



CCD COP-2 HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 7 DECEMBER 1998

Delegates to CCD COP-2 met in Plenary during the morning to hear statements and consider the CST draft decisions. During the afternoon, an informal meeting of the COW established two non-groups to informally consider draft decisions. Participants also attended an all-day Interparliamentary Round Table discussion.

PLENARY

Vice-President Ali Saad Altokhais (Saudi Arabia) opened the Plenary and introduced the morning's speakers. JAPAN noted that, based on a recent decision by the Japanese Diet, Japan will become a Party to the CCD on 10 December 1998. He outlined Japanese cooperation on desertification and related issues, including the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which met in October and cited solutions to environmental problems as a cross-cutting theme for the advancement of development. He stressed the importance of effective and efficient use of limited resources. The WORLD BANK highlighted efforts on land degradation and management, noting that desertification must be tackled from a development as well as an environment perspective. He said internal procedures ensure that environmental and social concerns are represented in its activities. He complemented IFAD for its role in promoting the Global Mechanism, noted collaborative efforts as an implementing agency of the GEF and said the FCCC might make soil projects eligible as Clean Development Mechanism projects.

An NGO representative spoke on behalf of participants of the 12th Session of the Global Biodiversity Forum, which met from 5-6 December 1998 in Dakar. The Forum was attended by over 160 participants representing research, education and resource management institutions, the private sector, government, NGOs and local communities. The meeting consisted of four workshops on financial innovations, linking biodiversity and desertification, climate change and desertification and traditional knowledge.

The Forum recommended that the CCD COP: help Parties to minimize costs and therefore reduce pressures on existing sources of finances in collaboration with other convention processes; support the participation of indigenous and local communities in the CCD's meetings and discussions; encourage the GEF to fund CCD implementation; facilitate dialogue between the subsidiary bodies of the three Rio Conventions on scientific and technological inter-linkages; establish synergies between biodiversity and desertification-related conventions; and develop collaborative linkages related to traditional knowledge with the CBD's newly formed

open-ended working group on traditional knowledge, taking into account intellectual property rights protection. Recommendations were also made to national governments and other agencies to: explore innovative financing sources to facilitate implementation of the CCD at the local community, national and regional levels; develop mechanisms for local and indigenous communities to participate in decision-making processes; and increase their access to financial assistance.

CST DECISIONS: CST Chair Jabbari introduced the CST's draft decisions (ICCD/COP(2)/L.1-4, L.4/Rev.1 and CRP.3). Delegates adopted the following decisions as amended by CRP.3: Roster of Independent Experts (L.1), Other Bodies Performing Work Similar to that Envisaged for the CST (L.1), Survey and Evaluation of Existing Networks, Institutions, Agencies and Bodies (L.1), and Benchmarks and Indicators (L.2). ALGERIA questioned whether it is appropriate for Parties to do work on benchmarks and indicators, which he said was the Secretariat's job.

To the decision on the CST's Work Programme, the EU proposed adding "water and soil management" as a topic for CST-3 and indicating that the intersessional bureau meeting should be held "within existing resources." SWITZERLAND proposed a new paragraph calling upon parties to submit contributions on their own experience with early-warning systems no later than 31 March 1999 to facilitate discussion at CST-3. The CST Chair pointed out that the second EU and the Swiss proposals were not raised during CST discussions. The Chair requested delegates to confer informally and deferred adoption until later. Consideration of the decision on traditional knowledge (L.4/Rev.1) was postponed pending preparation of a second revised text.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW met informally during the afternoon. Six draft decisions prepared by the G-77/China were distributed to delegates. Delegates discussed whether they were prepared for a first reading of the decisions. A number of speakers highlighted the limited time before the close of COP-2 and their desire to avoid night sessions, and proposed that discussions begin immediately. Among the reasons presented by those who did not want to conduct a first reading were their availability in English only, the need to review the drafts and the fact that others were preparing draft decisions that should be considered at the same time. The Secretariat said the six G-77/China drafts plus three others would be available on Tuesday in all UN languages. Others were encouraged to informally circulate their drafts.

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The Chair proposed establishing three non-groups to meet on an informal basis guided by non-chairs. They would consider draft decisions and non-papers that the regional and interest groups are circulating. The non-titles for the non-groups would be legal, implementation and institutional arrangements. The legal group's non-chair would be David Johansson (Finland) and would address questions of institutional arrangements with the Secretariat, the headquarters agreement with Germany, annexes on arbitration and conciliation, the MOU with IFAD on the GM, and outstanding rules of procedure. The implementation group's non-chair would be Harold Acemah (Uganda) and would consider the programme of work for COP-3, procedures for communication of information, the medium-term strategy and the GM. The institutional arrangements group would be chaired by Therese Adam (Switzerland) and consider the regional implementation annexes, collaboration with other conventions and the review of implementation.

