



CCD COP-2 HIGHLIGHTS

TUESDAY, 8 DECEMBER 1998

Eleven ministers, 25 government officials and 5 IO representatives addressed the ways and means to promote the timely and effective implementation of the Convention (ICCD/COP(2)/5) during morning and afternoon sessions of the Special Segment. The COW and non-groups also met during the morning and afternoon, respectively.

SPECIAL SEGMENT

Many speakers highlighted national activities under their NAPs. ALGERIA's national efforts include the monitoring and remote sensing of sensitive regions. Concerns of NIGER's grass-roots actors include their lack of alternative sources of energy to firewood. EL SALVADOR said natural catastrophes must remind Parties of their commitment to protect the environment. He noted activities in the framework of regional cooperation in Latin America. TOGO stressed that it was time to take stock of the progress since COP-1 and urged Parties to continue to prepare their NAPs. NEPAL stressed that development should focus on people and their surroundings and those development activities should be designed to alleviate poverty. TANZANIA's national experience indicates the importance of political willingness and strong mechanisms for awareness raising, harmonized cross-cutting activities, technical support and clear elaboration of partnership arrangements, and reliable and sustainable financial arrangements. JAMAICA called attention to the problems and needs of small island developing States.

SENEGAL said implementation requires the full participation of the local communities. NORWAY said women's participation is vital for the success of the CCD. CAPE VERDE has named 2000 the Year of Desertification for the country and will promote public awareness. CHILE said its national policies have been consolidated at very local levels. SYRIA has set up over 30 reserves to protect land. IRAN discussed family planning in relation to desertification. UNDP stressed its continuous support of capacity building in affected countries.

INDIA has offered to host a regional network on Agro-forestry Management and Soil Conservation. UZBEKISTAN discussed national efforts to meet its challenges, including efforts to shift away from cotton as a single crop. ARMENIA supported adding a fifth annex to the CCD. KAZAKHSTAN noted desertification is an inter-state problem and discussed joint efforts with neighboring countries. SPAIN noted its support of projects in Africa and Latin America. ETHIOPIA underscored the need to incorporate desertification into the national sustainable development strategy. MALI

discussed national reforms to decentralize and allow local authorities to participate in land management decision making. FINLAND believed NAPs should cover all social and economic aspects. MAURITANIA called for regional coordinating units in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. MOROCCO noted that the headquarters of the Sahara/Sahel Observatory (OSS), of which it serves as chair, will be transferred from Paris to Tunis. CILSS said organized actors of Sahelian civil society, particularly farmers and NGOs, are actively involved in the preparation of NAPs and state and civil society relations are also developing positively. CHINA said effective implementation requires countries to: become aware of the importance and urgency of strengthening coordination and cooperation; actively promote funding and technology transfer from developed to affected developing countries; strengthen South-South cooperation; explore and apply new technology; educate and mobilize people in the affected areas; and encourage the initiatives of local communities and social partners.

The EU said affected countries are in the best position to steer the process and highlighted NAPs as important instruments to provide such guidance. SWITZERLAND said the NAP provides a light for global development policy, which consistency and efficiency demand. The EC noted that the experience of the Sahelian countries in managing the drought of the 1970s lends valuable lessons for the affected countries. ITALY proposed that a "mandate of Dakar" lead to a protocol with specific commitments at COP-4 once all regional action plans are approved.

Financing for implementation and institutional issues were also addressed. The G-77/CHINA reaffirmed its determination to combat desertification, but added that international cooperation on financing is essential. The EU has been and will continue to be a major source of financing for the CCD, and will seek to make resource use more efficient and help the GM mobilize resources. FRANCE appealed to bilateral and multilateral donors to increase funds for combating desertification and called for more efficient use of resources.

The GEF Council has stipulated that its operational strategy should include land degradation as an integral part of its activities. A new GEF initiative, "dialogue workshops," will offer workshops on project identification, how to access GEF resources and the GEF project cycle. SWEDEN outlined a six-step process for building operational partnerships, starting with a bottom-up preparation process in affected countries and progressing through the identification of prospective donors, launching of the NAP, and dialogues on the NAP with donors. The EC stressed the need to ensure that local communities have the necessary resources to combat desertification.

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BENIN called on his partners to mobilize resources through the GM and noted the value of the Secretariat's initiatives and actions. IFAD requested the COP to deliver policy guidance for its dynamic and potential development. ERITREA called for the timely and full operation of the GM. PAKISTAN expressed hope that its national fund to combat desertification would receive adequate assistance from donors. MOROCCO said effective and swift implementation of the CCD requires furnishing the permanent Secretariat with the means to carry out its role, ensuring the swift functioning of the GM, and implementing NAPs with the participation of partners and the GM.

