regional consultations, so the COP opened officially on 30 September. The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) held its first session simultaneously on 2 - 3 October. Additional parallel events included an NGO Forum, an international forum for mayors, a seminar for the media and an exhibit of comic strips. One hundred and two States submitted their instruments of ratification by the requisite date and participated as Parties to the Convention. As of 30 September 1997, 113 countries had submitted instruments of ratification.

The COP-1 and CST-1 agendas contained primarily organizational matters. Delegates selected Bonn, Germany, as the location for the Permanent Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as the organization to administer the Global Mechanism. At the CST's recommendation, the COP established an *ad hoc* panel to oversee the continuation of the process of surveying benchmarks and indicators, and decided that CST-2 would consider linkages between traditional knowledge and modern technology. Five Plenary meetings were devoted to a High-Level Segment and one to a dialogue between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and delegates on building partnerships for the CCD. Argentina's proposal that Plenary meetings at future COPs be devoted to similar NGO dialogues was also adopted. While most delegates were pleased with the two-week session, they looked forward to COP-2, which will take place in Dakar, Senegal, to delve into more substantive issues related to combatting desertification.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONVENTION

The Convention to Combat Desertification was adopted on 17 June 1994 and was opened for signature in October 1994 in Paris. Three months following the receipt of its fiftieth ratification, the Convention entered into force on 26 December 1996.

The Convention recognizes: the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of desertification; the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand driven; and the involvement of local populations. The core of the CCD is the development of national and subregional/regional action programmes by national governments in cooperation with donors, local populations and NGOs. The purpose of using an innovative "bottom-up" approach, by involving people who are affected by desertification in decision-making, is to facilitate effective implementation of the Convention.

## NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION

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 Inter-governmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa (INCD). At the organizational session of the INCD in January 1993, delegates elected Amb. Bo Kjellén (Sweden) as Chair of the Committee. The INCD met five times between May 1993 and June 1994, during which delegates drafted the Convention and four regional Annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean. The Convention was adopted on 17 June 1994, along with resolutions recommending urgent action for Africa and interim arrangements for the period between adoption of the CCD and its entry into force.

## THE INTERIM PERIOD

Pending the entry into force of the CCD, the INCD met six times between January 1995 and August 1997 to hear progress reports on urgent action taking place in Africa and interim measures in other regions, and to prepare for COP-1. The preparations included discussion of issues such as the Secretariat's programme and budget, the functions of and administrative arrangements for the Global Mechanism, the physical location of the Permanent Secretariat and the establishment of the Committee on Science and Technology. Although considerable progress was made, especially on scientific and technological cooperation, some important issues remained unresolved at the end of the last session of the INCD. The size and membership of the COP Bureau were left for COP-1 to decide, as were questions about the host institutions and some functions of the Global Mechanism.

### IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the Convention . . . . .	1
Report of COP-1 . . . . .	2
Plenary Deliberations . . . . .	2
Committee of the Whole . . . . .	4
Committee on Science and Technology . . . . .	7
NGO Forum . . . . .	8
Closing Plenary . . . . .	8
A Brief Analysis of COP-1 . . . . .	10
Things to Look For . . . . .	11

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## REPORT OF COP-1

CCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo opened the first Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification on 30 September 1997, and thanked the Italian Government for hosting the meeting. Delegates elected Lamberto Dini, Italy's Minister for Foreign Affairs, as COP-1 President by acclamation. In his opening remarks, Dini said the Convention presents the best effort to effectively re-design North-South relationships and international cooperation.

UN Under-Secretary-General Nitin Desai spoke on behalf of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He said COP-1 must ensure that the Secretariat has the necessary resources to meet countries' requirements and aspirations and stressed the importance of the decision on administrative arrangements for the Global Mechanism. Desai noted that the CCD has brought together all parts of the UN system and has been a worthy development of the Spirit of Rio. INCD Chair Amb. Bo Kjellén noted the important basis that the first meeting of the CST will establish for the exchange of experiences and networking. He stressed the need for a decision on the Global Mechanism so that it is operational by COP-2.

During the rest of the meeting, delegates proceeded through the agenda. The Plenary heard statements from representatives of inter-governmental organizations, ministers and other government officials regarding efforts to implement the CCD. The Plenary also focused on the issue of building partnerships with NGOs during a half-day meeting organized by the NGOs. Negotiations on the decisions taken by the COP were conducted in a Committee of the Whole (COW), the Committee on Science and Technology and informal groups. The following report separates the deliberations into three sections: Plenary deliberations, the Committee of the Whole and the Committee on Science and Technology.

### PLENARY DELIBERATIONS

#### PROCEDURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS

At its first meeting on Tuesday, 30 September 1997, the COP adopted the rules of procedure (ICCD/COP(1)/2) with the exception of the bracketed text. The Committee of the Whole (COW) removed some of those brackets during the course of the two weeks. The Plenary also agreed to apply provisionally Rules 22 and 31 in relation to the size of the Bureau: nine Vice-Presidents. The agenda and organization of work (ICCD/COP(1)/1 and ICCD/COP(1)/1/Corr.1) were adopted, as were the terms of reference for the CST (ICCD/COP(1)/2). Delegates also accredited the IGOs and NGOs listed in documents ICCD/COP(1)/2/Corr.1 and ICCD/COP(1)/8.

#### BUREAU ELECTIONS

On 30 September, COP President Dini stated that nine Vice-Presidents and the Chair of the CST would be elected and that they should be selected on the basis of equitable geographical representation and adequate representation of affected countries. The African Group proposed Mahmoud Ould El-Ghaouth (Mauritania) as a Vice-President and Chair of the Committee of the Whole. Informal consultations continued throughout the following two days on the remaining Bureau members.

On Thursday, 2 October, delegates elected the remaining Bureau members. As the Eastern European Group had only one Party to the CCD, it was decided that rather than leave a Bureau seat open, it would be filled, for COP-1 only, by a representative from another regional group. The seat will revert back to the Eastern European Group at COP-2. Those elected Vice-Presidents were: Harold Acemah (Uganda); Katinda Komando (Tanzania); Mohammad Reza Jabbari (Iran); Abdul Hameed Al-Monajed (Syria); Samvel Baloyan (Armenia); Maria Julia Alsogaray (Argentina); Miguel Angel Araujo Padilla (El Salvador); and Andri Bisaz (Switzerland). Jabbari also served as Rapporteur. Ricardo Sánchez-Sosa (Cuba) was elected CST Chair.

Representatives of the regional groups expressed satisfaction with the composition of the Bureau. Benin, on behalf of the African Group, said the current allocation should not serve as a precedent for future Bureau compositions. Equitable geographic distribution and adequate representation must be assured in the future. He said that at COP-2, the African Group would like three representatives on the Bureau. Belgium, on behalf of the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG), expressed regret over the lack of transparency in the election process of the CST Chair. Nor did he agree with the proposal that three African representatives should serve on the Bureau at COP-2. Iran, on behalf of the Asian Group, highlighted the "gentlemen's agreement" between the regional groups that the Asian Group will chair CST-2 and reserved the right to nominate two Vice-Presidents to the Bureau at COP-2.

#### HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

Delegates to COP-1 met in Plenary for two-and-one-half days, from 7 - 9 October, to hear 93 statements during the High-Level Segment, of which 46 were by ministers, 11 by deputy-ministers and 35 by other officials. The Vice-President of El Salvador addressed the Plenary on Friday, 10 October. Delegates addressed a wide range of issues that generally fell into the following categories: the CCD and sustainable development; resource and technology transfer; financial assistance; CCD ratification; the Global Mechanism; and implementation.

**CCD AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** The importance of interdisciplinary approaches and coordination at all levels was emphasized by many speakers. Food security and poverty alleviation also were stressed. Zimbabwe, for example, noted that desertification, viewed in the 1980s as an African problem, is now accepted as an international issue requiring a global solution. He stressed the need to consider the social and economic ramifications of desertification. The G-77 and China said the CCD is the first international convention to address environmental destruction and poverty in rural areas. Bangladesh suggested exploring the correlation between desertification, food security, migration and the exodus to cities. The impediments that social and political crises pose to environmental protection were noted by Burundi and Angola. Many speakers noted the impacts of El Niño, including Peru's expression of hope for a rapid and positive response of the international community to the phenomenon. Niger said desertification is a global challenge requiring North-South and South-South cooperation and the development of synergies between the three Rio Conventions. Connections with other intergovernmental processes, such as Finland's mention of the recent commencement of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, were also offered. France said the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) review of implementation of Agenda 21 showed that the Rio process had run out of steam and hoped the CCD's entry into force will demonstrate a desire to compensate for that.

