



CCD COP-4 HIGHLIGHTS

TUESDAY, 19 DECEMBER 2000

The Plenary convened all day for the special segment on the implementation of the Convention and heard 38 statements from high-level officials and representatives of UN agencies and specialized bodies. The *ad hoc* working group on the review of CCD implementation (AHWG) met to consider the Asian regional report, and six country reports. Informal consultations on the additional regional implementation annex to the Convention and the informal working group on programme and budget continued.

PLENARY

The UNEP Executive Director said the CCD is a chance for the North and South to enter into a global compact to secure our common future. The GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF) elaborated five proposals responding to the November 2000 GEF Council request for a paper for its 2001 meeting on the best options to strengthen GEF support for CCD implementation. The INTERGOVERNMENTAL AUTHORITY ON DEVELOPMENT said development of a Sub-Regional Action Programme (SRAP) had suffered insufficient resources. The EUROPEAN COMMISSION called for strengthening of the Global Mechanism (GM) and said additional bodies would only further stretch resources. The ROUND TABLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS called for a new GEF window for financing CCD implementation. The ARAB-MAGHREB UNION (UMA) and the LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES outlined their support to their regions. UMA proposed preparing a report for Rio+10 on African CCD implementation.

Most affected developing countries, in their statements, reviewed desertification effects and their activities to tackle it, including National Action Programme (NAP) processes. SENEGAL, UGANDA, BURUNDI, EGYPT and SAUDI ARABIA stressed the need for a GEF window on desertification. TANZANIA said the total amount provided to prepare all the African CCD national reports equaled the GEF's allocation to a single country for reporting under the Climate Change Convention. SWAZILAND said the CCD is the most financially marginalized of the Rio Conventions. SAUDI ARABIA saw no justification to exclude the CCD from GEF benefits, unless the CCD is of little concern to the international community and should then be renamed the convention of the poor. TUNISIA said the CCD is not a convention for the poor, but a global effort that Northern countries have a duty to contribute to. ERITREA emphasized the need to support combating desertification as a global, not regional or national issue. MALAWI called for adequate donor support to

enhance future CCD implementation. SENEGAL and BURKINA FASO called for the establishment of a subsidiary body to review progress in CCD implementation. ALGERIA said developed countries must reallocate resources currently diverted to activities no longer warranted in peace time. GUINEA highlighted the repercussions of its 10-year civil war and called for international support because it is the source of many rivers serving the region. TOGO noted that economic inequality, the debt burden, wars and the HIV/AIDS scourge are additional burdens to nations, constraining their ability to combat desertification. MOZAMBIQUE noted its vulnerability to climatic changes and called for support for capacity building. MALI drew attention to the Statement adopted by participants at the Second Africa-Latin American Conference held in Mali and urged delegates to support it.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA said assistance was needed for tackling desertification in his region. INDIA said Parties' fulfillment of their CCD commitments should be reported at Rio+10. KYRGYZSTAN described the regional initiative to prepare a SRAP for the Aral Sea Basin and UZBEKISTAN noted the GM's active participation. TAJIKISTAN commended the Secretariat and UNITAR activities in the region.

The CZECH REPUBLIC encouraged the endorsement of a fifth CCD annex for Central and Eastern Europe. Noting the low participation of small island developing States in the CCD, the COOK ISLANDS urged the Secretariat to prepare a long-term regional strategy and organize a workshop in 2001.

Developed countries, in their statements, described their support to Convention activities. SWITZERLAND raised four concerns, including the apparent weariness among delegates in the pace of CCD implementation. GREECE supported the GM's role and said it is time to use existing knowledge to act. NEW ZEALAND, a new CCD Party, described its support to countries in the Pacific region. NORWAY underscored the empowerment of marginalized peoples and urged developed countries to fulfill their commitments. DENMARK pledged a new contribution of 3 million Danish Kroner to the GM. With JAPAN, he said donor assistance could never substitute affected country efforts, while FINLAND added that it cannot replace private financial resources. LUXEMBOURG intends to meet its 0.7% of GNP ODA target and asserted the need for NAP consistency with poverty alleviation policies.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON IMPLEMENTATION

REGIONAL REPORT: The ASIAN REGIONAL REPORT outlines the activities of the thematic programme networks on monitoring and assessment (TPN1) and on agroforestry and soil

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conservation in arid, semi-arid and sub-humid areas (TPN2) and the conclusions of the third regional meeting of CCD focal points. The conclusions included the need for: consistent partnership agreements with UN agencies and other partners; support to grassroots organizations, NGOs and community based organizations; better understanding of the features of CCD benchmarks and indicators.

Delegates then discussed the value of sharing expertise, how regional efforts feed back into the countries, and how the recognition of Central Asia as a new sub-region will affect ongoing work. Donor countries were urged to support the thematic programme networks.

