

## UNCCD COP 9 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2009

The first day of the UNCCD COP 9 high-level segment opened on Monday, 28 September, with over 60 countries set to participate in the three roundtables to be held during the two-day segment. Following opening and regional and interest group statements during the morning, 21 speakers took the floor during an afternoon roundtable on global trends of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). Contact groups met throughout the day to develop draft decisions related to the CST, CRIC TOR, CRIC, the JIU assessment of the GM, budget and Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCMs).

### HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

COP 9 President Bibiloni opened the high-level segment highlighting the need to prioritize and resolve issues within the COP, as urgent problems related to drought, migration and floods cannot wait for negotiating times. He also emphasized the need for a vision of unity, "one vision, one orientation and one conductor." UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja delivered a message from UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, which noted that DLDD exacerbate poverty and vulnerability to climate change, and highlighted how SLM may provide critical contributions to mitigation, and to strengthen resilience, economic development and food security. Gnacadja added that the Special Summit on Climate Change held at the UN illustrated the significance of land resources to climate change mitigation and adaptation, and said the Strategy is central to improve the livelihoods of more than 2 billion affected people.

CST Chair Kellner said more than 120 scientists participated in the first Scientific Conference, along with 200 country delegates, discussing how science can assist in M&A of desertification and land degradation. CRIC Chair Torres said the CRIC's TOR are being reviewed and a new monitoring tool for regularly assessing progress using performance and impact indicators is being discussed. COW Chair Galil Hussein reported on the work of the contact groups on: the JIU's assessment of the GM, programme and budget of the Convention, RCMs, and TOR of the CRIC.

### STATEMENTS BY REGIONAL AND INTEREST

**GROUPS:** The G-77/CHINA said there are good reasons to move towards RCMs and to increase the Convention's budget. The EU: said strengthened institutions and donor coordination are essential to mobilize resources, along with strong ownership of the UNCCD by affected parties; appealed for more private

sector involvement; and said the UNCCD plays an important role in putting land management issues on the climate change agenda.

The ASIA GROUP emphasized strengthening national focal points, said RCM's should cater to the needs of parties in the region, and urged consensus building so that COP 9 could be remembered for harmonizing the Convention's institutions for stronger implementation. The AFRICA GROUP noted that COP 9 would consider the future of the Secretariat and the GM, reactivate the NAPs, and direct the CST and CRIC's activities, and said the quality of follow-up is linked to the political will to take the struggle to combat desertification to a higher level. The LAC GROUP said: implementation is a national task but regional coordination is essential and the RCMs should be formal; COP 9 should give the GM constructive instructions to enhance its functioning and the GM must work with more transparency and accountability to the COP; and the CRIC should be a permanent body. CENTRAL and EASTERN EUROPE stressed that the global role of the Convention can be achieved only if the Convention's work is directed at land degradation in all regional annexes, and said improving mechanisms for regional coordination is critical in this regard.

**ROUNDTABLE:** COP 9 President Bibiloni opened the roundtable on "Global trends of desertification, land degradation and drought: liaison with other problems and challenges for decision makers and stakeholders." Co-Chair Hanny-Sherry Ayttey, Minister of Environment, Science and Technology, Ghana recalled the livelihood impacts of DLDD and invited participants to comment on: the role that the UN can play to halt DLDD, what policy makers can do to help UNCCD, what governments can do to address food security and migration, and how science and technology can be used to provide advice on how to address DLDD.

Keynote speaker Jerry Lengoasa, Assistant Secretary-General, World Meteorological Organization, stressed drought preparedness, early warning systems and knowledge of vulnerability as key elements in national strategies against DLDD. Walter Ammann, President of Global Risk Forum, moderated the roundtable.

CHINA highlighted: monitoring; desertification prevention and control for combating climate change; and incorporating UNCCD implementation into national development frameworks. He committed to increase support to African countries in combating desertification in the framework of the Sino-Africa Forum. MOROCCO highlighted: education and awareness raising; adaptation to climate change; and reforestation.

PANAMA the tasks of the CRIC must be strengthened, the decision on the GM should not be hasty, and the GEF should ensure a more equitable distribution of resources among focal areas, countries and regions.

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary, Convention on Biological Diversity, recalled the joint work programme with the UNCCD Secretariat and stressed the importance for the three Rio Conventions to work in synergy. Bakary Kante, UNEP, said UNEP has helped the chemical conventions develop synergies and is now targeting conventions related to biodiversity to ensure that they achieve synergies.

CUBA said the RCMs should have financing through the Convention and highlighted the role of sharing positive implementation experiences. SOUTH AFRICA stressed coordinated research and science processes that enhance the participation of indigenous people in conventional science. ISRAEL noted that before discussing trends in DLDD, the current situation must be known and lamented the lack of harmonized global work in this regard. ERITREA said the UNCCD Secretariat must make sure that countries have access to resources, knowledge and experiences to implement the Convention. CENSTA said the Scientific Conference has been a positive initiative, but more should be done to include traditional knowledge and to make operational proposals.

