



CCD COP-2 HIGHLIGHTS

TUESDAY, 1 DECEMBER 1998

Delegates to CCD COP-2 met in Plenary and the Committee on Science and Technology during morning and afternoon sessions. The Plenary heard reports from convention secretariats, Parties and intergovernmental organizations and considered the accreditation of NGOs and IGOs and the election of officers. The Committee on Science and Technology completed consideration of the roster of experts, survey and evaluation of existing networks, benchmarks and indicators, and bodies performing work similar to that of the CST.

PLENARY

Delmar Blasco, RAMSAR Convention Executive Secretary, said many wetlands can be found in the world's arid zones and encouraged coordinating related activities at the national and international level. He highlighted the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been prepared for the RAMSAR and CCD Secretariats. Noting its Memorandum of Cooperation with the CCD, a CBD representative stressed the importance of cooperation to reduce the burdens and optimize the limited resources of Parties and the Conventions. She noted the interdependence of loss of biodiversity, deforestation, soil degradation and desertification. She outlined many of the Conventions' related issues and activities and said drylands will be examined at CBD COP-5. Hama Arba Diallo, CCD Executive Secretary, also stressed synergizing Conventions at all levels.

ARGENTINA emphasized the need for a strong and efficient Secretariat with clear functions that are different but coordinated with those of the Global Mechanism (GM) and called for a balance in the budget among the regions. ISRAEL informed the conference about the upgrading of the Blaustein Institute for Desert Research, which is geared toward developing countries affected by desertification. He said that support had been secured to establish an information centre producing real-time interpreted satellite images of drylands of the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION, supported by ARMENIA and AZERBAIJAN, called for progress on the definition of a fifth annex to the CCD for the consideration of the central and eastern European States. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said he was prepared to undertake informal consultations on the issue. ARMENIA noted the link between the Rio Conventions and its efforts to implement its obligations under each, and with AZERBAIJAN stressed regional and interregional cooperation. AZERBAIJAN said it has ratified the CCD and begun to elaborate its National Action Programme (NAP). He said that increased desertification has become an envi-

ronmental consequence of the wars in Eastern Europe. ROMANIA said it has ratified the CCD and begun implementing its commitments, particularly work on its NAP. He noted that soil erosion has become a problem in southern Romania. SYRIA highlighted activities undertaken nationally and regionally to combat desertification. A NAP has been established, under which there are currently thirty-two projects, and he requested financing for their implementation. The LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES described the efforts of the Arab Centre for Studies of Arid Zones and Drylands (ACSAD) to contain the effects of drought and desertification as well as to rehabilitate desert arid areas. He underscored the need for cooperation and participation of local populations and NGOs in implementing the CCD. IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) described various activities including *inter alia*: a feasibility study on the establishment of a subregional facilitation fund to identify financial resources and establish an accessible financial reservoir and a study on the involvement of the private sector in the implementation of the CCD. WMO called on the COP to include in its agenda mechanisms for cooperation between the CCD, CBD and IPCC, and improvement of systematic observation systems.

FAO emphasized the link between the CCD and the promotion of food security. He said FAO is developing a programme of action that focuses on: assistance in implementation of NAPs; technical support of networks on desertification; the preparation and dissemination of best technical practices; the establishment of an information system to assist decision making; and technical support to the bodies of the CCD. UNESCO said that an MOU between UNESCO and the CCD Secretariat is currently being formulated to provide a framework agreement for joint activities, in particular those within UNESCO's mandated programme areas on education, science and culture. UNEP highlighted ways it could assist the Parties in combating desertification, including: assessment and environmental reporting; the gathering and exchange of scientific and technical information; facilitating regional cooperation and the participation of civil society; assisting in synergizing Conventions; and securing GEF financing.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: Delegates accredited the IGOs and NGOs listed in document ICCD/COP(2)/12.

Delegates accepted the nine nominations from the regional and interest groups to serve as Vice-Presidents of the Bureau: John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda), Maria Julia Alsogaray (Argentina), Jafarov Ogtay (Azerbaijan), Samvel Baloyan (Armenia), Marc Gedopt (Belgium), Olivier Jalbert (Canada), Abdelmajid Khabour

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(Jordan), Ali Saad Altokhais (Saudi Arabia) and Hatem Ben Salem (Tunisia). Marc Gedopt was selected to Chair the COW while Samvel Baloyan was selected to serve as Rapporteur.

The AFRICAN GROUP said the Group maintained its intention to be represented by three members and the concessions made at this COP do not imply a renunciation of that intention. Brazil made an offer to host COP-3 in Recife.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

CST Chair Jabbari (Iran) opened the Committee and noted that the Plenary adopted the CST agenda (ICCD/COP(2)/CST/1) on Monday afternoon. Delegates elected Guido Soto (Chile), Samuel Mutiso (Kenya) and Linda Brown (UK) as Vice-Chairs. Linda Brown will also serve as Rapporteur. Romania, the remaining East European Party without a COP-2 Bureau seat, may nominate the fourth Vice-Chair.