The G-77/CHINA said a strong Secretariat is the essential and key machinery for implementation. MAURITANIA said the CCD Secretariat must be given the freedom to implement its responsibilities. GERMANY said it has done its share to facilitate the timely operation of the permanent Secretariat in January 1999. KAZAKHSTAN commended the Secretariat's work on benchmarks and indicators and expressed an interest in testing the methodology. FINLAND said the Secretariat should continue to be active in promoting implementation of RAPs and NAPs.

The EU said the CST should provide usable advice, develop a structured work programme and complement related work undertaken by other bodies. The US said the COP, CST and GM should work together and focus on identifying and channeling resources to those most in need as efficiently and expeditiously as possible.

ITALY said the FCCC's flexible mechanism could be a useful tool for CCD-related efforts. TOGO noted the synergies between the Rio conventions and called for cooperation to harmonize actions at the national and regional levels. The FCCC suggested coordination with the CCD on logistics and administrative arrangements. He called for an integrated scientific vision and said he relied on strengthened UNEP capacities to achieve this. He also said he hoped to relaunch the integration of national reports within the three Rio conventions.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW considered the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions, procedures and institutional mechanisms for the resolution of implementation issues and an annex on arbitration and conciliation procedures. The Secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(2)/7 (collaboration and synergies among Rio conventions for the implementation of the CCD). He said the document gives an account of the rationale for cooperation with other conventions, elaborates a joint pilot initiative, reviews the main areas for synergies and proposes further steps to enhance cooperation among convention secretariats while advancing their effective implementation.

The G-77/CHINA, supported by GRULAC, EGYPT and INDIA, underscored the enhancement and strengthening of cooperation activities between conventions and said issues regarding institutional cooperation are still under the General Assembly's consideration. The EU noted the recommendations outlined in the chapter on "Greater coherence in various intergovernmental organizations and processes" of the Rio+5 document, and called for actions to make these steps a reality to avoid duplication and increase efficiency. EGYPT suggested including terms of reference for financial cooperation between the GEF and IFAD. INDIA stressed the importance of preserving biodiversity through the CCD and said the patenting issue and its related importance in terms of the WTO agreement should be reflected in the document. ICELAND noted the tendency under the FCCC to limit discussions on sinks to forestry activities and supported including, in the scientific and technical linkages section, restoration of degraded lands

that would serve the objectives of both the FCCC and CCD. The Secretariat noted the interventions and said improved coordination and synergies at the field level will be reflected in future endeavors.

Regarding procedures and institutional mechanisms to resolve questions on implementation and an annex on arbitration and conciliation procedures, the Secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(2)/10 and noted that the adoption of annexes would require an amendment to the Convention as outlined in CCD Article 30. The G-77/CHINA said that, compared with the FCCC, which has recently decided to establish a multilateral consultation process, the CCD is a young convention and the development of such a process would require further discussion. Regarding the annex, he called for the establishment of an *ad hoc* experts group to discuss the issue and refer it to COP-3.

The EU said such procedures should be simple, facilitative, non-confrontational, cooperative, consultative and, supported by JUSCANZ, tailored to the circumstances of the Convention. The EU and JUSCANZ called on the Secretariat to compile submissions for COP-3, taking into account other conventions' experiences. JUSCANZ said the establishment of an *ad hoc* group was premature and that the COP should proceed in phases, the first being a compilation of views for consideration at COP-3.

MAURITANIA and CHINA said the G-77/CHINA and EU/JUSCANZ positions were not necessarily contradictory. MAURITANIA said COP-2 could agree to refer discussion of this issue to an open-ended *ad hoc* group that would discuss and make recommendations at COP-3 and in the interim compile views to form the basis for the discussions. EGYPT and CHINA stressed that a compilation of views alone was insufficient and that an open-ended working group was indispensable for discussion. SYRIA said implementation of the Convention must occur first, particularly progress on the GM's operation, and only then could the COP predict disputes that might arise and adopt appropriate procedures.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The non-group on legal issues discussed the proposed decision on the review of implementation of the Convention during the afternoon. The G-77/China proposed the establishment of a Committee on the review of the implementation of the Convention but other delegates preferred to address the issue at COP-3, as had been agreed in Decision 10/COP.1. A Secretariat draft reflects this latter view and invites Parties to make submissions in writing by 30 April 1999. The group also reached agreement on the headquarters agreement following bilateral contacts between the G-77/China and EU. The implementation non-group agreed to text on ordinary sessions of the COP and regional action programmes.

The contact group on budget issues is reported to be close to agreement. Participants reported that one of the German contributions will be transferred to a special fund and offset by Secretariat savings, given the lower cost-of-living in Bonn. As a result, Party contributions will remain roughly the same.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Twenty-six speakers on ways and means to promote the timely and effective implementation of the Convention are expected during morning and afternoon sessions of the Special Segment.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: The COW may meet in the afternoon.

NON-GROUPS: The non-groups established to negotiate the draft decisions for the COW have been instructed to complete their work before Wednesday evening.