**RESOURCE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER:** Many speakers noted the importance of resource and technology transfer for the implementation of the CCD's objectives. Italy called for measures supporting the North-South transfer of technology. Turkey, India and South Africa offered to share their knowledge and expertise with others. Togo stressed technology acquisition instead of transfer. Many speakers, including Iran, Côte d'Ivoire, Jordan, Algeria and Armenia, stressed the need for technical and financial support. Malaysia said there are sufficient resources available; the need is for political will to reallocate them to priorities recognized by the international community. Equatorial Guinea said CCD Article 4, paragraph 2(b) needs to be properly implemented with regard to debt, and supported the establishment of a national trust fund for the environment. El Salvador said it is carrying out a study on the possible use of fiscal instruments for funding environmental projects, however, they require support from the international community.

**FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE:** Many developed country donors as well as some developing country donors highlighted the CCD-related projects they are financing. The EU, for example, has committed more than US\$2.2 million to desertification programmes. The UK highlighted its new development philosophy and activities, including debt cancellation. Saudi Arabia's international assistance in recent decades



included US\$367 million to IFAD and US\$70.6 million for development loans to 72 beneficiaries. Malaysia has extended assistance and training to developing countries, including those affected by desertification. The Republic of Korea is expanding cooperation with neighboring countries. The Netherlands said the "lead donor" idea can give meaning to partnerships and noted that it is serving in that capacity in Burkina Faso. Spain will make contributions towards implementation of the Convention in Latin America.

**CCD RATIFICATION:** Speakers called for universal ratification of the Convention, including France's appeal to major developed countries who have not yet ratified. The US said the Senate's failure to ratify the Convention does not reflect a lack of commitment to the CCD, and said it has provided US\$33.5 million for CCD-relevant activities. The efforts of East and Central European States to ratify the Convention were also noted. In this regard, Russia, Poland and Kyrgyzstan stressed the need for a fifth CCD annex for Central and Eastern European States. Tajikistan is undertaking efforts to ratify the CCD and supported rapid accession by the Central and Eastern European countries.

**GLOBAL MECHANISM:** Several speakers indicated their positions on the Global Mechanism. Botswana appealed for a Global Mechanism that not only raises substantial funds but is also accessible and responsive to the needs of affected countries. Indonesia stressed a role for the Global Mechanism in the transfer of technology. Peru stressed the need for the COP and the Global Mechanism host institution to coordinate implementation in a transparent and balanced manner. Argentina said the Global Mechanism will have a catalytic role in linking national and international programmes. Bangladesh, Mauritania, and the G-77 and China stressed the importance of a Mechanism that mobilizes resources for field activities.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Most speakers noted national and international efforts to combat desertification. Examples of national activities include: a 95,000-hectare "Green Belt" project in Syria; Kuwait's establishment of a network to track shifting sand dunes and a desert studies programme at the University of Kuwait; the establishment of an Environment and Monitoring Center in Dakar, Senegal; plans to hold local government elections to involve local communities in Lesotho; a national programme to provide safe drinking water in Uzbekistan; and Bolivia's plans to present bilateral and multilateral donors with 26 projects at a roundtable next month. Haiti is preparing for the involvement of representatives of mayors and civil society groups in the use of national desertification funds and mechanisms of coordination between the Fund and other local funds managed by NGOs throughout the country.

Regional and subregional implementation activities were also noted, including Niger's emphasis of the strong cooperative arrangements between Africa and Asia in combating desertification. Finland will host a Ministerial Conference on the Environment for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership on 28 November 1997. Equatorial Guinea will host a regional workshop from 22 to 24 October 1997 that will address the management of environmental information. Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay have a joint subregional sustainable development programme.

Germany asked if implementation only has been limited to workshops and stressed the need to make poverty reduction the focus of cooperation. Swaziland stressed the importance of education over the development of sophisticated structures. India said it would be happy to host a future COP. El Salvador said it could host the COP when it is the Latin America and Caribbean Group's (GRULAC) turn.

#### **STATEMENTS BY INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS**

On Tuesday, 30 September and Thursday, 9 October, representatives from a number of intergovernmental organizations addressed the Plenary and identified ways in which their activities complement those taken under the CCD. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Director-General Jacques Diouf noted the relationship between food security and sustainable development and outlined CCD-relevant programmes that have been established by the FAO. The Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), G.O.P.

Obasi, said the WMO will take steps to: ensure the availability of climatological and hydrological data; promote the assessment and management of freshwater sources in affected areas; promote research on linkages between desertification and climate; and contribute to the development of indicators and benchmarks relevant to the CCD.

The President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Fawzi Al-Sultan, outlined challenges in the implementation of the CCD: ensuring that national action programmes respond to the needs of local communities and enhance local area development; disseminating technology and creating the required supportive environment and institutions; collaboration aimed at re-orienting the focus of poor farmers; and financing the operations of the CCD. He said the Global Mechanism needs a strong coalition, but for accountability should be housed in one organization. UNDP Assistant Administrator Anders Wijkman supported a collaborative arrangement for the Global Mechanism to ensure the institutional commitment of other organizations and agreed that one agency should be selected for the day-to-day management.

Colombia's Vice-President Carlos Lemos, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said important factors contributing to desertification that need attention include: globalization; the external debt of developing countries; trade in drugs in developed countries, which encourages deforestation; and technology transfer.

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 Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Calestous Juma, discussed institutional cooperation between the Rio conventions. The Executive-Secretary of the Permanent Interstate Committee to Combat Desertification in the Sahel (CILSS), Mariam Sidibé, stressed three activities essential to the effective implementation of the CCD: the establishment of a Global Mechanism; the establishment of a monitoring committee for the implementation of the CCD, similar to that of the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); and adequate provision of financial resources for the Permanent Secretariat. Roy Stacy, OECD, said CCD measures can improve development assistance practices and can reduce supply driven aid through local ownership and policy coherence. He noted two corollary commitments that support the Convention: Sahel 21 and the OECD/DAC partnership Strategy for the 21st Century. Hassen Seoud, Director-General of the League of Arab States' study center, ACSAD, outlined ACSAD's research and findings and highlighted the capacity of the institution to provide research support to the Asian and North African regions.

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) outlined the achievements of the subregion, including: ratification of the CCD by all countries except Somalia; convening of several awareness raising workshops; and assistance to member countries to implement the CCD. Priority areas and projects will be presented to donors in March 1998. UNESCO said it has undertaken activities in response to the CCD, and called attention to the Education for All programme. He added that strengthening of scientific capacities remains a priority. The Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and the CCD have complementary concerns. 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 national action programmes.

#### **LOCATION OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT**

Delegates to COP-1 considered the offers of three countries, Canada, Spain and Germany, to host the Permanent Secretariat. On Tuesday, 30 September, representatives from Montreal, Murcia and Bonn addressed the Plenary and presented the benefits of their cities. During the first week of the COP, each bidding country also set up an exhibition booth to provide additional information. On Friday, 3 October, the Plenary took a consensus decision after the first round of voting for the location of the Permanent Secretariat. Bonn received an



absolute majority and will host the Permanent Secretariat. Germany noted the significance of Bonn's election on Germany's national holiday celebrating its unification. Germany also thanked Canada and Spain for a bidding process that had been competitive yet fair. Spain and Canada congratulated Bonn and said they will continue to support the Secretariat and Bonn. Michael Zammit Cutajar, Executive Secretary of the FCCC, addressed the Plenary after the election and expressed his delight that the CCD and FCCC Secretariats would be neighbors. He suggested the two Secretariats explore opportunities for cooperation, particularly in capacity building, and streamline processes for gathering information. Several developing countries are involved in a pilot project to produce national reports that meet the requirements of the three sister Conventions.

### **BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE CCD**

COW Chair El-Ghaouth opened the Plenary dialogue with NGOs on building partnerships for the CCD on Thursday afternoon, 9 October. He said the COP was making history and that other UN bodies would note the CCD's example. NGO representative Souma Diallo (Niger) from Sapha, 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. Edit Tuboly (Netherlands), from BothEnds, served as Co-Chair of the meeting.