ROSTER OF EXPERTS: The Secretariat introduced the documentation for the roster of experts (ICCD/COP(2)/11 and Add.1). He noted that COP-1, in Decision 19/COP.1, requested Parties to submit names for the roster, paying attention to gender and discipline balance and considering increasing NGO and IGO experts. The roster is available in ICCD/COP(2)/11/Add.1, on the Secretariat's web site and in CD ROM format. He noted that women comprise thirteen percent of the names submitted. He said the CST may wish to make recommendations regarding the development of the roster, including steps to achieve greater balance in geographic, gender and discipline representation.

NORWAY, the NETHERLANDS and ZIMBABWE said the names they submitted do not appear on the roster. The Secretariat said the roster will have to be maintained on a continual basis and asked for CST members to highlight errors. He also noted the format for submissions was not always followed, creating delays. The FAO asked if it could propose IGO representatives. The Secretariat said that member States supply names. TANZANIA noted the importance of including e-mail or fax information for experts.

SURVEY AND EVALUATION: UNEP reported that it is establishing agreements with other consortium members to conduct the survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies, as requested by COP-1 in Decision 23/COP.1. He also reported that a questionnaire is being prepared and will be distributed before the end of COP-2, and the final report can be expected in July 1999 for review at COP-3. The UK and EGYPT expressed disappointment that there was no written report and that delegations therefore could not deal with the issue until COP-3. The UK noted that the dates of the next COP meeting have not yet been fixed.

BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS: The Secretariat introduced the report of the *ad hoc* panel on benchmarks and indicators (ICCD/COP(2)/CSD/3 and Add.1). Over twenty participants intervened on this issue, which the Chair highlighted to indicate the level of interest in it. SPAIN noted the need to evaluate the cost of desertification for the benefit of decision-makers. She also stressed capacity building to implement the methodology for impact indicators. FRANCE, supported by MOROCCO, said the methodology should be tested as soon as possible to learn how it works. The UK, supported by JAPAN, noted the need to harmonize work with that done by other conventions. The Inter-State Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) noted the importance of information collection and exchange and capacity building so that affected countries can know what information is available and can be used for implementation.

ARGENTINA noted its experience in implementing impact indicators and supported moving the process to the second phase. CUBA expressed the same desire and appealed for financial

support to evaluate implementation. TUNISIA noted the social and economic implications of the methodology for impact indicators and called for financial assistance to countries particularly in his region.

The NETHERLANDS stressed the relevance of indicators in relation to NAPs and asked if the *ad hoc* panel considered how to use feedback from monitoring. SENEGAL supported testing the methodological system and said it has reached a stage where it can do field tests. The Sahara/Sahel Observatory (OSS) stressed that it facilitated self-evaluations and offered to share the results and lessons learned from African countries' tests of the methodology. BURKINA FASO said his country selected nine indicators adapted to national conditions and hopes to produce results by 1999. CHILE noted that developing benchmarks can be difficult and that data collection involves costs. CHINA said the establishment of benchmarks and indicators is useful in implementation.

UNDP said priority should be on indicators for national and sub-national, including community, levels and highlighted the need to address accessibility to core data sets. KENYA called on development partners to mobilize resources to increase capacity to develop indicators. ITALY stressed the importance of an information system to check the impacts of strategies. GERMANY supported testing indicators on the national level that are appropriate with little input from external sources. MAURITANIA said indicators are relative and cannot be applied everywhere. The Arab Center for the Study of Arid Zones and Drylands said projects should move from the regional to sub-regional to national level and indicators should take into consideration socio-economic impacts and costs. CUBA said indicators must serve a country's needs but be global to enable assessment.

BODIES PERFORMING WORK SIMILAR TO THE CST: The Secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(2)/CST/4, which compiles information provided by various institutions and conventions about groups doing work similar to that envisaged for the CST. He said additions or corrections could be offered.

An NGO representative stressed the importance of the CST to NGOs in combatting desertification and suggested that it address "local science" rather than "local knowledge."

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates to the CST expressed disappointment that the UNEP-led survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies has only just commenced and that a progress report was not included in their COP-2 documents. Several explained that delays in securing funding and commitments from the collaborating organizations were among the reasons for the late start. Some expressed pleasure with the speed of work since the funding arrangements were finalized a little over two months ago. They looked forward to reviewing the network project proposal that UNEP distributed informally during the Tuesday afternoon CST meeting.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: The COW is expected to meet at 9:30 am to begin discussing outstanding items, including the rules of procedure, review of implementation at the regional level and the report of the Global Mechanism.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: The CST is scheduled to discuss traditional knowledge during morning and afternoon sessions in room B 012.