



SUMMARY OF THE SECOND CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION 30 NOVEMBER - 11 DECEMBER 1998

Delegates to the Second Conference of the Parties (COP-2) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) met in Dakar, Senegal, from 30 November to 11 December 1998. The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) met in parallel to the COP on 1 to 4 December. Delegates approved arrangements for the institutional linkage between the Convention and the UN Secretariat and the headquarters agreement with the Government of Germany, where the Secretariat is scheduled to move in early 1999. The COP approved adjustments to its budget and adopted the outstanding rules of procedure concerning bureau members, but retained bracketed language regarding majority voting absent consensus. Eastern and Central European countries were invited to submit to COP-3 a draft regional implementation annex.

The CST established an *ad hoc* panel to follow-up its discussion on links between traditional and modern knowledge. Delegates considered, but deferred to COP-3, decisions on the Secretariat's medium-term strategy, adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding between the COP and IFAD regarding the Global Mechanism, and the G-77/China proposal to establish a Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention. Delegates expressed pleasure with the CST's discussion on traditional knowledge, as well as with an informal discussion on experience implementing NAPs and NGO dialogues on these two issues. Insights into the COP's and CST's ability to translate deliberations into action will have to wait, however; late-starts on both the UNEP-led survey and evaluation of existing networks and the operation of the Global Mechanism, called for by COP-1, precluded substantive discussions on these first fruits of the CST's and COP's deliberations.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONVENTION

The Convention to Combat Desertification was adopted on 17 June 1994 and was opened for signature in October 1994 in Paris. Three months following the receipt of its fiftieth ratification, the Convention entered into force on 26 December 1996. As of 22 October 1998, 144 countries had ratified or acceded to the CCD.

The Convention recognizes: the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of desertification; the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand-driven; and the involvement of local populations. The core of the CCD is the development of

national and subregional/regional action programmes by national governments in cooperation with donors, local populations and NGOs. The purpose of using an innovative "bottom-up" approach, by involving people who are affected by desertification in decision-making, is to facilitate effective implementation of the Convention.

NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION: In 1992, the UN General Assembly, as requested by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), adopted Resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa (INCD). At the organizational session of the INCD in January 1993, delegates elected Bo Kjellén (Sweden) as Chair of the Committee. The INCD met five times between May 1993 and June 1994, during which delegates drafted the Convention and four regional annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin American and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean. The Convention was adopted on 17 June 1994, along with resolutions recommending urgent action for Africa and interim arrangements for the period between adoption of the CCD and its entry into force.

THE INTERIM PERIOD: Pending the CCD's entry into force, the INCD met six times between January 1995 and August 1997 to hear progress reports on urgent action taking place in Africa and interim measures in other regions, and to prepare for COP-1. The preparations included discussion of issues such as the Secretariat's

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programme and budget, the functions of and administrative arrangements for the Global Mechanism, the physical location of the Permanent Secretariat and the establishment of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). Although considerable progress was made, especially on scientific and technological cooperation, some important issues remained unresolved at the end of the last session of the INCD. The size and membership of the COP Bureau were left for COP-1 to decide, as were questions about the host institutions and some functions of the Global Mechanism.

THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES: The First Conference of the Parties (COP-1) to the CCD met in Rome, Italy, from 29 September to 10 October 1997. The CST held its first session simultaneously on 2-3 October. One hundred and two States submitted their instruments of ratification by the requisite date and participated as Parties to the Convention. The COP-1 and CST-1 agendas contained primarily organizational matters. Delegates selected Bonn, Germany, as the location for the Permanent Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as the organization to administer the Global Mechanism. At the CST's recommendation, the COP established an *ad hoc* panel to oversee the continuation of the process of surveying benchmarks and indicators and decided that CST-2 would consider linkages between traditional knowledge and modern technology. One Plenary meeting was devoted to a dialogue between NGOs and delegates on building partnerships within the CCD. Argentina's proposal that Plenary meetings at future COPs be devoted to similar NGO dialogues was also adopted. While most delegates were pleased with the two-week session, they looked forward to COP-2 where they would delve into more substantive issues related to combating desertification.

REPORT OF COP-2

The Second Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification began with an opening ceremony on Monday morning, 30 November 1998. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal, welcomed participants and thanked them for convening COP-2 in Senegal, on Sahelian soil. He highlighted the problems desertification poses to Africa and Senegal in particular, as well as actions taken to combat this phenomenon at all levels. He suggested that the COP, in moving toward its operational phase, consider how to coordinate activities under the CCD, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC), and arrive at the precise definition of the role and operational procedures of the Global Mechanism.

During the opening Plenary on Monday afternoon, delegates elected Souty Touré, Senegal's Minister of Environment and Protection of Nature, as COP-2 President. He said this meeting should enable participants to have an in-depth exchange of views on implementation and institutional arrangements. UN Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs Nitin Desai, on behalf of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, highlighted three ways in which the CCD exemplifies and follows-up on Rio: it shows how environmental and development objectives can be served in the same framework; it reflects the Rio partnership between developed and developing countries; and it recognizes the interaction between sectoral and among cross-sectoral themes. CCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo introduced the documents prepared for COP-2 and reported on recent meetings and workshops, including an interregional forum. He stressed the importance of focal points and national coordinating bodies, noting that recent reports indicate that the weakness of focal points is a reason for delay in implementation. He emphasized that the Secretariat would continue to work with Parties during the implementation phase.

During the following two weeks, delegates met in Plenary, the Committee of the Whole (COW) and its three informal negotiating groups and the CST to discuss the COP's agenda items and possible draft decisions. The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) met from 1 to 4 December. Delegates dialogued with NGOs during half-day COW sessions on 3 and 10 December. An informal discussion on

experiences with National Action Programmes (NAPs) took place on 4 December. On 7 December, parliamentarians from 21 countries convened an Interparliamentary Round Table on the contribution they can make to the implementation of the Convention. A Special Segment, during which ministers, high-level governmental officials and representatives from intergovernmental organizations addressed the ways and means to implement the CCD, took place on 8 and 9 December. The following report separates the deliberations into three sections: Plenary deliberations, the COW and the CST. The COW and CST reports are organized around delegates' discussions on the COP-2 decisions.