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 expectations of partnerships. An Argentine case study on building partnerships for National Action Programmes was made, 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.

South Africa's NGOs were responsible for its national awareness campaign and consultation process, while its government functionalities conducted the editorial work in drawing up the national action programme (NAP) and national audit of existing policies and research. CILSS has a forum it uses when it wants to organize the establishment of partnerships. Some speakers noted the recent proliferation of NGOs and added that they do not have sufficient resources. Sweden noted the opportunity for contacts between NGOs and government officials at the COP. He said parliamentarians can sometimes serve as brokers between NGOs from North and South. A project on NGO capacity building in sub-Saharan Africa is seeking to determine what strategies work to mobilize different stakeholders. He said neither a strict top-down approach nor a strict bottom-up approach works.

Key issues noted by the closing speaker, Supriya Akerkar (India), from the Centre for Science and Environment, 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 national action programmes; 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.

### **INCLUSION OF NGO ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE OFFICIAL PROGRAMME OF WORK**

Argentina tabled this decision (ICCD/COP(1)/L.20) during the NGO-organized Plenary meeting on Thursday, 9 October. The closing Plenary adopted it without comment. It recalls CCD references to the participation of NGOs and local populations in combatting desertification. It requests that additional open dialogue sessions organized by NGOs occur within the programme of work for future COPs and that the Secretariat make all efforts to facilitate at least two half-day NGO sessions within the official programme of work. Finally, it requests that NGOs give further consideration to institutional mechanisms for reinforcing a wide range of partnerships.

### **RESULTS OF THE MAYOR'S FORUM**

The Mayor of Rome addressed the Plenary on Friday, 10 October, to report on the results of the previous weekend's Mayor's Forum. Mayors of cities and local authorities from 21 countries gathered in

Rome from 3 - 4 October 1997 to review urban and rural development in the light of desertification-induced migration. They agreed to liaise with national and local authorities to seek an integrated response to desertification within the framework of national action programmes. They stressed the importance of efforts to raise awareness about desertification and its consequences for urban society and the global environment. Efforts to reduce desertification-induced migration to cities and to help migrants wishing to return home to do so were also recommended.

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

The Committee of the Whole (COW) formally started its deliberations on Thursday, 2 October, although informal negotiations on some of the issues had started Monday evening, 29 September. The COW was chaired by Mahmoud Ould El-Ghaouth (Mauritania). Pierre-Marc Johnson (Canada) and John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) coordinated many of the informal negotiations. The COW negotiated the 21 issues left outstanding from the INCD in open-ended informal consultations, and adopted and transmitted the draft decisions to the Plenary on Thursday, 9 October. By the end of the COP, three matters were left unresolved and transmitted to COP-2: the need to set up a committee for the review of implementation of the Convention; and, in the Rules of Procedure, references to representation of regional implementation annex countries, and to voting by majority or consensus on financial matters.

### **INCD RECOMMENDATIONS**

During its first meeting, the COW quickly agreed to transmit three INCD recommendations, contained in document ICCD/COP(1)/2 and ICCD/COP(1)/2/Corr.1, to the Plenary for adoption: decision 10/5, concerning the financial rules of the COP, its subsidiary bodies and the Permanent Secretariat; decision 10/2, concerning the designation of a Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning; administrative and support arrangements; and decision 9/9, concerning procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation. The COW also agreed to transmit to the Plenary decision 10/17, concerning the procedure for selection of the city to host the Permanent Secretariat.

### **DATE AND VENUE OF COP-2**

Deliberations on the venue of COP-2 were held through informal consultations within regional groups, in particular the African Group, which had offered to host COP-2 following the adoption of the decision by the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment. During the COW, the African Group proposed Dakar, Senegal, as the COP-2 host. Based on discussions with the UN in New York, COP-2 was scheduled to be held from 24 August to 4 September 1998.

During the final Plenary, Senegal suggested that early December would be a better time for the meeting. The August-September dates were adopted with the understanding that the COP President, the Secretariat, the Senegalese Government and UN conference services could consult with a view to changing them. Delegates adopted decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.2 with this understanding.

### **INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS**

Decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.3 outlines a number of actions to be undertaken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in the interim period, to enable the Permanent Secretariat to start operations as an independent entity in 1999.

There were two sticky issues during COW deliberations: financing of the conference service costs arising from the COP and its subsidiary bodies from the Regular Programme Budget of the UN; and the rank and title of the head of the Permanent Secretariat. The EU suggested that these issues should be negotiated by a small contact group, together with all other financial aspects because budgetary issues have to be presented as a package.

Decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.3/Rev.1 requests the Secretary-General to: include COP-2 and the meetings of its subsidiary bodies on the 1998-1999 calendar of conferences and meetings; and, following consultations with the COP through its Bureau, appoint the head of the



Convention Secretariat with the title of Executive Secretary for a three-year term of office starting 1 January 1999, at the level of Assistant Secretary-General, on the understanding that the level will be reviewed by the COP at the end of this period and re-classified to the D-2 level. It also requests: the UN General Assembly (UNGA) to decide to finance the conference service costs of the COP and its subsidiary bodies from the UN Regular Programme Budget; the COP-1 President to report to UNGA on the results of the COP-1 meeting; and the Executive Secretary to report to COP-2 on the implementation of the decision.

#### **PHYSICAL LOCATION OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT**

Decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.4 accepts the offer of Germany to host the Permanent Secretariat in Bonn and highlights follow-up steps to be taken by the Executive Secretary. The EU suggested that the Executive Secretary acts "for and on behalf of the UN Organization" when negotiating an agreement with the host government of Germany. The EU also preferred relocation close to but prior to 1 January 1999, and not after that date. The EU's suggestion generated lengthy debate as to whether the negotiation with Germany would result in a bilateral or tripartite agreement. Delegates referred to related text in the climate change and biodiversity conventions. Regarding relocation to Bonn, the text was amended "so that" the Permanent Secretariat starts operating on 1 January 1999, even if it has not relocated by that date.

Following informal consultations, the OECD proposed amendments encouraging the Executive Secretary, as a matter of urgency, to negotiate an appropriate headquarters agreement with the German Government, upon such terms and conditions that are appropriate and necessary, in consultation with the Secretary-General, and to submit it to the COP-2 for adoption. Delegates agreed.

#### **PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES**

COW Chair El-Ghaouth prepared the draft decision document that sets out the COP's future work programme. The text: identifies five standing agenda items and four selected items for COP-2; decides to review the implementation of the CCD at COP-2 on the basis of statements and documents presented by delegations at COP-2; requests the Secretariat to circulate a provisional annotated agenda and appropriate documentation for COP-2 at least three months prior to that session; and recalls the COP's obligation at COP-3 to review the policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism, and on that basis, to consider and take appropriate action.

There was little substantive discussion on this subject. Decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.5 was adopted.

#### **EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE TO ITALY AND THE FAO**

The Plenary adopted, by acclamation, decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.7 and ICCD/COP(1)/L.6. They express, respectively, the appreciation of the COP to Italy and the FAO for hosting COP-1, and encourages the FAO to strengthen its current cooperation with and assistance to the CCD Secretariat.

#### **COLLABORATION WITH OTHER CONVENTIONS**

The proposal for a draft decision on collaboration with other conventions was based on draft decision (A/AC.241/L.43) submitted by the G-77 and China during the last Plenary of the resumed INCD-10. Deliberations concluded during the first week of COP-1.

The main debate centered around whether to include Switzerland's text that emphasized the role of UNEP as coordinator of the conventions, in particular referring to Chapter 38 of Agenda 21 and the January 1997 UNEP Governing Council decision 19/9 (c). Antigua and Barbuda preferred adopting language from the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) regarding the review of implementation of Agenda 21, which he noted was adopted in June 1997. They settled for the UNGASS reference.

The final decision (ICCD/COP(1)/L.8) recalls the "Programme for the further implementation of Agenda 21" adopted by UNGASS and recommends collaboration between the conventions that resulted from the Rio process and those related to sustainable development, as well

as the strengthening of UNEP's role, including developing coherent interlinkages among relevant environmental conventions in cooperation with their respective COPs or governing bodies. The decision also requests the CCD Secretariat to strengthen further collaboration with other relevant conventions, in particular on biological diversity, climate change and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

#### **PROGRAMME BUDGET**

Executive Secretary Arba Diallo presented the programme and budget for the 1998-1999 biennium (ICCD/COP(1)/3 and Add.1, ICCD/COP(1)/4 and ICCD/COP(1)/2 to the COW. He highlighted: the expected changes in funding arrangements in 1999; the uncertainties that constrain an exact estimation of the budget; possible approaches to financing a 43-member secretariat; and decisions on the financial rules that need to be taken.