Some delegates noted that a small group already exists to consider the budget, bringing the total of small groups to four, and proposed assigning the institutional arrangements non-group's issues to the other two non-groups. The legal group was thus tentatively assigned the review of implementation and collaboration with other conventions and the implementation group acquired the regional implementation annexes subject. The Chair said the issues are not set in stone.

INTERPARLIAMENTARY ROUND TABLE

Thirty-six parliamentarians from 22 countries, two IOs and one NGO participated in morning and afternoon sessions of a Parliamentary Round Table at the invitation of the CCD Secretariat, the National Assembly of Senegal and the Inter-Parliamentary Union to discuss the process of implementation of the Convention and to issue a draft declaration for COP-2. Cheikh Abdoul Kadre Cissokho, President of the National Assembly of Senegal, chaired the Round Table discussion. Tana de Zulueta (Italy), Ohki Hiroshi (Japan), Hugo Andres Araujo de la Torre (Mexico) and Grant Chapman (Australia) served as Vice-Presidents and Jean Ziegler (Switzerland) served as Rapporteur. Executive Secretary Diallo said he hoped the discussion would provide insight to the contribution parliamentarians could make to the Convention's implementation and their view of the role of legislators in heightening awareness. One participant said parliamentarians should also correct misinformation.

Parliamentarians noted the link between desertification and the fight against poverty and other socio-economic concerns, as well as the link between land degradation and long-term sustainable development. Another noted that the CCD is closely related to the other two Rio Conventions and called for their equal treatment.

Parliamentarians called for a sound overarching policy to yield multiple benefits at national level. They also stressed the need for greater public awareness of the desertification phenomenon at all levels. Additional information, including the incorporation of traditional wisdom into modern knowledge about desertification, was stressed. Others said parliamentarians should educate themselves on the issue so they may become more active in implementation. Many urged the elaboration and implementation of NAPs, RAPs and SRAPs.

One said that solving desertification problems requires capacity building at all levels. Several participants said a structure for reliable funding needed to be established at the national and multilateral level as well as a reorientation of resources toward institutions that combat desertification. One called for cooperation between northern and southern parliamentarians to narrow the gap between the rich minority and the poor majority, and exclaimed that "it is

freedom that oppresses and law that liberates!" Several called for debt swapping strategies, particularly for least developed countries, as a financial alternative for implementing environmental management plans.

Others urged countries, particularly donor countries, to ratify the Convention. One parliamentarian said that for the CCD to be truly global in nature a fifth annex should be elaborated to take into consideration Parties of Central and Eastern Europe. Several supported convening further parliamentary sessions at future COPs. At the end of the day, the parliamentarians discussed a draft declaration in which they affirmed their commitment to contribute fully to the implementation of the CCD by, *inter alia*: supporting legislation concerning the fight against desertification; subscribing to the promotion of policies and the strengthening of institutional frameworks for the favorable development of cooperation among affected countries; supporting the strengthening of social policies and education, health and public awareness; and subscribing to the initiatives of agencies, donor countries and civil societies to increase financial assistance to promote sustainable development in fragile ecosystems.

They undertook to promote: the formulation of national legislation and harmonization with the provisions of the Convention; integration in the fight against desertification in national agendas as well as those of regional and subregional organizations; the formulation of action programmes in affected developing countries; and the adoption of practical measures to include environmental protection disciplines. They issued an urgent appeal to: financial and business entities worldwide to support the mobilization of financial resources to combat desertification; academic institutions, the scientific community and research centres to support the various tasks of implementing the Convention in affected developing countries; and the CCD Secretariat to continue actions taken up in support of affected countries. The draft declaration was adopted, with minor amendments, as the Dakar Declaration.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates left the conference center on Friday after being promised eight G-77/China draft decisions and arrived at the conference center on Monday to find that the group expected to submit nineteen draft decisions. Other groups are also expected to circulate drafts; the EU has prepared four and is expecting some more. Delegates considered how to organize small groups to facilitate negotiations on these drafts, as well as their necessity, and anticipated a sharp increase in the pace of COP-2. The non-groups on the budget and legal issues were expected to convene Monday evening.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

SPECIAL SEGMENT: Thirty-seven speakers are expected to address ways and means to promote the timely and effective implementation of the Convention during morning and afternoon sessions of the Special Segment.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: The COW is expected to convene during the morning.

DRAFT DECISIONS AND NON-GROUPS: Nine draft decisions are expected to be distributed as "L" documents. Several regional and interest groups are also expected to informally distribute draft decisions they are preparing. The three non-groups are expected to meet as needed.

CONCERTATION FRANCOPHONE: The Senegalese Minister of the Environment and Protection of Nature invites the Ministers and Heads of Delegation of Francophone countries to a meeting from 4:00 to 5:15 pm in Room B 01.