PLENARY DELIBERATIONS

PROCEDURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: On 30 November, the COP President introduced the provisional agenda (ICCD/COP(2)/1) for adoption. The EU proposed adding reference to an "exchange of views" in connection with the review of CCD implementation. Benin, on behalf of the African Group, noted that a special segment was scheduled to discuss implementation. Following consultations, delegates agreed to discuss the issue at the expert level and at the Special Segment and adopted the agenda. Delegates agreed to establish a COW, which Benin said would be *ad hoc* until a decision was taken to form a subsidiary body of the COP on matters relating to implementation of the Convention.

Delegates then adopted the agenda of the CST (ICCD/COP(2)/CST/1) and nominated members of the Bureau. The African Group nominated Tunisia and Chad and said Senegal would have a double role as President and Bureau member. The Asian Group nominated Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The Western Europe and Others Group nominated Belgium and Canada. The East European Group nominated Armenia and Azerbaijan. The Latin American and Caribbean Group nominated Antigua and Barbuda and Argentina. Mohammad Reza Jabbari (Iran) was elected to chair the CST. The nominations exceeded the nine bureau members allowed by the rules of procedure. Following informal consultations on Tuesday, 1 December, delegates accepted nine nominations for 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 (Jordan), Ali Saad Altokhais (Saudi Arabia) and Hatem Ben Salem (Tunisia). Marc Gedopt was selected to Chair the COW and Samvel Baloyan was selected to serve as Rapporteur.

On 1 December, delegates accredited the IGOs and NGOs listed in ICCD/COP(2)/12. They accorded observer status to additional international organizations, as proposed in ICCD/COP(2)/12/Add.1, on Friday, 4 December.

STATEMENTS BY PARTIES AND OBSERVERS: Parties and observers offered statements in several Plenary meetings over the course of COP-2. During the opening Plenary, Indonesia, on behalf of the G-77/China, called for the elaboration of national, regional and subregional programmes and stressed the need to establish and operate regional coordinating units as soon as possible to facilitate implementation. He expressed concern over the lack of enthusiasm of some partners and called on them to provide financial and institutional assistance. He regretted that the Global Mechanism did not commence operations on 1 January 1998, as decided at COP-1. He hoped that COP-2 would take decisive action in the establishment of a committee to review the implementation of the Convention and its institutional arrangements.

Austria, on behalf of the EU, underscored the importance of coordination between donors and affected countries and said a coordination tool that reflects the intentions of all partners will reduce duplication of work and assure a precise definition of respective tasks. He noted the important relationship and benefits of coordinating efforts between desertification, water, climate change and biodiversity. He called for a further elaboration of the Secretariat's role and a clear division of labor between the Global Mechanism and the Secretariat.



Canada, on behalf of JUSCANZ, promised its support and cooperation at COP-2. Ecuador, on behalf of GRULAC, highlighted its Regional Action Programme (RAP), which has led to the establishment of a regional coordination unit and a regional information network. He expressed concern over the imbalance in budget distribution among the regions and representation on the Secretariat. Masse Lo (ENDA), on behalf of the NGO community, said the scheduled dialogues between NGOs and the COP indicate Parties' commitment to partnership and a new challenge for NGOs. He expressed concern with the delays in operating the Global Mechanism, asked participants to consider opportunities presented by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), particularly since the Global Mechanism is not fully operational. He emphasized civil society's important role in the creation and implementation of NAPs at all levels and welcomed the establishment of an NGO office within the Convention Secretariat.

In other Plenary statements, Argentina emphasized the need for a strong and efficient Secretariat with clear functions that are different but coordinated with those of the Global Mechanism, and called for a balance in the budget among the regions. Israel called attention to the establishment of an information center that will produce real-time interpreted satellite images of drylands in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. The Russian Federation, supported by Armenia and Azerbaijan, called for progress on the definition of a fifth regional implementation annex. Azerbaijan said increased desertification has resulted from the wars in Eastern Europe. Romania announced that it has ratified the CCD and begun working on its NAP. Syria highlighted activities undertaken nationally and regionally to combat desertification. Japan called attention to the fact that it became a Party on 10 December 1998 and called on the US and other non-Parties to conclude the process of accession to Party status.

STATEMENTS BY INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS:

A number of representatives from international organizations also addressed the COP Plenary. The Ramsar Convention said many wetlands can be found in the world's arid zones and encouraged coordinating related activities at the national and international levels. He highlighted the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has been prepared for the Ramsar and CCD Secretariats. Noting its Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) with the CCD, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) stressed the importance of cooperation to reduce the burdens and optimize the limited resources of Parties and the Conventions. She highlighted the interdependence of loss of biodiversity, deforestation, soil degradation and desertification and noted that drylands will be examined at CBD COP-5.

The League of Arab States described the efforts of the Arab Center 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 the local population and NGOs in implementing the CCD. The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) described various activities, including 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. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) called on the COP to include in its agenda mechanisms for cooperation between the CCD, CBD and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), and improvement of systematic observation systems. 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 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 infor-

mation; facilitating regional cooperation; the participation of civil society; assisting in synergizing Conventions; and securing GEF financing. The World Bank highlighted efforts on land degradation and management and said internal procedures ensure that environmental and social concerns are represented in its activities. He noted collaborative efforts as an implementing agency of the GEF and said the FCCC might make soil projects eligible as Clean Development Mechanism projects.

SPECIAL SEGMENT: The Special Segment convened on Tuesday and Wednesday, 8 and 9 December, during which 82 speakers addressed the ways and means to implement the CCD. The speakers' list included 18 ministers, 56 governmental officials and eight international organization representatives. Delegates addressed a wide range of issues that generally focused on the following areas: issues related to accession to CCD; CCD institutional issues; international cooperation and developed country action; and national activities under their NAPs and priority issues.

Several delegates highlighted issues related to accession to the CCD. The Russian Federation and several Eastern and Central European countries supported a fifth implementation annex to the CCD, which they believed would accelerate some countries' accession to the Convention. The Republic of Korea will submit the CCD to its national assembly in the coming year for consideration. Bangladesh called for countries that have not yet done so to accede to the CCD, in particular donor countries. The US expressed its hope that it will participate as a Party at COP-3.