To facilitate discussion, El-Ghaouth concurred with the EU on the need to compare the proposed budget with those of sister conventions on climate change and biological diversity for the same period. Agreement was reached after a six-hour informal negotiation held Wednesday evening, 8 October: a total budget of US\$6.1 million for 1999 and an additional US\$1 million for conferences services. The 1998 budget will still be provided in the same manner as during the Convention negotiation period. The Secretariat had proposed a budget of US\$15.9 million, excluding funds to the Global Mechanism, conference services, overhead, capital reserve and host Government contribution.

During the adoption of the budget in the final Plenary, protracted debate arose due to the provision of a detailed breakdown of how the proposed budget of US\$6.1 million would be allocated to the programme areas. The EU and the G-77 and China stated that, although general guidelines on the use of the US\$6.1 million were informally agreed to during the negotiations, negotiators had agreed not to provide a breakdown of the figures in the draft decision. After extensive debate, El-Ghaouth proposed an increase in the figure provided for the Global Mechanism, from US\$533,000 to US\$1 million, and a corresponding reduction of the budget for facilitation of implementation and coordination from US\$1,476,800 to US\$1,009,800.

The revision of ICCD/COP(1)/L.9 was adopted. It provides details on the manner in which disbursements and adjustments may be made, the manner in which contributions will be made and mobilized, and welcomes the General Assembly resolution that requested the UN Secretary-General to continue supporting the Secretariat until the Permanent Secretariat assumes responsibility, which should be no later than 31 December 1998.

Following this agreement, Decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.13, which noted that the expenses of the Mechanism in 1999 are missing in the proposed budget and programme (ICCD/COP(1)/5) and requested the Executive Secretary to submit budget estimates to COP-2, was withdrawn.

#### **SUPPLEMENTARY FUND AND SPECIAL FUND**

Decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.10 mandates the establishment of two Funds, the Supplementary Fund and the Special Fund, for various Convention purposes and invites contributions from Parties, non-Parties, IGOs and NGOs. PANAMA suggested revising text so as not to specify the number of NGOs to be supported. New text was added to ensure funds are used for "relevant articles of the regional implementation annexes." In addition, 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 FUNDS**

Decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.11, concerning extrabudgetary funds for the Secretariat, stipulates how the Trust and Special Voluntary Funds should be used in 1998. Executive Secretary Diallo detailed activities undertaken in several regions, reviewed CCD information dissemination and public awareness efforts and discussed the Interim Secretariat's current staffing situation. No discussion was forthcoming, but adoption of the decision was deferred pending the outcome of the



informal consultations on programme budget. Later, the decision was adopted without objection. The Decision: requests the Executive Secretary to report to COP-2 on the status of contributions to and expenditures from the Trust and Special Voluntary Funds; authorizes the Secretariat to use the Special Voluntary and Trust Funds to support participation of developing countries and NGOs, respectively, in COP-2; and requests the General Assembly to take the necessary action to enable the Secretariat to use these funds as authorized by COP and to transfer any remaining funds by 31 December 1998 to the Supplementary and Special Funds appropriately, as stipulated in financial rules paragraphs 9 and 10.

#### **RELATIONS WITH THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY**

Decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.12 welcomes the decision by the GEF Council to finance land degradation activities and invites it to report to the COP on matters relating to the issue. After informal EU consultations, the draft decision was agreed by the COW, with a minor amendment.

#### **REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION ANNEXES**

The decision regarding regional implementation annexes (ICCD/COP(1)/L.19) originated from a proposal submitted by the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC). GRULAC proposed the adoption of agreements made by the Region's Parties at their meetings and requested the Executive Secretary to provide support for the regional action programme and coordinating mechanism. Discussions in the COW centered around the possibility of other regions submitting similar decisions and the need for clarity about the decisions the Parties would be making. The EU amended the text to cover the other regional implementation annexes, to avoid a proliferation of similar draft decisions at COP-1 and 2. The proposed amendments were negotiated informally between regional groups. The agreed text 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. The final Plenary withdrew decision L.14, the GRULAC proposal originally submitted by Paraguay and adopted decision L.19, as proposed by the Chair of the COW.

#### **GLOBAL MECHANISM**

The two major issues of debate on the Global Mechanism related to its functions and hosting arrangements. During the regional consultations held Monday, 29 September, the COW decided to complete consideration of the functions before taking up the hosting and administrative aspects.

**FUNCTIONS OF THE GLOBAL MECHANISM:** There was only one outstanding issue on the functions of the Global Mechanism: whether the Mechanism should mobilize and channel its own resources or only provide guidance and advice on resources mobilized bilaterally, multilaterally and through the Conventions' programme budget, as contained in Annex I subparagraph 4 (e) of document ICCD/COP(1)/5.

The negotiations were carried out in an informal contact group co-chaired by John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) and Pierre-Marc Johnson (Canada). Delegates agreed that the Mechanism could: guide and channel resources mobilized through bilateral and multilateral sources, as requested and as appropriate, to activities, programmes and projects in the field; and use its own resources mobilized through a trust fund and/or similar arrangement for the functions stipulated in Annex A of the Convention. Japan said this agreement was reached on the understanding that contributions to a trust fund and/or similar arrangement are voluntary. This discussion concluded discussions on the functions of the Global Mechanism.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS:** Discussions on the administrative arrangements for the Global Mechanism dealt with two issues: (1) the proposed collaborative institutional arrangements between the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank, based on a proposal submitted jointly to the COP by the three

organizations (ICCD/COP(1)/CRP.1); and (2) whether IFAD or UNDP should house the Mechanism, and the modalities to do so, as contained in Appendix II and III of ICCD/COP(1)/5, ICCD/COP(5)/Add.1, Add.1/Rev.1, CRP.2 and CRP.3.

The discussions and negotiations on collaborative institutional arrangements were conducted through an informal contact group of regional representatives co-chaired by Ashe and Johnson, whose proposals were later adopted by the COW. The COP decided (ICCD/COP(1)/L.16) to: adopt CRP.1, which stipulates the collaborative agreement between the three institutions, as the initial basis for co-hosting arrangements; select IFAD as the institution to house the Mechanism and bid it to fully cooperate with the other two institutions; urges the three institutions to implement the proposals in CRP.1, establish a facilitation committee and report on the progress at COP-2; invite other relevant entities to support the activities of the Mechanism; and request IFAD to report to COP-2 on collaboration modalities between itself and the NGOs and other interested organizations, including the private sector.

The negotiations on the host institutions were carried out in regional group consultations. In some groups, however, there was no consensus in favor of either IFAD or UNDP. There was strong reluctance in all groups to take a vote on the issue because the Global Mechanism is linked to the financial rules, whose decision-making process is still unresolved. During the final Plenary, Chair El-Ghaouth proposed that IFAD house the Mechanism and UNDP appoint the Head of the Mechanism, unless 53 Parties took the floor to indicate otherwise. No objections were raised, enabling the COP to adopt decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.15 that: requests IFAD, the Secretariat, UNDP and the World Bank to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between the COP and IFAD for consideration and adoption at COP-2, paying particular attention to issues specified in the decision; further requests IFAD and the Secretariat to work out appropriate liaison arrangements; invites relevant institutions to support the activities of the Mechanism and to make voluntary contributions to ensure that the Mechanism begins operation by 1 January 1998; and reiterates the requirement to review the activities of the Global Mechanism at COP-3 and take appropriate action.

#### **REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION**

Discussion of the approach to review implementation was prompted by draft decision A/AC.241/L.42 submitted by the G-77 and China on the last day of the resumed INCD-10 session in August. It calls for the establishment of a committee to review the implementation of the Convention (CRIC). Discussions on L.42 started at COP-1 and were conducted through open-ended informal consultations.

The OECD group of countries questioned whether the Convention provided for such a committee and argued that it is premature and can only be considered, at the earliest, by COP-3. Further, the cost of such a committee could be as high as that of the COP. Given that the COP will be meeting each year until COP-3, the need for an intersessional meeting to review implementation was unnecessary. They also questioned whether the proposed approach to review implementation was the most appropriate, adding that the responsibility to review implementation was vested in the COP.

