



CCD COP-4 HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 18 DECEMBER 2000

The Plenary convened throughout the day for the special segment on the implementation of the Convention and heard two statements by Prime Ministers, and 27 by ministers, high-level officials and representatives of UN bodies and specialized agencies. The *ad hoc* working group on the review of CCD implementation (AHWG) met to consider the African regional report, four sub-regional reports, and five country reports. It also heard a report by the CST on its work and its contribution to the AHWG.

PLENARY

SPECIAL SEGMENT ON CCD IMPLEMENTATION:

COP-4 President Bartjargal (Mongolia) opened the segment and said the CCD could considerably improve conditions in affected countries. CCD Executive Secretary Diallo called for an extensive review of national implementation reports. A message from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan appealed to donors to mobilize adequate resources for affected developing country use. Bärbel Dieckmann, Mayor of Bonn, called for networking and collaboration, which she said were the only ways to effectively combat desertification.

The INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT said that given low development assistance levels, it is counterproductive to create a fund for the CCD in addition to the Global Mechanism (GM). The WORLD BANK said that the Bank recently approved a US\$2.5 million development grant to the GM. UNDP described its renewal process and how it relates to the CCD, and emphasized that dryland degradation measures have to be integrated with poverty alleviation plans.

The UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE Secretariat said that the desertification dimension needs to be kept visible in the climate change negotiations. He said that bringing out synergies between the Rio Conventions is not only a task for the Secretariats but for all Parties. The CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY Secretariat described extensive joint activities under the Biodiversity and Desertification Conventions.

NIGERIA, speaking on behalf of the G-77/China emphasized the need to designate the Global Environment Facility (GEF) as the financial mechanism of the CCD and to establish a committee to review the implementation of the CCD (CRIC). FRANCE, on behalf of the EU, said it is possible to mobilize resources for the CCD without a financial instrument.

Affected developing countries described, in their statements, national efforts to combat desertification, including the development of National Action Programmes (NAPs). Several reiterated the need to ensure that the GEF is designated as a CCD financing mechanism. NIGER explained poor nations' inability to deal with desertification due to dwindling development resources, the negative impact of globalization, and trends in international commodity markets. He urged for a permanent structure for the COP to analyze and utilize national reports. LESOTHO outlined the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) efforts in land reclamation and water conservation and recalled the outputs of the African preparatory meeting held in Algiers in October 2000. MAURITANIA underscored the need to strengthen NGO participation at COPs by providing new resources or selecting themes of NGO interest to discuss. BENIN said that, as with the recent Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the GEF should be opened to support combating desertification. The GAMBIA urged developed countries to live up to their CCD commitments by channeling resources through the GM. MOROCCO said developed countries' survival depends on that of developing countries, and hoped that COP decisions will enhance CCD implementation, in particular for the most affected. SOUTH AFRICA described initiatives to correct past injustices and hoped Rio+10 would reaffirm commitments to Agenda 21 and contribute to African Renaissance.

BANGLADESH pleaded for support to the CCD as a step towards environmental justice. SYRIA stressed the need for peace and debt alleviation to assure sustainable development and gave examples of Israel's activities causing environmental destruction. JORDAN urged for a special fund with contributions from developed countries, and drew attention to the environmental impact of hazardous waste and weapons of mass destruction, as well as the important role of women in anti-desertification campaigns. IRAN emphasized that developed countries need to fulfill their commitments through the provision of financial and technological resources. CHINA called for support for the establishment of the Asia-Africa research center to combat desertification.

GEORGIA and ROMANIA appealed to all Parties to promptly adopt the fifth CCD annex for Central and Eastern Europe because it is essential for millions of people in the Caucasian region.

In their presentations, developed countries described their support to affected developing countries and regions. GERMANY outlined future challenges in CCD implementation and said he would call for the enhancement of GEF support for CCD implementation at the GEF's next replenishment negotiations. The UNITED KINGDOM noted the need to integrate CCD processes



in central planning functions and said its official development assistance in 2003-4 will increase from 0.26% to 0.33%. CANADA said that, as a donor, it is committed to supporting the 10-member Nile River Basin Consortium, anti-desertification programmes in Ghana and Nigeria, and, as an affected country, to share scientific and technical exchanges. ITALY drew attention to the new, promising opportunities for GEF to fund land degradation programmes and stressed the need for an innovative and effective new phase that utilizes different approaches, such as debt-swap schemes.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON IMPLEMENTATION

REGIONAL REPORT: The AFRICA REGIONAL REPORT highlighted focal areas including: early warning systems; agroforestry and soil conservation; integrated water management; promotion of better rangeland management, renewable energy resources and sustainable agriculture; and creation of enabling environments to combat desertification. He said a recently held workshop identified actions in each focal area and proposed strategies for resource mobilization.