Speakers also discussed CCD institutional issues. For example, Argentina called for the definition of instruments to facilitate the Global Mechanism and called for commitment to sustain technical and financial support to the CST. The G-77/China, the Gambia, Egypt, Botswana and Peru, among others, underlined the necessity for the Global Mechanism's operationalization in 1999, and called for countries to provide resources to achieve this. The G-77/China said a strong Secretariat is the essential and key machinery for implementation. Mauritania said the CCD Secretariat must be given the freedom to implement its responsibilities. Germany indicated it has done its share to ensure the timely operation of the Permanent Secretariat in January 1999. Kazakhstan commended the Secretariat's work on benchmarks and indicators and expressed an interest in testing the methodology. The EU said the CST should provide usable advice, develop a structured work programme and complement related work undertaken by other bodies. The US said the COP, CST and Global Mechanism should work together and focus on identifying and channeling resources to those most in need.

Burkina Faso and others supported establishing a committee to review implementation. Italy, supported by Cape Verde, Angola and others, called for a mandate of Dakar that would lead to a protocol with specific commitments by COP-4. Cape Verde suggested naming 2000 the world Year of Desertification to promote public awareness.

International cooperation and developed country action were also stressed. Tunisia noted that the socio-economic consequences of desertification transcend borders, making it a global concern. Myanmar and Chad called for international financial and technical support to facilitate affected developing countries' projects against desertification.

The EU said it would continue to be a major source of financing for the CCD, will seek to make resource use more efficient and help the Global Mechanism mobilize resources. France appealed to bilateral and multilateral donors to increase funds for combating desertification and called for more efficient use of resources. Sweden outlined a six-step process for building operational partnerships, starting with a bottom-up preparation process in affected countries. The UK said it is increasing its development assistance over the coming years and recognizes the need to raise its citizens' awareness of the CCD's objectives. Denmark discussed its continuous support to affected devel-



oping countries and called for the international donor community's further cooperation. Several speakers called for GEF financing of CCD-related projects.

Several international organizations discussed ways through which they could facilitate implementation. The GEF said its Council has stipulated that its operational strategy should include land degradation as an integral part of its activities. A new GEF initiative, "dialogue workshops," will offer workshops on project identification, how to access GEF resources and the GEF project cycle. UNDP said it will strengthen its actions in areas including building capacity, strengthening country offices' support to CCD implementation, facilitating the sharing of experience and promoting the GEF's dryland portfolio. UNEP said it could offer the CCD support based on four main areas of expertise: GEF projects; assessment, evaluation and awareness promotion; synergies with other conventions; and regional coordination through its six regional offices. The FAO can support implementation by, *inter alia*, acting as a mediator and technical assistant in support of NAPs and through the identification and dissemination of best practices. UNCTAD can play a role by, *inter alia*, providing information about preferential trade arrangements to ensure their better utilization. The FCCC suggested coordinating with the CCD on logistics and administrative arrangements. He called for an integrated scientific vision and said he relied on strengthened UNEP capacities to achieve this. He also hoped to relaunch the integration of national reports within the three Rio conventions.

Speakers also indicated various activities under their NAPs and outlined priority issues. Algeria's efforts include the monitoring and remote sensing of sensitive regions. Concerns of Niger's grassroots actors include their lack of alternative sources of energy to firewood. El Salvador said natural catastrophes must remind Parties of their commitment to protect the environment and noted activities in the framework of regional cooperation in Latin America. Tanzania's national experience indicates the importance of political willingness and strong mechanisms for awareness raising, harmonized crosscutting activities, technical support and clear elaboration of partnership arrangements, and reliable and sustainable financial arrangements. Sudan noted that participatory approaches were central to national activities to combat desertification and called on donors to support these efforts.

Participants at Uganda's first national forum identified the following priorities: information exchange, capacity development, soil and water conservation and management, alternative energy sources, development of appropriate technologies and institutional support. Madagascar presented an overview of its three-phase national environmental action plan. South Africa underscored women's vital role in implementing the CCD. Priority areas for Botswana's NAP are, *inter alia*: poverty alleviation and community empowerment; partnership building and networking between stakeholders; education and technology development; and strengthening capacity for research and information. The Annex IV countries called for, *inter alia*: cooperation between the CCD Secretariat and EU agencies on pilot projects; a network to monitor desertification at the national and Mediterranean basin scale; the identification, elaboration and use of a common set of impact indicators; and the sharing of traditional knowledge. Israel suggested exploring ways to exploit the drylands' advantages, such as solar energy. Jamaica, Tuvalu and the Cook Islands highlighted the needs of the South Pacific region and small island States and requested attention by the Secretariat.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

At the first Plenary meeting, on 30 November, the COP established a COW to consider outstanding issues for adoption by the COP. The COW began its deliberations on Wednesday, 2 December, and met nine times. The COW's agenda included the outstanding rules of procedure, designation of a Permanent Secretariat, programme and budget, review of implementation of budget, report of the Global Mechanism, promotion and strengthening of relationships with other

conventions, and annexes on arbitration and conciliation procedures. Regional and interest groups tabled draft texts that served as the basis for negotiations on the COP's decisions.

Marc Gedopt (Belgium) served as its Chair. David Johansson (Finland), Harold Acemah (Uganda) and John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) chaired informal consultations on legal issues, CCD implementation and budget and programme of work for 1999, respectively. Mame Balla Sy (Senegal) held informal consultations on the MOU between the COP and IFAD and Giorgio Franchetti Pardo (Italy) conducted consultations on outstanding rules of procedure.

OUTSTANDING RULES OF PROCEDURE: On Wednesday, 2 December, the COW considered the outstanding rules of procedure. COP-1 adopted the rules of procedure subject to bracketed text in Rules 22(1), 31 (composition of the Bureau) and 47(1) (majority required absent consensus). Discussions on these outstanding rules at COP-2, contained in document ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1, resulted in a resolution regarding the composition of the Bureau. On the issue of majority voting, which has proven difficult for other conventions, particularly the FCCC, the COP transmitted revised bracketed language to COP-3 for further consultation.