The G-77 and China said that the Convention does not rule out the possibility of establishing a committee. In fact, Articles 22 (a) and (c), 26 and 27 provided for the COP to establish institutions it deems necessary to enable it fulfill its mandate. Setting up a committee is delegating, not abdicating, responsibility. They also preferred to discuss CRIC at COP-2, at which point they could decide to transmit it to COP-3 if discussion was still considered premature.

In the final agreement (ICCD/COP(1)/L.18), the COP decided to continue to consider A/AC.241/L.42 and that COP-3 should take action as to whether there is need to establish additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist in the regular review of implementation.



## RULES OF PROCEDURE

Discussions on the Rules of Procedure, contained in documents ICCD/COP(1)/2 and Corr.1, cleared some issues that remained bracketed during the INCD, while others remain to be resolved. In Rule 6 (participation of the UN and specialized agencies), the COW agreed to refer to the "organization housing the Global Mechanism" instead of "organizations." In Rule 22 (election of officers), the COW agreed to "nine" Vice-Presidents on the Bureau that should be selected "in a manner that every geographical region shall be represented by at least two members." Concerning the third set of brackets, "in the regions referred to in the implementation annexes of the Convention," Spain, supported by Portugal and Mexico, stressed that the proposed language was not an attempt to exclude Parties, nor to reserve posts, and supported the text as it enhances the principal premise of equitable geographic distribution. The G-77 and China said the text on representation of the regions referred to in the implementation annexes should be deleted. The text remained bracketed. The African Group said the reference in Rule 22 to "equitable geographic distribution" does not necessarily mean arithmetic equality. On Rule 31 (election of officers for subsidiary bodies), delegates agreed there would be "four" Vice-Chairs for subsidiary bodies. Brackets remain around "regions referred to in the implementation annexes of the Convention." On Rule 47 (majority required), the UK, supported by the US, preferred consensus instead of a two-thirds majority vote for decisions taken under Article 21 of the Convention (financial mechanisms). The G-77 and China supported the reference to two-thirds majority. The COW Chair proposed removing the brackets around the entire Rule, except the references to "a two-thirds majority vote of the parties present and voting" and "except for decisions taken under Article 21 of the Convention which shall be agreed upon by consensus."

During a second consideration of the bracketed language in Rules 22 and 31, 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 Annexes of the Convention..." The African Group and GRULAC 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. They could not accept the deletion of "also but not limited to." The EU preferred the original text. JUSCANNZ said negotiations were back to where they started two years ago.

The bracketed language in Rules 22, 31 and 47 was transmitted to COP-2 for further consultation. The Chair noted a need for informal consultations in the interim period before COP-2.

## COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) was originally scheduled to hold its first meeting on Tuesday, 30 September, and Wednesday, 1 October, but was postponed due to the inability of the COP to elect a Bureau, including a CST Chair. The CST met Thursday and Friday, 2 - 3 October, and concluded its work successfully. Ricardo Sanchez-Sosa (Cuba) was elected Chair. Salah Tahoun (Egypt), Sung Honglie (China) and Linda Brown (UK) were elected Vice-Chairs. Tahoun also served as Rapporteur. The COW passed all the CST decisions along to the Plenary, where they were adopted, as contained in documents ICCD/COP(1)/L.1 and Add.1.

## TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

Decision I in ICCD/COP(1)/L.1 notes the importance attached by Parties and observers to further the work on the use of traditional knowledge and on links between such knowledge and modern technology, and establishes the procedure through which this work should take place in the coming year. Deliberations were based on document ICCD/COP(1)/CST/5.

An informal meeting focused on this issue on Wednesday, 1 October, because the CST Chair had not yet been elected and the CST could not officially start. Sweden reported that participants at the

informal meeting asked how localized experience could be transferred within countries and between regions and continents. They proposed involving NGOs in the process, developing an *ad hoc* panel on local knowledge and developing research appropriate for application at the local level. During discussion in the CST, the African Group supported document ICCD/COP(1)/CST/5, especially the suggested inventory of traditional knowledge. Many delegates supported the UK's suggestion that each CST meeting select one topic for in-depth consideration and that the issue of the interface between traditional and modern knowledge be the theme for next year. Delegates suggested that the CST hear statements from each region and receive preparatory materials. Morocco suggested that each country should discuss the issue, after which regional seminars could prepare the presentations for CST-2. The Chair highlighted the bottom-up approach of Morocco's proposal and suggested that donations be encouraged to host an international symposium.

The COP adopted the CST decision encouraging Parties and observers to collate information on traditional knowledge, including how it might be linked to modern technology. It requests the Secretariat to prepare a synthesis of the reports. The CST is to allocate one day to review the report, discuss the topic and reach conclusions and recommendations. Parties and observers are invited to make contributions on a subregional or regional basis during CST-2.

## CST WORK PROGRAMME

The CST work programme, as contained in Decision II of ICCD/COP(1)/L.1, decides that each CST session should address a priority issue in depth and that the priority issue for CST-2 will be traditional knowledge. CST-2 will also consider other topics on the agenda of CST-1. Parties are invited to submit proposals no later than 31 December 1997 on additional topics. During the brief discussion on this decision, the Netherlands proposed including a consideration of National Action Programmes.

## ROSTER OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS

The proposed roster of independent experts (ICCD/COP(1)/6 and Add.1) contained 584 nominated experts. Many delegates wanted an open-ended roster that is updated regularly. Others suggested: increased representation of social scientists, women, NGOs and all regions; inclusion of representatives from regional and subregional organizations; and putting the roster on the Internet. Some countries were concerned because their nominees were not included on the list. The Secretariat said it could not include nominations unless received through diplomatic channels. Finally, a number of agencies announced their willingness to contribute their expertise and ongoing desertification activities to the CST.

Decision III of ICCD/COP(1)/L.1 requests Parties to supplement their submissions to the Secretariat to ensure that under-represented areas are addressed by: making the roster more gender balanced; ensuring better representation of anthropology, sociology, health sciences, legislation, microbiology and trade; and increasing NGO and IGO representation. The decision also requests the Secretariat to make the roster available annually on paper through the regular channels of the UN system, and in electronic format.

## OTHER BODIES PERFORMING WORK SIMILAR TO THE CST

During consideration of document ICCD/COP(1)/CST/4, which was based on 15 replies from INCD members, a number of countries and regional and subregional desertification bodies proposed changes or additions to the list of international, regional, subregional and non-governmental organizations. The UK proposed that the Secretariat should produce a consolidated document for the next CST meeting. The Chair proposed making the information available on the Internet.

Decision IV of ICCD/COP(1)/L.1 invites governments to supplement the list of organizations by 31 December 1997. It requests the Secretariat to: consolidate information in documents A/AC.241/67 and ICCD/COP(1)/4; report to COP-2 with a consolidated report; and make the information available in electronic form, as well as through the UN system's channels.



## BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS

Decision V of ICCD/COP(1)/L.1 establishes the process through which the informal examination of benchmarks and indicators relevant to the CCD should continue during the next year. The CST discussion was based on documents ICCD/COP(1)/CST/3 and Add.1. The Secretariat introduced these documents and noted the recommendation for the establishment of an *ad hoc* panel. Cuba and France, among others, supported an *ad hoc* panel, which would be financed by the Secretariat. The UK and Germany preferred the self-financed open-ended consultative process, which has carried out the work so far. The UK suggested that the matrix of implementation indicators in document A/AC.241/Inf.4 be tested in the field and that the methodology for identifying impact indicators in document ICCD/COP(1)/CST/3/Add.1 may be too ambitious. Sweden proposed that five members from the roster be added to the open-ended consultative group. The following day, a five-member *ad hoc* panel was considered as part of a draft decision. The UK, Brazil and others preferred five members. Nigeria and others suggested ten. Delegates agreed to ten members, all of whom should be nominated in accordance with the established rules for *ad hoc* panels. Three were to be from Africa, one from Eastern Europe and two each from other regions. The regional groups submitted names of their proposed experts on Thursday, 9 October. Africa and WEOG submitted three names each. GRULAC submitted two names. The Eastern European Region had no names on the roster from which experts were to be selected. Asia had not completed its negotiations. Following informal consultations, it was agreed to have two representatives each from Asia and Latin America and three each from Africa and WEOG. WEOG would occupy the empty Eastern European seat, which would revert back to Eastern Europe at the next COP. An expert from Asia (China) will serve as coordinator. The names, gender and discipline of each expert was distributed at the closing Plenary: two are female.