REPORT BY THE CST: Chair Olanrewaju Smith (Canada), reported on the contribution of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) to the AHWG, as mandated by the COP. He highlighted a CST draft decision that takes note of concerns regarding the lack of scientific and technological information, particularly indicators and benchmarks, in the national reports. The decision encourages Parties to include such information and requests the Secretariat to revise the Help Guide to aid Parties to better reflect the activities of their scientific communities in their national reports.

SUB-REGIONAL REPORTS: The ARAB MAGHREB UNION (UMA) said the countries in the sub-region have adopted a charter for environment and sustainable development calling for a major share of national incomes to be devoted to combating desertification and providing a framework for implementation of relevant programmes. He outlined a six-pronged approach to the sub-regional action programme (SRAP) involving institutional support, establishment of desertification information databases, a sub-regional project for participatory coordination, establishment of monitoring systems, disaster relief preparation and integrated transborder cooperation.

Highlighting its activities in the West Africa sub-region, the PERMANENT INTERSTATE COMMITTEE ON DROUGHT CONTROL IN THE SAHEL (CILSS) outlined its support to: implementation and harmonization of NAPs; partnership agreements between countries; thematic groups in eight areas, including in management of shared resources; follow-up and evaluation; and information dissemination.

SADC outlined its regional coordination units, focussing on the Environment and Land Management Sector. The areas addressed are: capacity building and institutional strengthening; promotion of early warning systems; cooperation in the sustainable management of shared resources; development and transfer of technologies; information sharing and exchange; development of alternative energy; and socio-economic issues. He noted efforts to establish a donor hub to facilitate coordination.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT (IGAD) highlighted its activities, which include support to member states in formulating NAPs, developing a SRAP and resource mobilization strategies.

Regarding problems faced in implementing SRAPs, the presenters highlighted weak intersectoral coordination and integration of NAPs and SRAPs into government plans and strategies, and lack of adequate and predictable resources, information on existing funding mechanisms, and donor coordination.

Discussions addressed donor coordination and the transaction costs of networking at sub-regional levels. One delegate noted that it was easier to get support for the preparatory stages of the SRAPs than for their implementation and urged for donor support as SRAPs address issues beyond the scope of the NAPs. The FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION called for rapid implementation of field projects and targeted policies to achieve results.

NATIONAL REPORTS: TUNISIA said it had: convened a special ministerial council to coordinate work on desertification; started work on national indicators; established an institute of arid zones; and made the NAP part of a national development programme. LESOTHO said it had identified field level indicators that will be further tested and developed. SWAZILAND stressed the need to involve community level stakeholders, and underscored the need for technical assistance on how to develop fundable projects. NAMIBIA outlined its desertification activities, highlighting active participation as a key success factor and ongoing priority. TANZANIA presented both previous and current desertification programmes, and said its NAP focuses on: streamlining cross-sectoral policies; raising awareness; disseminating technology; and mainstreaming gender.

Problems identified in the reports relate to: poor coordination; difficulties in mobilizing stakeholders and making information rapidly accessible to partners; insufficient resources and capacities; up-scaling pilot activities; outdated domestic policies and legislation; and inconsistencies with regard to donor requirements. One country noted the lack of capable staff and high turnover rate, as well as the slow pace of decentralization.

The ensuing discussions highlighted: the need for consultation with partners beyond the NAP and the importance of civil society participation; the value of intersectoral cooperation in NAP implementation; the need to stress CCD implementation as a priority to donors; and the importance of political will to integrate desertification into national development policies. Delegates raised issues on how to encourage local and district level involvement without creating additional levels of bureaucracy, and discussed the costs and benefits of raising awareness at different levels. They provided examples of the integration of desertification objectives in water and agricultural sector policies, and of technical assistance that allows consistency between strategies at the national and regional levels. In response to a question from the floor, one presenter highlighted initiatives to identify and document traditional knowledge that can be integrated into the NAP and shared at the regional and international levels.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The *ad hoc* working group continued its work today. Some participants said that even though the approach taken was criticized as yielding less than expected, the discussions were slowly taking shape and starting to focus on key issues. They said the approach was the best possible given that this was the first time the activity was undertaken in this process. Others, however, said a more cross-cutting approach to compare country experiences in a regional context would have been most constructive and time efficient, and hoped that such a format would develop in the future.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Plenary convenes at 10:00 a.m. to continue the special segment in the Plenary Hall.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP: The group meets in the Committee Room to begin considering reports from Asian countries, including the Asian regional report on CCD implementation.