Regarding the composition of the Bureau, the G-77/China said Parties should pay particular attention to equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected country Parties, particularly those in Africa, and favored removing an additional reference to representation based on the implementation annexes. JUSCANZ agreed that affected country Parties should be adequately represented in the Bureau and said the current non-bracketed text already reflected this. He said Rules 22(1) and 31 mirror and should remain consistent with CCD Article 22(6). He further stated that the annexes did not correspond with the regional groups of the UN system and this additional language would introduce rigidity and complicate elections. Spain said he did not intend to part from the UN groupings, nor did he intend to provide permanent positions, but stated that adding a reference to annex countries was logical given the structure of the CCD since they have assumed special obligations under the Convention.

Regarding Rule 47(1), the G-77/China said that, absent consensus, to which Parties should always strive, a "simple majority vote" and not a "two-thirds majority vote" should be permitted. JUSCANZ supported consensus decisions on key matters, particularly financial.

After informal consultations, the COP adopted text for Rules 22(1) and 31. In both rules, after "due regard shall be paid to the need to ensure equitable geographic distribution and adequate representation of affected country Parties, particularly those in Africa," the COP agreed to insert "while not neglecting affected country Parties in other regions." Regarding Rule 47(1), the COP added "a simple majority vote" in brackets to the bracketed option "two-thirds majority vote." The COP retained intact a bracketed exception for decisions pertaining to Articles 21 and 22(2)(g) (financial mechanisms and programme and budget), which would be taken by consensus only.

DESIGNATION OF A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUNCTIONING: At the outset of discussions on this issue on Thursday, 3 December, which were based on documents ICCD/COP(2)/9 and ICCD/COP(2)/8, Corr.1, Add.1 and Add.2, Executive Secretary Diallo noted that in December 1997, the UN General Assembly approved the institutional linkage between the CCD Secretariat and the UN. He also noted Decision 3/COP.1, which mirrors FCCC arrangements, accepting the offer for the UN to provide the administrative and support arrangements for the Convention Secretariat during the period of this linkage.

Diallo and Germany highlighted that the headquarters agreement signed with the German Government on 18 August 1998 has identical terms to that of the FCCC Secretariat. Diallo said ratification by the German Parliament should take place in early 1999, but added that the necessary minimum conditions for adoption by the COP had been achieved. Germany said it had forwarded DM2 million to the Secretariat as part of the agreement and promised to pay its contribution to the Secretariat's core budget in January 1999.



The COP adopted the headquarters agreement of the Permanent Secretariat, which approves the agreement subject to its ratification by the Federal Republic of Germany. The decision also notes that Germany has issued an ordinance, which became effective on 23 October 1998, implementing major parts of the agreement under German law, and that three articles of the agreement require ratification. Germany requested that the COP-2 Plenary report reflect that the agreement will most likely be ratified by early 1999 and that it provides for the equal treatment of the Secretariats of the CCD and FCCC.

PROGRAMME AND BUDGET: Discussions on the programme and budget on Thursday, 3 December, were based on documents ICCD/COP(2)/2 and 3. Diallo said expenditure of the supplementary and special funds for 1999 suggest a reduction of 10% of the proposals outlined at COP-1. Eighty-two percent of the supplementary fund would be concentrated on facilitation, external relations and public information programmes. The special fund would support the participation of affected countries at the COP and at sessions of its subsidiary bodies.

Delegates discussed at length the adjustments to the budget to accommodate new Parties, the financing of coordination units and support for the coordination of the Rio Conventions, the contribution of the host government and the scale of contributions. The Secretariat noted the availability of an updated scale of contributions and said 20 of the 32 core staff will relocate to Bonn. She noted the experimental basis of the financing from the UN Secretariat due to concerns expressed over the possible use of the funds to offset the contributions of member States and said support to the regional level was drawn from the supplementary funds and not the core budget. The EU proposed continuing discussions on the proposed budgetary adjustments in a smaller group.

Following deliberations in the contact group, delegates reached agreement on adjustments to the Convention budget and programme for 1999. Among its provisions are: approval of the revised core budget for 1999 amounting to US\$6.1 million; approval of the creation of a new trust fund for the special annual contribution from the German Government; a request to the Executive Secretary to submit at COP-3 a proposed programme budget for 2000/2001; and adoption of an indicative scale of contributions by Parties to the general fund of the Convention. The COP adopted the text as well as the Secretariat's notes on the review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds in 1998.

MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY: On Friday, 4 December, the COW considered the Secretariat's medium-term strategy (ICCD/COP(2)/6), which was the Secretariat's proactive attempt to synergize conventions. The G-77/China supported the Secretariat's strategy and proposals for future action and said the document should be used as the basis for future discussion. The EU and JUSCANZ did not support the document as a basis for further discussion, stating that it suggested an operational role for the Secretariat. They stressed that the Secretariat is intended to play a facilitating and coordinating role for Parties, and should not conflict with the roles of the Global Mechanism, CST and specialized agencies involved in combating desertification. The G-77/China stressed that the Secretariat's mandate should not be limited solely to the provisions of Article 23 and that he interpreted the EU and JUSCANZ positions as a non-objective and restrictive interpretation of the Secretariat's strategy.

Concern was expressed that these were attempts to reduce the Secretariat to its lowest common denominator, which would tend to confirm that the CCD was a "poor relation" of the other Rio Conventions. The NGO community noted that the Secretariat has a role to play in ensuring that NGOs and civil society are involved in implementation of the Convention at all levels, which requires the Secretariat to have the necessary means for operating a strong NGO liaison office to facilitate activities at all levels. Executive Secretary Diallo noted that,

while there are many actors, they too are limited by their mandates. He said that, where the Secretariat could contribute to facilitating the process, it should do so.

After deliberations in the non-group on implementation, the COW drafted a decision requesting the Executive Secretary to elaborate a new document and inviting Parties to make submissions on the issue by 30 April 1999. The COP noted the suggestion by the G-77/China to include in the compendium the comments, suggestions and proposals expressed at COP-2 as well as the medium-term strategy document of the Secretariat, and adopted the decision.