The final decision requests governments to initiate testing of the implementation indicators and to report on their utility and practicality in their national reports to COP-3. It appoints the *ad hoc* panel to act as a steering committee to oversee the continuation of the informal process. It also requests the Interim Secretariat to continue the informal process of reviewing the methodology for impact indicators contained in ICCD/COP(1)/CST/3/Add.1. Spain submitted a reservation on the procedures for the establishment of the *ad hoc* panel, for reasons related to ongoing discussions on the representation of regional implementation annex countries in the Bureau and subsidiary bodies.

## SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF EXISTING NETWORKS

Documents ICCD/COP(1)/CST/2 and Add.1 contain seven organizations' proposals to undertake a survey of existing networks. The UNEP proposal, on behalf of itself and a consortium of members, was supported by several delegations. The Chair suggested that UNEP's proposal be accepted with the provision that UNEP would submit an addendum on the organizations to be consulted.

As a result of this discussion, a resolution was drafted recommending that the COP approve the UNEP proposal. The terms of reference included: a proposed amount of US\$414,000 plus 13 percent for programme support costs; the participation of other organizations and that the additional cost for such participation should not exceed 25 percent of the total estimated cost; and that governments, regional economic integration organizations and other interested organizations should contribute to the Trust Fund. This proposal attracted protracted debate. Potential funding countries did not support references to 13 and 25 percent in the UNEP proposal. The Secretariat explained that 13 percent was a standard cost on all contributions and that 25 percent was added to cover the additional costs of including other consortium members. UNEP said extra costs for some of the members in the consortium were included in the US\$414,000. Delegates decided to delete reference to 25 percent and include a reference to the possibility of funding by the Global Environment Facility.

Decision VI of ICCD/COP(1)/L.1 approves the proposal of UNEP, as contained in ICCD/COP(1)/CS/2/Add.1, for the amount proposed, plus 13 percent programme support costs, requests UNEP to include

the participation of other organizations and requests Parties, Signatories to the Convention and interested organizations, including the Global Environment Facility, to contribute to the Trust Fund.

## ADOPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS AND OTHER DECISIONS

Through Decisions VII and VIII, as contained in documents ICCD/COP(1)/L.1/Add.1, the CST recommended that the COP adopt the procedures for the establishment of *ad hoc* panels and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of a roster of independent experts, respectively. These procedures were recommended by the INCD, as contained in ICCD/COP(1)/2, sections II.F.2 and 3, respectively. Spain submitted a reservation on the procedures for the establishment of *ad hoc* panels for the same reasons as its reservation on Decision V.

## NGO FORUM

The Plenary Hall was transformed into an NGO Forum on Monday, 6 October. One wall held colorful displays detailing activities undertaken by several organizations. Presentations were organized around four themes: women, desertification, drought and poverty; local experiences and traditional knowledge; partnership building; and building communication.

**WOMEN, DESERTIFICATION, DROUGHT AND POVERTY:** The discussion on women, desertification, drought and poverty focused on three themes: the role of women in controlling natural resources; women's struggle to prevent desertification; and how the CCD addresses women's role in combating desertification. The International NGO Network on Desertification (RIOD) Working Group on Women and Desertification suggested strengthening the role of women by: raising awareness with simple documents translated into local languages; holding workshops on grassroots women's perspectives; networking and building strategic coalitions; and enabling women to access resources through national desertification funds.

**LOCAL EXPERIENCES AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE:** Speakers on the topic of local experiences and traditional knowledge stressed the need to shift from a top-down model to a knowledge system that incorporates traditional knowledge. Several examples of traditional knowledge practices were noted, and participants stressed the need to develop, promote and disseminate local knowledge.

**PARTNERSHIP BUILDING:** The workshop on partnership building considered NGO participation in the INCD process, through regional and subregional activities, and in the preparation of national action programmes. Lessons learned include the importance of mutual respect between NGOs and governments and the need for their participation as equal partners. Constraints for implementation of NAPs include poor communication at the subregional level, insufficient capacity to control pests, inadequate legislation, low priority to pastoral concerns, civil strife and inappropriate technologies.

**BUILDING COMMUNICATION:** Speakers in the workshop on building communication noted that participatory implementation requires good communication of the problem and the solution. The workshop concluded with a skit that portrayed a meeting between donors and community leaders. It demonstrated that ideas of participation vary in different communities. These differences, combined with language differences, alien ways of problem analysis and the short time periods in which evaluations take place, can lead to miscommunication and misunderstanding.

## CLOSING PLENARY

Delegates adopted the draft decisions submitted by the COW during a closing Plenary meeting on the afternoon of Friday, 10 October. Salah Tahoun (Egypt), as Rapporteur for the CST and on behalf of its Chair, presented the draft decisions that the COW had adopted on the basis of the CST's recommendations. The eight draft decisions contained in ICCD/COP(1)/L.1 and Add.1 were adopted without comment.



COW Chair Mahmoud Ould El-Ghaouth (Mauritania) presented the draft decisions negotiated in that body. He asked delegates not to reopen issues and said that those who thought work could have been done differently would have an opportunity to reorient the work at future COPs.

In ICCD/COP(1)/L.2 (date and venue of COP-2), the Chair said the blank spaces in the draft should indicate that the session would be held in Dakar, Senegal, from 24 August to 4 September 1998. Senegal suggested holding the meeting in December because the logistical arrangements would be better. The Chair suggested that the draft be adopted as indicated, with the understanding that the COP President, Secretariat, Senegalese Government and UN conference services could possibly revise the dates. Delegates agreed.

Delegates adopted decisions ICCD/COP(1)/L.3/Rev.1, L.4 and L.5, regarding interim arrangements, physical location of the Secretariat and programme of work, respectively, as amended by the COW. They also adopted decisions ICCD/COP(1)/L.6 and L.7, regarding expressions of appreciation to the FAO and the Government and people of Italy, and decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.8 (collaboration with other Conventions).

On decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.9 (budget and programme for 1999), which was revised by an unnumbered, English-only paper, the Netherlands and the G-77 and China said the informally negotiated agreement was to leave the costs for the programme areas unspecified and retain the total budget figure of US\$6.1 million. They proposed deleting the allocation figures for the programme areas, as contained in the unnumbered paper. The Chair said there was agreement to not micro-manage the Secretariat. The Netherlands emphasized that he was not changing the negotiated agreement. The Chair said the CCD would be without a budget if the figures were deleted. Antigua and Barbuda objected to deleting the figures. Grenada suggested that, if there was an objection to a particular dollar amount for a programme area, changes could be proposed. Following a short suspension of consideration of L.9 and consideration of the remaining decisions, the G-77 and China proposed deleting the programme area figures but including a footnote indicating that, during negotiations, it was agreed to distribute US\$1 million for conference services, US\$1.5 million for the Global Mechanism, 13 percent for overhead and 8.3 percent for capital reserve. The Executive Secretary said he sat in the negotiations and did not think this was the understanding. On a point of order, the Netherlands said it was not appropriate for the Executive Secretary to offer his opinion of the G-77 and China's proposal. A fortuitous blackout of the Plenary Hall provided time for informal consultations. Following restoration of the lights, the Chair said the implications of the footnote would be a budget of US\$2 million for the Secretariat. He suggested raising the Global Mechanism figure from US\$533,000 to US\$1 million and reducing the figure for facilitation of implementation and coordination from US\$1.476 million to US\$1,009,800. Delegates agreed.

Decisions L.10 (Supplementary Fund and Special Fund) and L.12 (relations with the Global Environment Facility), were adopted with minor amendments. Decisions L.11 (extrabudgetary funding for the Secretariat for 1998) and L.20 (inclusion of activities of NGOs within the official programme of work) were adopted without amendments. Decision L.13 (budget estimates for the operating expenses of the Global Mechanism) was withdrawn, in light of decision L.9. Decision L.19 (that notes the Latin America and Caribbean Regional Action Programme) was adopted and, consequently, Decision L.14 (activities related to the regional implementation of the CCD in Latin American and Caribbean countries) was withdrawn.

Decision L.16 (collaborative institutional arrangements in support of the Global Mechanism) was adopted without amendments. Decision L.18 (review of the implementation of the CCD) decides to transmit decision A/AC.241/L.42 (establishment of a "Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention", CRIC) to the conference documentation for COP-2. It was adopted.

