



CCD COP-4 HIGHLIGHTS

FRIDAY-SATURDAY, 15-16 DECEMBER 2000

On Friday, the Plenary convened for the first of two dialogue sessions with NGOs on synergies between conventions and the role of stakeholders. The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) met in morning and afternoon sessions to adopt draft decisions and conclude its work. On Friday and Saturday, the *ad hoc* working group to review CCD implementation (AHWG) met to be reviewing reports on CCD implementation.

PLENARY

Delegates engaged in an open dialogue with NGOs on synergies between the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the CCD and on how stakeholders can assist governments and communities in CCD implementation. A panel comprising of three NGO and three IGO representatives, two Convention Secretariats and one country delegate made brief presentations.

Executive Secretary Diallo thanked Canada and Switzerland, the only countries that had supported NGO participation at COP-4. Despite the small presence of NGOs at COP-4, compared to the 4000 at the UNFCCC COP-6, he expressed his belief that they could still be effective.

The INTERNATIONAL NGO NETWORK ON DESERTIFICATION (RIOD) summarized the scope of the dialogue as being: the need for political will; achievements resulting from the memoranda of understanding between the conventions and other partners; harmonization of the three conventions at the national level to enhance implementation; and the value added at the national level.

The CCD Secretariat highlighted its cooperation initiatives with other partners. The UNFCCC Secretariat underscored attaining synergy at the national level, including through organizing multi-stakeholder forums and increasing interactions among the Conventions.

The DESERT RESEARCH FOUNDATION - NAMIBIA stressed the importance of harmonizing synergies at the national level with those at the local level.

Rogation Biaou, Benin, gave examples of crosscutting activities relating to the Rio Conventions, which covered integrated water resource management, reforestation, revegetation and tree cultivation, and the promotion of renewable energy resources. He said synergies should be complementary and additional to the provisions of the conventions.

The GERMANY NGO FORUM ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT underscored the need for coherent national policies. The GLOBAL MECHANISM outlined its activities

relating to the promotion of enabling environments to enhance civil society involvement in National Action Programmes (NAP), and to exchanges between resource users, noting that these will be upscaled in the future.

The UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME identified potential areas for collaboration with NGOs, including gender and natural resource management and alternative energy technologies, but noted the need for NGO capacity building to develop fundable projects.

The GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY highlighted mechanisms they have developed to support synergies, through the land degradation programme including resource mobilization, the integrated land and water management programme in Africa and a capacity-building initiative.

Issues raised in the ensuing discussions included: the important role NGOs play in CCD implementation; the need to support NGO involvement in the COP's work; and a request for a COP resolution calling for progress on synergies between the different Conventions. The dialogue with NGOs will continue on Wednesday, 20 December.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The CST met in morning and afternoon sessions to discuss nine draft decisions to be forwarded to the COP for consideration. The Committee adopted draft decisions: on the roster of experts, inviting Parties to supplement their submissions to increase gender balance, representation of all relevant disciplines, and include grassroots organizations and NGO expertise; on traditional knowledge (TK), noting the Italian initiative to establish a TK international research center; on early warning systems (EWS), reappointing an EWS *ad hoc* panel to further examine EWS performance, methods for analyzing vulnerability, exchange of information between institutions, and measures for preparedness; and on the survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies, accepting UNEP's proposal (ICCD/COP(4)/CST/3/Add.1) to implement phase 2 of the survey.

The CST also adopted draft decisions: on the CST-5 work programme, deciding that the Committee should work on strategies for communication and information to generate best practices for combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought; on the review and implementation of scientific and technical aspects of national reports, inviting Parties to develop a minimum set of impact indicators for future selection of a set of basic indicators, mobilize support for affected country Parties, and better integrate the scientific and technical community activities in CCD implementation. Delegates adopted additional draft decisions that

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encourage: the Secretariat to follow the activities of the Dryland Degradation Assessment (LADA) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment; CILSS (Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel), GRULAC (the Latin American and Caribbean Group) and OSS (the Sahara-Sahel Observatory) to continue their initiative on benchmarks and indicators; and Parties to transmit recommendations on how to improve CST effectiveness for preparation of a synthesis report for COP-5.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON IMPLEMENTATION

On Friday, the AHWG adopted its work programme and elected three Vice Chairs, Mohammed Reza Jabbari (Iran), Octavio Perez Pardo (Argentina), and Ogtay Jafarov (Azerbaijan), who will act as Rapporteur. Delegates then considered reports on CCD implementation in Cape Verde and Senegal. On Saturday, they considered the reports from Mali, Burkina Faso and Benin.