PROGRAMME OF WORK AT COP-3 AND COP-4: During their discussion on Friday, 4 December, on the COP's programme of work, delegates cautioned against overloading the COP agenda and stressed the need to harmonize and distribute the documentation in time. The G-77/China expressed concern over the limited time for African countries to prepare their reports for COP-3 and appealed for assistance to facilitate their timely completion. Some suggested deferring the arbitration and conciliation issues to COP-5.

The decision on the programme of work for COP-3 and COP-4 indicates that COP-3 will consider, *inter alia*: implementation reports from Africa; the Global Mechanism modalities and activities; the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other conventions; procedures and institutional mechanisms for the resolution of questions on implementation; and arbitration and conciliation procedures. COP-4 will review the implementation reports and Regional Action Programmes (RAPs) and Subregional Action Programmes (SRAPs) of affected countries other than in Africa. The decisions on the programme of work were adopted without amendment.

REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION, AND OF ITS INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, INCLUDING SUPPORT TO REGIONAL PROGRAMMES: Initial discussions on these issues, which took place on Wednesday, 2 December, were based on document ICCD/COP(2)/5, which contains information on activities undertaken at national, regional and subregional levels. The G-77/China said experiences in the interim phase highlight issues to be elaborated, including the need to: streamline the strategic planning framework for affected country Parties; encourage closer cooperation between multilateral agencies and donors at the country level; channel resources directly to the local level; and structure the level of financial support that may be expected by an affected country over a programme's life-cycle. The EU underlined the importance of the Convention in the context of sustainable development and underscored the importance of NAPs and the institutional framework in which they are set.

Several partners stressed concentration of efforts on the national and local levels based on national priorities and their integration at the subregional and regional levels. The need to ensure that the concerns expressed at the COP are adequately reflected in bilateral and multilateral discussions on priorities for assistance was emphasized. The discussions highlighted the role of NGOs and local populations in combating desertification. Burkina Faso said the understanding of partnership would remain problematic as long as donors continue to put their assistance in the framework of traditional assistance to countries. The US said any review of implementation and determination of the need for additional institutional structures internal to the Convention must include a review of activities of all existing institutions internal and external to the Convention. Several countries stressed the importance of elaborating a fifth regional implementation annex to the Convention and said informal consultations will be finalized once the countries concerned accede to Party status.

These issues were considered further in the non-groups on implementation and legal matters. Regional and interest groups tabled draft texts and the COW produced decisions on the following four issues: regional implementation annexes and interregional programmes and platforms of cooperation; regional cooperation between countries of Eastern and Central Europe; procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation; and review of implementa-



tion of the Convention. The decision on regional implementation annexes welcomes the launching of RAPs, encourages affected developing country Parties to pursue the formulation and implementation of activities for interregional implementation, requests the Executive Secretary to facilitate assistance for the effective and efficient implementation of RAPs, and calls on the international community to support RAPs and SRAPs.

During adoption in the Plenary, the EU said she appreciated the efforts undertaken by the Parties to the regional annexes to intensify their cooperation in implementing the CCD. However, she wished to have the report of the meeting reflect the EU's view that, while the COP had taken useful further steps to strengthen regional cooperation, the facilitating role of the Executive Secretary should not lead to the creation of new institutional structures, highlighting the regional coordinating units. The G-77/China also wished to have the report reflect that they supported the Secretariat's initiatives to facilitate implementation of the regional annexes and regional cooperation. GRULAC requested the Secretariat to redouble and strengthen its activities in support of national, regional and subregional activities in all regions and that more resources be allocated in a balanced manner for all regions to combat desertification.

The decision on regional cooperation between countries of Eastern and Central Europe urges observer countries from Eastern and Central Europe to take steps to become Parties, takes note of informal consultations aimed at producing an additional regional implementation annex to the Convention and invites the countries to submit a draft for consideration by COP-3.

The decision on procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation calls on interested organizations to provide technical and financial support to assist affected African country Parties in the compilation and communication of information to be submitted to COP-3 as well as to identify the technical and financial needs associated with action programmes.

The decision entitled "Review of Implementation of the Convention" notes that additional time was needed to consider establishing a mechanism to assist in the regular review of implementation of the Convention. It invites Parties to make submissions regarding this issue to the Secretariat by 30 April 1999 for compilation and consideration by COP-3. The decision also requests the Secretariat to include decision 10/COP.1, which calls on COP-3 to consider whether to establish a mechanism to assist in regularly reviewing implementation, in the COP-3 agenda. The decision also transmits to COP-3 the draft decision proposed by the G-77/China at COP-2, which calls for the establishment of a Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

GLOBAL MECHANISM: Debate on this issue, which began on Friday, 4 December, focused on reports from the Global Mechanism Managing Director and IFAD, as well as the MOU between the COP and IFAD, which was negotiated by the Secretariat and IFAD (ICCD/COP(2)/4, Add.1, CRP.1 and 2). The report on the Global Mechanism noted activities undertaken since the appointment of its Managing Director two months ago. Per Rydén, Managing Director, said he has grouped the Global Mechanism's tasks into eight operational activities, including partnership building, channeling and matchmaking, developing a database, identifying innovative techniques, and marketing and communicating the Global Mechanism as the framework for addressing land degradation issues. He said it would take time before the Global Mechanism has an impact, given its limited resources.

Speaking on behalf of IFAD, Bahman Mansuri stressed the Fund's continued support to the CCD and commitment, as the housing institution of the Global Mechanism, to make Global Mechanism operations effective. He reported on the establishment of a Facilitation Committee, which is a collaborative arrangement between IFAD, UNDP and the World Bank and has now expanded to include the CCD Secretariat, the GEF and other regional banks.

Discussions on these reports stressed the need to operationalize the Global Mechanism, noting the failure to start operations on 1 January 1998, as scheduled. Delegates noted the need to set priorities for the Global Mechanism in accordance with the CCD and stressed the need for a clear and distinct division of labor between the Global Mechanism and the Secretariat. The NGO community called for the elaboration of NGO involvement in the Global Mechanism. The EU outlined three prerequisites for successful operation of the Global Mechanism, including: conducive conditions for full ownership and responsibility of developing country Parties; consideration of the experiences of the Consultative Group on Desertification Control between 1978-88; and designation of CCD, UNDP, bilateral and multilateral donor focal points as Global Mechanism contact points. He stressed prioritizing partnership building at all levels, provision of advice on innovative financial mechanisms, identification of CCD technology financing sources, development of a Global Mechanism database for the establishment of a baseline for future performance and a joint Global Mechanism/Secretariat web site for awareness services.