It was agreed that bracketed language in Rules 22, 31 and 47 in ICCD/COP(1)/2, regarding the representation of regions and affected country Parties and voting procedures, would be transmitted to COP-2

for further consideration. A list of 10 experts who are to constitute the *ad hoc* panel on benchmarks and indicators, as recommended by the CST, was adopted.

The COW adopted three decisions recommended by the INCD, as contained in ICCD/COP(1)/2 (II. C, D and E): financial rules of the COP, its subsidiary bodies and the permanent secretariat; designation of a permanent secretariat and arrangements for its functioning; administrative and support arrangements; and procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation.

Decision L.15 was adopted with the amendment that IFAD would be the organization housing the Global Mechanism and that UNDP would appoint the head for the Mechanism, to be located in Rome. COW Chair El-Ghaouth said negotiations on this issue had been long and noted the deplorable attitude of certain international civil servants in the election process. Following adoption of the decision, WEOG explained that his Group's decision to support the developing countries' choice of IFAD had been guided by three elements in the CCD -- the bottom-up approach, true partnership, and empowerment.

Delegates adopted the INCD's recommendations regarding credentials, as contained in ICCD/COP(1)/10.

A statement from the COP President regarding the Central and Eastern European region was read. It noted that Group's interest in establishing an annex for that region and said the President understood this interest to be an indication of their firm resolve to complete the CCD ratification process. It also said that consultations on such an annex should be taken at an appropriate time and would be facilitated by those countries' early accession to the CCD. Russia thanked participants for their constructive approach and understanding in the process of consultations with a view to establishing a new annex for Central and Eastern Europe.

Rapporteur Jabbari introduced the report of the COP, ICCD/COP(1)/L.17, which was adopted without comment.

The G-77 and China commended President Dini, Executive Secretary Diallo, the Secretariat, Italy and the FAO for their efforts, as well as the EU and others for their financial and technical support. He welcomed the decision to host COP-2 in Dakar, Senegal, and the decision to select IFAD as host of the Global Mechanism. He appealed to all Parties to fulfill their obligations.

The EU thanked the G-77 and China for their cooperation during the Conference, hoped the Global Mechanism would be effective, and appealed to delegates to assist those directly affected by desertification, not solely through workshops and conferences, but by creating an enabling environment. The US said the ratification instrument is in Congress, however, the budget and the manner in which the Secretariat and Parties implement the Convention, particularly the Global Mechanism, will affect ratification. Senegal thanked the Government of Italy and the FAO for the excellent way in which the COP was organized and hoped that COP-2 will also be successful.

Executive Secretary Diallo thanked Canada, Germany and Spain for their interest in hosting the Permanent Secretariat, and said the Secretariat looks forward to relocating to Bonn. He called for close cooperation between the CCD, FCCC and CBD, congratulated IFAD, which will house the Global Mechanism, and thanked IFAD, UNDP and the World Bank for their efforts. He also thanked the NGOs for hosting the NGO Forum and their presentation to the Plenary.

IFAD thanked the COP for the consensus it reached to choose it to house the Global Mechanism, while collaborating with UNDP and the World Bank. UNDP said COP-1 was a good opportunity to exchange views and that it looked forward to turning the Global Mechanism into a useful instrument.

INCD Chair Bo Kjellén said that, while the COP should be satisfied with the results of their endeavors, if the CCD fails to have a daily impact on the people of the drylands, the job is not complete. A representative of the NGO community thanked the COP for adopting ICCD/COP(1)/L.20, to include activities of NGOs within the official programme of work. He said that, despite the small turnout by delegates at the NGO Forum, the truly enabling environment at COP-1 made it possible for NGOs to express their views regarding the implementation of the CCD.



The COP President concluded by commenting that a spirit of good will, openness and dialogue had been present at COP-1. He thanked delegates for their achievements, encouraged them to maintain their constructive spirit, and gavelled COP-1 to a close at 7:00 pm.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF COP-1

Participants arrived at COP-1 with fairly realistic expectations and, despite evident, recurring tensions between the regions, were generally pleased with its results. Since the agenda focused on the organizational aspects of the Convention, the substance will only catch up with the rhetoric at COP-2. Nevertheless, some key discussions and decisions, including the Bureau election, the meeting of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Global Mechanism debate highlighted key expectations of delegates and will serve as the framework for matters to be considered at future COPs.

### ACCOMPLISHMENTS

**FROM POLITICS TO PRACTICE:** Many participants described the First Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Combat Desertification (COP-1) as a milestone. Finally, some delegates sighed, the process of combatting desertification has reached its most important phase: implementation. Despite useful interim activities such as the urgent action for Africa, governments have focused on the negotiations and their national ratification processes. Now that the CCD has entered into force and an "infrastructure" for the implementation phase has been established at COP-1, no obstacles remain to prevent countries from carrying out real action in the field.

**CST OFF TO A GOOD START:** Delegates to the CST were frustrated by the postponement of their meeting for two days due to the problems with the election of the Bureau and the manner in which the CST Chair was chosen. Some said the election process for the CST Chair was anything but transparent. For instance, delegates were not provided with the candidate's CV when requested. Some also hinted that there was not adequate consultation with other regional groups on the decision. Tension eased when the first two-day meeting of the CST finally started. Delegates were, in fact, pleasantly surprised by the outcome and were content with how speedily the CST had been guided through its agenda.

Despite this generally positive impression, some felt that the Committee had failed to make itself a unique institution and to determine the kind of work it should carry out based on that uniqueness. They expressed a fear that the CST may in the future be dominated by politically oriented members and never get down to "scientific business," as has been the case with the Convention on Biological Diversity's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice, whose meetings initially turned into mini-COPs where political considerations were prioritized over substantive scientific issues. Some questioned the wisdom of running the CST and COP meetings concurrently and the approach to government-endorsed nomination of experts. Since CST meetings will only take place once a year, it could take several years before the real impacts of these INCD provisions are determined.

**NGO PARTICIPATION:** Delegates and NGOs alike hailed the COP-1 breakthrough that found, for the first time ever, a Plenary meeting dedicated to NGO dialogue. The afternoon Plenary of Thursday, 9 October, was organized by the NGO community and was co-chaired by COW Chair Mahmoud Ould El-Ghaouth (Mauritania) and NGO Edit Tuboly (Netherlands) of BothEnds.

Many of the delegates and observers who participated said it was a useful forum and that it sets a precedent for incorporating practitioners into intergovernmental processes. It enabled governments and NGOs to define concepts such as partnerships and to jointly define what they would like to achieve. This forum could mark the beginning of a process that actively embraces the ideas of other interest groups as an integral part of intergovernmental negotiations. While COP-1 decided that the arrangement should continue in the future, some noted the need for caution as the precedent whereby government initiatives to realize justice on behalf of the international community could be undermined by interest and lobby groups with conflicting goals.

### PROCEDURAL ASPECTS

"Bonn! C'est bon!" delegates exclaimed as the result of the vote on the location of the Permanent Secretariat was announced on Friday, 3 October. Reasons for Bonn's victory were believed to be its financially generous offer, long-standing cooperation between Germany and some African countries, and proximity to the Climate Change Convention Secretariat.

The election of Bonn demonstrated broad support for the German city and many delegates complemented those responsible for the smooth selection process. Participants also believed that the negotiation process on other difficult issues, such as the informal consultations on the programme and budget and some aspects of the Global Mechanism, enabled tough issues to be dealt with in a manner that did not dampen the Spirit of Rio.

By contrast, the selection process for the host of the Global Mechanism frustrated and even infuriated delegates. There was no clear consensus within or between regional groups. A minority thought this impasse should be resolved through a vote, but this was ruled out because the Global Mechanism is linked to the financial rules, for which the decision-making process is still not agreed and, by default, must be made through consensus. Some thought the decision of the African Group should guide the selection, but that Group also did not agree on one institution, despite having voted by secret ballot. Ironically, delegates had labored to develop criteria for selecting the institution, but in the end these were completely disregarded. Although some delegates suggested that UNDP met the criteria, there seemed to be no consensus in any of the regional groups. Furthermore, some delegates were upset by the lobbying of the bidding institutions, which have been established to service the governments. In the face of no consensus after drawn out regional consultations that had caused the suspension of several formal sessions of the COW, during the final Plenary COW Chair El-Ghaouth proposed that he indicate one institution, and if 53 States Parties spoke against it, the proposal would not stand. This suggestion amounted to voting by another name. The Chair's proposal of IFAD to host the Mechanism and UNDP to select the Mechanism's head came as a surprise to the majority in the closing Plenary, including the institutions themselves. While some delegates seemed content with IFAD as the host, others noted that, although the negotiated criteria to determine the host institution were thorough, the blatant disregard for these criteria does not augur well for the host institution, in particular its ability to garner the support needed to enable it to become the lead Mechanism to mobilize resources for the Convention. At the end of COP-1, two delegates tellingly commented: "what goes around, comes around" and "it is not over yet!"