The five reports highlighted measures taken to implement the National Action Programmes (NAPs), constraints faced and suggestions on how to overcome them. The presenters highlighted efforts to coordinate policies, institutions and resources, and to involve all stakeholders. CAPE VERDE described its decentralized approach in NAP implementation. SENEGAL said that besides the NAP, they had developed a priority action program and strategies for testing its effectiveness.

MALI highlighted the roundtable discussions it held with its cooperation partners after the NAP had been developed, and stressed their usefulness in providing donors with relevant information and in facilitating coordination. BURKINA FASO said many of its desertification activities began before the adoption of the CCD, although the results failed to meet their expectations at the time. He outlined the implementation strategy for the NAP and emphasized the need for continuous awareness raising and dialogue with the stakeholders. BENIN emphasized cross-border aspects of desertification involving issues such as migrating cattle herds, and underscored the need to move sub-regional and regional initiatives forward. He also noted the effectiveness of sub-regional technical assistance.

On problems faced, the presenters highlighted that funding was still insufficient and that coordination of institutions and funds was inadequate. They said the changing donor policies are difficult to follow and adapt to and expressed concern over the lack of understanding of the needs of coastal countries or countries where land degradation is not yet very widespread. They called for further support for NAP implementation, stronger links between the Rio Conventions and poverty alleviation activities, and training for national leaders under these programmes. The slow implementation rate and limited impact of the information campaigns in a decentralized context was highlighted by one presenter.

Issues raised in the discussion included how to reconcile the number of project proposals received under a decentralized approach with the limited resources available and how coordination of the funding could be attained. The delegates noted that the reports: demonstrate positive results of integrated projects as opposed to narrowly focused ones; underscored the utility of building on existing institutions; stressed the need for trans-boundary resource management and clear timeframes in planning, such as detailed annual/five-year programs with realistic objectives. They stressed the need to: link the NAPs to the national poverty reduction strategies to ensure that donors can extend their support; identify synergies with actions carried out under other processes, such as the Tehran process of the UN Forum on forests; focus on preventive actions and consider long-term efforts to safeguard land resources through appropriate rural land ownership policies.

INFORMAL WORKING GROUPS AND CONSULTATIONS

The two open-ended informal working groups set up Wednesday, 13 December, on support to the regional coordination units (RCUs) and programme and budget were merged and are expected to start work Monday, 18 December. Mohammed Reza Jabbari (Iran) will Chair this group.

The open-ended working group on the draft declaration on the review of implementation (Recife Initiative), chaired by Marion Parry (Canada), met Friday and read through the text highlighting issues to be addressed in the group. On Saturday, the group began negotiating these issues.

Informal consultations facilitated by Michael Ellis (UK), on the additional implementation annex to the Convention for Central and Eastern Europe, were conducted Friday and Saturday. It is likely an informal meeting will be held on Monday, 18 December, to present a compilation of the issues raised by delegations.

IN THE CORRIDORS I

As the CST concluded its work on Friday, participants reviewed the work at its fourth session. Reactions were mixed. Some expressed concern and impatience with the slow progress and the lack of actual research initiatives taken by the CST. Others, however, felt that the Committee had made considerable progress, especially in comparison to the Plenary and the COW, and attributed this to the guidance of the skilful and well-informed Chair Olawarenju Smith.

Given its scientific mandate in a political setting, the CST is the focus of expectations from both scientists and decision-makers. Some observers noted that while a decision has now been made to consider reforming its work at the next session, it still remains to be seen if it can live up to the range of expectations. Some even suggested that scientific issues should be dealt with by a body similar to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, but wondered whether there were enough resources available.

IN THE CORRIDORS II

The AHWG began its work two days later than scheduled. At the end of the first two sessions on Friday and Saturday, some observers expressed pessimism over what the outcome of the process would be. They noted that the approach taken did not differ much from the general presentation of reports at COP-3 and did not focus discussions on how current CCD implementation could be improved. Some attributed this to the group's vague terms of reference, which did not provide much guidance on how lessons could be distilled from the reviews. Others, however, felt that it was too early to pass judgement on the group, noting that initiatives on how to structure the work of the group will emerge as it proceeds.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Plenary convenes at 10:00 a.m. for a special segment in the Plenary Hall. Among the expected speakers are the Prime Ministers of Lesotho and Guinea Bissau, the UNEP Executive Director, and the President of IFAD, host of the Global Mechanism.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP: This group meets at 10:00 a.m. in the Committee Room to continue consideration of national reports on CCD implementation throughout the day. Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia and Tunisia are expected to present their reports.