The discussion on the MOU between the COP and IFAD was deferred to the non-group on legal issues whereas the report on the Global Mechanism was deliberated in the implementation non-group. The COP adopted two draft decisions. The decision on the review of the Global Mechanism: notes with concern that the Global Mechanism did not start operating on 1 January 1998, as indicated in decision 24/COP.1; requests IFAD to pursue modalities of collaboration between itself and the NGO community as well as with other interested organizations; requests the Global Mechanism to establish a consultative and collaborative process with NGOs as well as with the private sector; requests cooperation between the Global Mechanism and the Convention Secretariat to avoid duplication and enhance the effectiveness of CCD implementation; notes the financial support provided on a voluntary basis and reiterates its appeal to governments, all interested organizations and the private sector to make promptly further voluntary commitments necessary to support the activities; and decides to undertake at COP-3 the first review of the policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism and take appropriate action on this basis.

The non-group on legal issues agreed to text that deferred the decision on the MOU between the CCD COP and IFAD to COP-3. During the closing Plenary, Canada, on behalf of the OECD group of countries, explained that whereas his group was pleased with the decision on the MOU, they were disappointed by the inability to adopt the MOU between the COP and IFAD. He said that group could accept the MOU with the following amendments: all references to "agreements" and "agree" should be replaced with "MOU" and "understand;" the word "shall" should be replaced with "will;" and the phrase "entry into force" should be replaced with "entry into operation." He said that with these changes the MOU would be perfectly correct in its form and substance. The G-77/China regretted this proposed redrafting of the MOU, which he said was carefully negotiated and approved by the Secretariat and IFAD. He opposed the changes proposed by the OECD group of countries and suggested that the Secretariat continue consultations with IFAD. The statements were noted and the decision adopted.

The decision on the MOU between the CCD COP and IFAD regarding the modalities and administrative operations of the Global Mechanism decides to transmit to COP-3 the draft decision ICCD/COP(2)/L.19 submitted by G-77/China, which supports the draft MOU (ICCD/COP(2)/4/Add.1), and calls on those to whom the draft MOU is addressed to act, pending its entry into operation, "as if it were already there."

PROMOTION AND STRENGTHENING OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER RELEVANT CONVENTIONS: Discussions on this topic, which took place on Tuesday, 8 December, were based on document ICCD/COP(2)/7 on collaboration with other conventions. Delegates underscored the need to enhance and strengthen cooperative activities between conventions and called for



actions to make the recommendations outlined at the five-year UNCED review a reality, avoid duplication and increase efficiency. They noted that issues regarding institutional cooperation are still under the General Assembly's consideration. Delegates also suggested additional issues for inclusion in the document. Egypt proposed including terms of reference for financial cooperation between the GEF and IFAD. India stressed the importance of preserving biodiversity through the CCD and said the patenting issue and its related importance in terms of the WTO agreement should be reflected in the document. Iceland noted the tendency under the FCCC to limit discussions on sinks to forestry activities and supported including, in the scientific and technical linkages section, restoration of degraded lands that would serve the objectives of both the FCCC and CCD. The Secretariat said improved coordination and synergies at the field level would be reflected in future endeavors.

The decision adopted by COP-2 requests the Secretariat to implement document ICCD/COP(2)/7, in consultation with other relevant secretariats, and to develop an MOU to define their collaboration and cooperation. It also requests the Executive Secretary, in preparing documents for the COP, to seek the views of and inputs from relevant convention secretariats, as well as from relevant organizations.

RESOLUTION OF QUESTIONS: ANNEXES ON ARBITRATION AND CONCILIATION PROCEDURES: On Tuesday, 8 December, in considering the issue of procedures and institutional mechanisms to resolve questions on implementation and an annex on arbitration and conciliation procedures, based on ICCD/COP(2)/10, the Secretariat noted that the adoption of annexes would require an amendment to the Convention, as outlined in CCD Article 30. Delegates agreed that, compared with the FCCC, which has recently decided to establish a multilateral consultative process, the CCD is a young Convention and the development of such a process would require further discussion. Regarding the issue of an annex for arbitration and conciliation procedures, debate centered on the G-77/China's preference to create an *ad hoc* experts group to discuss the issue and refer it to COP-3 versus the EU/JUSCANZ preference for a Secretariat compilation of submissions for COP-3, taking into account other conventions' experiences. Egypt and China stressed that a compilation of views alone was insufficient and that an open-ended working group was indispensable for discussion. Syria said implementation of the Convention must occur first, particularly progress on the Global Mechanism's operation, and only then could the COP predict disputes that might arise and adopt appropriate procedures.

The COP decision agrees to revisit the issue at COP-3, in light of the progress of negotiations on the same issue in other relevant environmental conventions, and to consider the establishment of an open-ended *ad hoc* group to examine and make recommendations on the issue, taking into account the document prepared by the Secretariat.

OTHER MATTERS: In addition to its agenda items, the COP considered other issues raised by delegates and adopted two decisions and one resolution on them. The COP unanimously adopted a resolution expressing solidarity with Central America over the devastation caused by Hurricane Mitch. The resolution invites the international community to contribute to the reconstruction and provide humanitarian assistance. It urges all governments, UN agencies, IGOs, NGOs, the private sector and society to offer technical and financial assistance to the effective execution of the national action plans of the affected countries and subregional programmes for combating desertification.

The COP adopted, as an annex to the COP-2 report, the Report on the Round Table of Parliamentarians, which includes the Declaration by Members of Parliaments regarding the process of implementation of the CCD.