### TENSIONS AND CHALLENGES

**PARTICULARITY VERSUS UNIVERSALITY:** The tensions that kept surfacing at critical stages of the INCD negotiations between and within regional groups, continued to appear at COP-1. At issue is the CCD's emphasis of the particularity of Africa, which the region has used to get exceptional treatment. The crises in selecting the Bureau and representatives to the *ad hoc* panel of the CST, determining the number of presentations at the COP-2 CST meetings, and electing the organization to host the Global Mechanism all manifested this tension. Africa wanted three seats on the Bureau and the *ad hoc* panel to the other region's two seats and two presentations at the CST-2's consideration of traditional knowledge to the other region's one presentation. The other regions chose to go by the G-77 and China's preference for the Global Mechanism host, which they expected would be determined by Africa's choice. Each of these debates created crises that manifested this tension. These difficulties were foreseen by INCD Chair Bo Kjellén, who repeatedly, but unsuccessfully, pushed for the selection of the Bureau members at the resumed session of INCD-10.

Solutions were found at COP-1 regarding the Bureau and composition of the *ad hoc* panels thanks to the fact that only one Eastern European State had ratified the CCD and no names from the region had been submitted to the roster of experts. This resulted in a "vacant" Eastern European seat, which many regional groups were eager to fill. However, the matter promises to recur at COP-2 and possibly assume greater proportions if a second ratification is forthcoming from Eastern



Europe. While certain delegates stated that the composition did not establish a precedent for the future, they went on to announce that the number of seats they had obtained should be the same next year. Some even began jockeying for the position of CST-2 Chair. Before a solution was found at COP-1, some delegates had suggested creating an *ex officio* position of the COW Chair on the Bureau to provide Africa with the third seat. However, this option was ruled out for COP-2 because it is against standard procedures for a region to hold both the Presidency and COW Chair. Some delegates warned that providing exceptions creates precedents for others to argue for exceptional status on other issues.

#### **EQUALITY BETWEEN THE SISTER CONVENTIONS:**

Since the CCD negotiations began, developing countries have stressed that the Convention must be equal to its sister conventions on climate change (FCCC) and biological diversity (CBD). At every obstacle, precedents from FCCC negotiations, in particular, have been invoked. Despite these professions of equality, divergent views were expressed about the relationship between the three Conventions.

Some considered the CCD the superior of the three. The CCD is very innovative, more participatory and deals with the two fundamental concerns of humankind: survival and freedom. It is a grassroots Convention. Implemented as negotiated, it can amass great political momentum to address the long-standing problem of land that pervades every form of human conflict. Its importance is manifested in the number of ratifications by COP-1, twice as many as the other two conventions. The Convention is as much about democratization and good governance as it is about development and combatting poverty.

Other delegates, however, commented that although the Convention is headed in the right direction, it is not yet on par with the FCCC, with which it now has similar institutional arrangements. First, the Global Mechanism must have moral and financial authority to mobilize the required resources to implement the CCD. Second, Africa must relinquish the desire to have a global yet African Convention. Pressing for particularity undermines the CCD's ability to enjoy the same status as the FCCC and CBD. But here again, the FCCC is invoked: pressing for particularity is no different from the exceptional status enjoyed by the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS) within the FCCC. Still, the biggest concern is that three important powers, Japan, Russia and the United States, have yet to ratify the Convention, thus making it truly global.

**WOMEN AND DESERTIFICATION:** The role of women in preventing dryland degradation has been stressed over and over again by ministers and delegates during the negotiation process. That the women farmers should be the greatest beneficiaries of the CCD has been stressed at countless workshops, throughout the INCD process and even at COP-1. However, the fact that only two women were selected to serve in official capacities, as Vice President in the Bureau and Vice-Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology, and only two of the 10 members of the CST *ad hoc* panel on indicators are women, suggests that it is only politically correct rhetoric. In fact, during the negotiations on the establishment of the roster of experts, two delegates implied that if more women were to be included in order to observe the recommended gender balance, the quality of expertise in the roster would decline. To translate the intentions into action, regional and women's groups, in particular from developing countries, must take deliberate steps to identify and include qualified women, especially in the work of the CST.

**COORDINATION AND COOPERATION:** Participation and coordination are the two issues most cited by field practitioners and Convention negotiators as critical elements to effect change on the ground. But several delegates began expressing apprehension that the problem of coordination is far from resolved. The Secretariat's proposed budget perplexed many. Some felt the proposed sum for implementation would make the Secretariat yet another implementing agency, amidst the myriad of specialized intergovernmental agencies already involved in dryland issues, and result in the inefficient use of resources. Unlike the FCCC and CBD, the Secretariat will be involved in some field implementation. The decision that specified the amount of funds that the Secretariat would allocate to the Mechanism was a relief as a lack of specification was considered to be a potential area of conflict between

the two institutions. The host institution would have had to negotiate with the Secretariat the contribution it would receive from the programme budget. The Secretariat had proposed close to US\$500,000 but the Plenary increased the amount to US\$1 million. Many delegates stressed the need to discuss the types of activities the Secretariat should undertake and not leave the Secretariat to negotiate with other intergovernmental agencies also working on dryland issues.

#### **CONCLUSION**

There was broad agreement by those at COP-1 that although process issues are crucial, the shelf life of the Convention is of greater importance. The credibility of the Convention hinges on the process used to develop the national action programmes. The ability to develop credible national action programmes and mobilize resources in both developed and developing countries depends on the political will and support accorded the national action programme process and desertification as an issue. These are policy issues that must be addressed at the country level, and for which affected developing countries, in particular those in Africa, must lead the way.

Considering the skepticism expressed in Rio at the idea of a global desertification convention, the progress made thus far bodes well for the future. One hundred thirteen countries have ratified the Convention and more are expected. A large number of developing countries participated in the INCD process. New ground has been broken in NGO participation in intergovernmental negotiations. All of these achievements demonstrate a political will that was lacking two decades ago following the adoption of the 1977 Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The CCD is a major accomplishment for Africa and for the world, but the real success will be determined by whether it changes the lives of those living in the drylands.

### **THINGS TO LOOK FOR**

**EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP:** A Ministerial Conference on the Environment will consider environmental aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership in Helsinki, Finland, on 28 November 1997. The first preparatory meeting was held on 23 - 24 September. The second preparatory meeting is to be held in Brussels on 3 - 4 November. A high-level meeting is planned for 25 - 27 November in Helsinki to prepare the Ministerial Declaration. For more information, contact: Leena Kapjalainen-Balk or Satu Nurmi, Finnish Ministry of the Environment; tel: +358-9-19919443; fax: +358-9-19919453.

**INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM FOR ARID LAND CROPS (IPALAC):** The IPALAC 1998 Calendar of Events include: a course on Propagation of Woody Species in Kenya in February 1998; a course in French on Date Palm Cultivation in Israel in June 1998; a workshop on *Zizyphus mauritiana* in Zimbabwe in June 1998; a course on Rainfed Farming Systems in Semi Arid Regions in Rajasthan, India, in September 1998; a symposium: "Silk - An Economic Opportunity for Semi-Arid Africa" in Dakar, Senegal, in October 1998; and an international conference: "Plant-Based Solutions for Combating Desertification" in Beer Sheva, Israel, from 2-5 November 1998. Contact: Mr. Arnie Schlissel, Administrative Coordinator, International Program for Arid Land Crops, c/o Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, P.O.B. 653, Beer Sheva, Israel 84105; tel: +972 7 646 1905, 646 1972; fax: +972 7 647 2984; e-mail: ipalac@bgumail.bgu.ac.il.

**SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES:** COP-2 will be held in Dakar, Senegal. The suggested dates are from 24 August to 4 September, but are subject to change. 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@unccd.ch.