NATIONAL REPORTS: The AHWG considered national reports from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Mongolia, Laos and China. These reports highlighted achievements in NAP implementation, challenges and constraints and solutions to overcome them.

TAJIKISTAN outlined the progress of its NAP and said that while NAP implementation had been delayed, measures to combat land degradation, manage soil salinization, and address water erosion have been carried out. TURKMENISTAN outlined its activities including the establishment of: a state commission on CCD implementation, with stakeholder representation; coordinating committees for the other environmental conventions; a company to protect the forest belt around populated centers; and a regional thematic center to combat desertification.

UZBEKISTAN highlighted community-level pilot projects to assess and develop methodologies for combating desertification. He stressed that Uzbekistan has adequate domestic scientific and technical capacity, but lacks financial resources.

MONGOLIA described its 1992 action plan to combat desertification, noting measures to involve stakeholders, advance decentralization and land tenure reform, and realize environmental synergies. LAOS discussed its initial national actions aimed at CCD implementation, underscoring they are integrated with development and poverty eradication. CHINA described its institutional set-up for combating desertification and noted coordination between, and activities by, numerous sectoral agencies.

On constraints faced in the NAP process, presenters noted the lack of financial resources to implement pilot projects and urged donors to provide support to improve ongoing activities. TURKMENISTAN noted that despite efforts to initiate desertification activities, donor responses were not encouraging.

In ensuing discussions, delegates raised the links to other sub-regional cooperation programmes such as the Aral Sea Programme, the establishment and strengthening of legal frameworks and structures to involve relevant actors in the planning process, as well as a need to strengthen human resources and institutional capacity. GERMANY expressed interest in supporting a regional participatory programme that reinforces and strengthens national programmes.

Delegates also noted that civil society, land tenure systems, as well as water-supply systems are new or still evolving in the Former Soviet Union.

In response to a question by the UK, UZBEKISTAN highlighted small-scale pilot projects as means of raising awareness at the grassroots level of the CCD. Interventions from the floor further highlighted the need to combine land reform policy with local-level awareness raising, and to complement technical monitoring with socio-economic monitoring.

In response to a question on legal instruments to regulate CCD implementation, TAJIKISTAN said these exist but are often insufficient and noted ongoing efforts to enact further legislation and

develop a land-use act. On compliance, TURKMENISTAN said it had set up a state commission to address compliance with obligations arising from various environmental conventions.

On donor participation in the AHWG's work, IRAN expressed disappointment with the few donor countries represented during discussions. He proposed allocating time to developed country presentations, noting that all reports should be given the same treatment. INDIA expressed disappointment over the few proposals made in the AHWG, regarding how to address the financial and technical issues raised by the affected country reports. MALI encouraged donors in the AHWG to provide guidance on how synergies and partnerships to implement actions highlighted in the national reports can be achieved.

Discussion also addressed the need to coordinate development planning to explicitly incorporate CCD objectives, and get to the root causes of desertification by focusing on poverty eradication.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS AND WORKING GROUPS

On Tuesday evening, the informal group on programme and budget considered a draft decision proposed by the COW Chair that includes requests to the Executive Secretary to: report at COP-5 any outcome on work to establish common administrative services in Bonn, taking into account the Convention's unique features; continue consultations with relevant UN departments to secure more resources from the overhead for administrative costs; submit to COP-5 a Programme Budget for the biennium 2002-3; and report to COP-5 on the status of the Trust Funds established under the financial rules.

The informal consultations on the additional implementation annex for Central and Eastern European countries are progressing slowly. The facilitator has made contact with several delegates from the different regions and is currently waiting for the G-77/China to designate a coordinator to participate in the consultations.

IN THE CORRIDORS

During the special segment, several affected country delegates proposed designating the GEF as CCD financial mechanism, reigniting a debate that threatened the conclusion of the Convention in 1994. According to some observers, the question is not *if* the GEF will take on the role of providing support, but rather *when* it will happen, and *what* the magnitude of the resources will be. They argued that the decision to make the GEF the financial mechanism of the recent Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) presented a new opportunity to link the CCD to GEF. As the once-in-four-years meeting of the GEF Assembly, to be held in 2002, considers the POPs Convention, they hope for an opportunity to reverse the "the historical mistake" made when the CCD was not allocated its own financial mechanism.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Plenary convenes at 10:00 a.m. to complete the special segment and at 3:00 p.m. for the second dialogue session with NGOs.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (COW): The COW meets briefly at 12:30 p.m. to consider agenda items on the Global Mechanism, and outstanding items relating to consideration of Rule 47 of the rules of procedure.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP: The group meets in the Committee Room at 10:00 a.m. to begin considering reports from Latin American and Caribbean countries (GRULAC), including the GRULAC regional report on CCD implementation, and national reports of the Northern Mediterranean countries.