EGYPT drew attention to the economic value of ecological services. NAMIBIA highlighted: new innovative approaches, integrated land management, financial resources, transfer of technology, and concerted and coordinated actions. NEPAL noted the need for integrated and coordinated efforts at all levels and for predictable and adequate resources. TANZANIA called for enhancing capacity and scientific knowledge, and developing innovative mechanisms to secure funds. ARGENTINA prioritized standardizing measurements and unifying methodology in monitoring and assessing desertification, and conducting economic analyses such as costs of inaction and market distortions by subsidies.

KENYA emphasized the need for targeted research, including on factors that lead to land degradation but could be changed by government policy. ZIMBABWE said parties need to set clear targets to stop DLDD. Jan McAlpine, Director, UN Forum on Forests (UNFF) Secretariat, mentioned the ongoing collaboration between the UNFF and the UNCCD secretariats in addressing information on funding gaps for sustainable forest management in low forest cover countries. SENEGAL stressed the need for early warning systems.

The PHILIPPINES discussed its efforts to address key data and knowledge gaps, thanked delegates for their expressions of support following Typhoon Ketsana, and said this disaster demonstrates the urgency to address climate change. MALI discussed land degradation issues related to cotton farming, its second largest export. SYRIA said the Convention should prioritize the issue of sand storms.

PALESTINE discussed land degradation challenges related to land occupation. SURINAME emphasized the importance of transferring knowledge, science and technology. INDONESIA suggested launching a second green revolution for degraded land. Co-Chair Hasan Mahmud, State Minister of Environment and Forest of Bangladesh, said food security, deforestation and DLDD are interlinked processes.

#### **IN THE CONTACT GROUPS**

**CRIC TOR:** During the afternoon, the contact group on additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention completed a second reading of the draft decision. They will review the TOR of the CRIC, contained in the

decision's Annex, on Tuesday. They agreed that regional meetings play an important role in the review process and redrafted text requesting the Secretariat to review provisions on the preparation of regional meetings in preparation for CRIC meetings. They agreed to reformulate text to clarify that the COP, not the CRIC, evaluates the CRIC's performance.

**CRIC:** The CRIC contact group discussed a draft decision on collaboration with the GEF. Delegates deleted references to the Resource Allocation Framework (RAF) and discussed how to address the GM's strategy on collaboration with the GEF, and decided to ask the GM to finalize its strategy to operationalize its complementary role to the GEF as requested in the Strategy. They deleted text indicating that the Secretariat should overview GEF project proposals to avoid slowing down the project cycle.

**RCMs:** Participants discussed a draft decision on mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention. Delegates discussed preambular paragraphs. Issues addressed included avoiding duplication among institutions involved in the implementation of the Convention at all levels and the need for coordination between the Secretariat and GM. Delegates finished the first reading of the preambular paragraphs and will consult with regional groups on the operative section, including budgetary considerations. They decided to look at regional proposals for mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination and a Secretariat proposal on evidence-based options for improving regional coordination arrangements.

**JIU ASSESSMENT OF THE GM:** The contact group completed a first reading of the decision on Saturday. On Monday evening, they made slow progress, agreeing to preambular text and addressing the first two operative paragraphs. On the first paragraph, parties discussed: whether the Secretariat, or GM and Secretariat, should prepare a single midterm report; the content of the report; and whether it should be submitted to intersessional CRICs. On the second paragraph, participants discussed whether to request the GM or Secretariat to prepare detailed regional implementation work programmes, and diverged on whether and how regions might provide input to this process and how often.

**BUDGET:** This group discussed a draft decision, with delegates agreeing on a preamble with some amendments. Operative paragraphs on the adoption of the work programmes and core budget were not discussed, pending decisions in other groups. A paragraph requesting the Executive Secretary to prepare a results-based budget and work programmes for the biennium 2010-2011 including budget scenarios under zero nominal growth and zero real growth was agreed with a minor amendment.

**CST:** This group convened on Saturday and Monday. Discussions included draft decisions on indicators, the outcome of the Scientific Conference, and the CST 10 agenda.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Weekend meetings and work on Monday started to portray the realities of negotiation, with delegates overheard speaking about budgetary implications of various proposals. Delegates from developed countries were not shy to present their limitations in light of the current economic crisis, and urged their colleagues from developing countries to prioritize among the wide range of identified needs. Some complained about the temptation by some delegates to micro-manage the Convention when costed work programmes are discussed, while others highlighted that RCMs, which are coveted by the G-77, have not been priced yet. One delegate, however, made it clear that only a "budget-neutral" decision on RCMs will be affordable at this COP.