The COP also adopted a decision on administrative and support arrangements for the Secretariat, including interim arrangements. This decision calls on the UN General Assembly to finance from the UN regular programme budget the conference servicing costs arising from sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies for the period of their institutional linkage. The US, in anticipation of becoming an active

member of the CCD, said that, as a matter of principle, such costs should not be borne by the UN regular budget but solely by Parties to the CCD on a voluntary basis. She added that language introduced in the US Congress proposes withholding its proportionate share of conference servicing costs for all conventions funded from the UN regular budget, and that if such language were to become law, the US would fall even further behind in its regular budget payments to the UN. She stressed parity with the sister conventions, noted that similar language was not adopted during FCCC COP-4, and said the related paragraph should have been dropped. She requested that her statement be reflected in the COP-2 report.

DIALOGUE WITH NGOS: Two COW sessions at COP-2 were devoted to dialogues with NGOs. The first session, which took place on Thursday, 3 December, focused on issues related to traditional knowledge. The second session, which took place on Thursday, 10 December, focused on the process of developing NAPs. The dialogues were organized around presentations by several NGOs, followed by comments from the floor.

During the dialogue on traditional knowledge, RIOD Mexico, the Nigeria Environmental Study Team (NEST), and Conseil National de Concertation des Ruraux (CNCR) Senegal discussed national actions and plans, noting the importance of considering sustainable livelihood activities in the NAP preparation process, the need to recognize small producer organizations on the same basis as NGOs, the establishment of effective funding and co-management of resources, and the role of NGOs in implementing NAPs. Environnement et développement (Area-ED) from Algeria, Association des volontaires du développement (AVD) Burkina Faso, and Conseil des ONG d'Appui au Développement (CONGAD) from Senegal spoke on partnership building, stressing the need for: new partnerships on information and dissemination of traditional knowledge; the establishment and enhancement of partnerships between NGOs, civil society, women's groups and national organizations; and the modalities of the partnerships in the context of NAPs. Los Algarrobos of Argentina and Comité de Coordination des Actions des ONG au Mali made interventions on communication and research. They underlined the inter-linkage between communication and participatory approaches and proposed including institutional capacity building in national programmes. The role of religion and religious institutions in facilitating participation was noted. Pro natura of the Dominican Republic and the Salvadoran Center of Appropriate Technology (CESTA) introduced the dialogue on appropriate technologies. They stressed the need for: incorporating traditional knowledge systems in CCD implementation; informed action based on traditional knowledge and appropriate technology; and a record of traditional practices to facilitate appropriately evaluated solutions. Discussants applauded the role women play in arid areas, as presented by representatives of women's groups from Cameroon and Senegal, not only in the guidance of culture but also in ensuring the stability of complex systems. They noted the urgency to protect women's know-how and address desertification, which threatens the resources on which their activities are based, and stressed the role of NGOs as facilitators of access by women at all levels.

During the second dialogue on the NAP process, Sweden urged NGOs to encourage developing country Parties to clearly identify their priorities. ENDA recommended information promotion and awareness raising strategies to facilitate local community involvement. He also noted that the dependence of coordinating mechanisms on external financing compromises long-term viability. The Women's Caucus of RIOD said women have been heavily involved in NAP preparation in the developing world, particularly in Africa, and called for more attention to women's voices at all levels. SCOPE/RIOD-Asia highlighted the need to explore ways to mobilize community-based organizations (CBOs) to participate in implementing the CCD and noted that NGOs can play a role in linking CBOs with national and international communities. EcoNews Africa identified ways to enhance local capacity, including improved local networks, assistance to women and strengthened local-level informal institutions. On partnership arrangements, the German Working Group on Desertification noted that the



concerned institutions' legal status, policy mandates, operational levels, and financial and human resources generally determine partnerships. On the experience of NAPs and civil society in Central Asian countries, RIOD-Central Asia highlighted the CCD's unique call for a wide range of civil society participation at all stages of NAPs and expressed concern over the lack of NGO participation in the NAP process in the region. The Network of Sustainable Development for Africa recalled NGOs' historical role in the whole CCD process, noting the importance of building partnership between governments and NGOs. Youth for Action (India) summarized the dialogue and presented four NGO recommendations: awareness-raising workshops and pilot projects at the local level; a special NGO dialogue session at CST-3; political will and support to integrate local communities and women with the NAP process; and convening an NGO preparatory meeting before COP-3.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) met from 1 to 4 December. Mohammad Reza Jabbari (Iran) served as Chair of the CST. Delegates elected Guido Soto (Chile), Samuel Mutiso (Kenya) and Linda Brown (UK) as Vice-Chairs. Delegates agreed that Romania, the remaining CCD Party from Eastern Europe without a COP-2 Bureau seat, could nominate the fourth Vice-Chair, but such a nomination did not take place. Linda Brown also served as Rapporteur. The Committee developed draft decisions on the roster of experts, survey and evaluation of existing networks, benchmarks and indicators, bodies performing work similar to the CST, traditional knowledge, and the CST-3 programme of work.

ROSTER OF EXPERTS: On Tuesday, 1 December, CST delegates evaluated the roster of experts (ICCD/COP(2)/11 and Add.1) and considered whether to make recommendations regarding its development. Several delegates noted the absence of the names they submitted or that full addresses, including electronic addresses, were missing from the roster. The Secretariat said the roster would have to be continually updated and noted that the format for submissions is not always followed, which creates delays and incomplete entries. France suggested asking for submissions on use of the roster.

The decision invites Parties to supplement their submissions for the roster to ensure that under-represented areas are addressed, in particular in terms of gender equity, better representation of relevant disciplines, and increasing representation of experts from NGOs and IOs. The draft also requests the Secretariat to make available an updated roster in electronic and hard copy formats.

SURVEY AND EVALUATION: The CST considered this topic on Tuesday, 1 December. UNEP reported to the CST that, as requested in Decision 23/COP.1, it is establishing agreements with other consortium members to conduct the survey of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies. He also reported that a questionnaire would be distributed before the end of COP-2 and the final report is expected in July 1999 for review at COP-3. The UK and Egypt expressed disappointment that UNEP's report was not written and that delegations therefore could not deal with the issue until COP-3. Delegates adopted the CST Chair's draft decision on this issue, requesting UNEP to expedite the survey and evaluation in conformity with its COP-1 mandate and to submit a report to COP-3. It also requests UNEP to submit to CST-3 a methodology for carrying out the second and third phases of the survey and evaluation.

BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS: On Tuesday, 1 December, the Secretariat introduced the report of the *ad hoc* panel on benchmarks and indicators (ICCD/COP(2)/CST/3 and Add.1), which was established at COP-1 and met twice during the past year. Over 20 participants took the floor to propose testing or implementing the methodology for impact indicators, note the importance of financial assistance and capacity building to do so, and/or discuss their experience testing them. Germany proposed testing indicators on the national level that could be appropriate with little input from external sources. The UK and Japan suggested that the work be harmonized with similar work under other conventions. Delegates also discussed the level on

which the indicators should be tested and to which they should apply. The Netherlands asked if the *ad hoc* panel considered how to use feedback from monitoring.

The decision contains several comments on the report of the *ad hoc* panel, including notes regarding the need for a harmonized approach with other conventions and relevant organizations and suggesting that the CST focus on programmes that build on national/local capacities to develop and use indicators. The decision also recommends: requesting the COP to endorse the methodological framework for impact indicators proposed by the panel, pending their testing and validation; inviting governments to initiate testing the impact indicators; and encouraging countries in a position to provide assistance to initiate testing. Delegates also called for representatives of the Convention annex regions to present to CST-4 their experience in applying impact indicators to permit evaluation and refinement of the methodology.

BODIES PERFORMING WORK SIMILAR TO THE CST:

On Tuesday, 1 December, the CST considered this issue. 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 invited additions or corrections, which some delegates offered. The decision adopted on this issue invites governments to update the information contained in Secretariat reports on this subject. The first draft of the decision also requested the Secretariat to "pursue" potential areas of cooperation between the CCD and other conventions and organizations. The UK supported a more precise definition of what the Secretariat would do, and delegates requested the Secretariat to "update the information on" potential areas of cooperation.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: On Wednesday, 2 December, the CST considered traditional knowledge. The Synopsis of Reports on Traditional Knowledge (ICCD/COP(2)/CST/5) summarized contributions from 12 Parties and 5 observers and served as a starting point for the CST's day-long discussion. CENESTA (Center for Ecocodevelopment Studies and Application), speaking on behalf of the NGO Working Group on the CST, highlighted several points that delegates also emphasized. She pointed out traditional knowledge's prominence in the planning and implementation of NAPs, the need for synergy between local knowledge systems and modern science, and for partnerships between scientists and local experts. On links between traditional and modern technology, to which many speakers referred, the FAO said they form a continuum. Morocco stressed the synergies in combining traditional and modern technologies. Finland and Spain suggested using modern technologies to improve traditional knowledge.

A number of speakers highlighted findings from related reports, projects or technologies. The Secretariat highlighted its ongoing compilation of traditional knowledge in certain subregions, which will describe the techniques and note the extent to which they are transferable. A number of countries highlighted their experiences and expertise in this regard. WMO suggested developing a list of available publications. Additional proposals for further CST action included the identification of threats to traditional knowledge, the importance of education and communication to perpetuate traditional knowledge, and the need to coordinate with other conventions. Delegates noted possible threats to traditional knowledge, including modern technology, population growth, marginalization of women, poverty, bio-invasions and climate change (Tanzania); economic change or pressures (Brazil and Niue); and wars and civil strife (Senegal and Chad). The UK also suggested considering linkages between traditional knowledge and the UNEP-led survey of networks.

The CST Chair's summary of the discussion on traditional knowledge notes that delegates' comments included suggestions to make inventories, compile and share relevant information, exchange experiences, and establish communication networks to improve information flow so that beneficiaries are ensured of access. Delegates also emphasized the need to develop synergies and to integrate traditional knowledge with modern technologies while addressing: intellectual property



rights implications; harnessing the positive attributes of traditional knowledge; socio-economic benefits from traditional knowledge; and their integration with NAPs. To respond to key threats to traditional knowledge, delegates identified several broad measures, including: creating an enabling environment for women; identifying and developing synergies and complementarity among relevant conventions; elaborating and implementing the NAPs to improve living conditions, particularly at the community level; and introducing traditional knowledge education in all sectors of society.

Delegates closed their discussion on traditional knowledge with consideration of whether to create an *ad hoc* group and what its composition and mandate should be. Several G-77/China countries, including Egypt, Brazil, Kenya, Mauritania and Sudan, supported a panel to carry forward projects identified during the discussion. Several EU countries as well as Japan, the US, Switzerland, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan did not believe an *ad hoc* panel under the CST was the best place to accomplish the work and questioned whether all of the work identified was necessary. They supported identifying ways to increase access to information and networking to assist implementation of NAPs.

Following a second discussion on the panel on Friday, 4 December, CST Chair Jabbari concluded that a significant number of CST members supported establishing a panel and asked delegates to discuss its terms of reference. The UK supported exploring linkages between the CST and other conventions' work on traditional knowledge, and preparing and presenting to the next meeting of the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) a report on traditional knowledge in dryland ecosystems drawing on CST-2 discussions and the Secretariat's ongoing compilation. Egypt proposed that the panel assess socio-economic impacts and ways and means of integrating traditional and modern knowledge. With Cuba and Kenya, he suggested that the Secretariat explore the linkages between the CST and other conventions so the panel could focus on these issues.

After informal consultations, delegates agreed that the panel would draw on the synthesis report being compiled by the Secretariat and identify and report to CST-3 successful experiences and conclusions relating to: threats and other constraints, including socio-economic impacts confronting such traditional knowledge and practices; strategies for integrating traditional knowledge and local knowledge with modern knowledge based on specific case histories; and mechanisms for promoting and exchanging successful approaches. The decision also requests the Secretariat to complete its compilation of traditional knowledge and explore ways to link the CST's work on traditional knowledge with that under other conventions. It requests UNEP to address networks on traditional and local knowledge in its survey of networks. During the closing Plenary, the following nominations for the *ad hoc* panel were accepted: Maria Urquiza (Cuba); Juan Torres Guevara (Peru); Mohammed Shatanawi (Jordan); Sunita Narain (India); Michael Tim Hoffman (South Africa); Samuel Osman Saaka (Ghana); Jean Claude Bomba (Central Africa); Ashot Vartevanian (Armenia); Christiaan Rey Philip (Germany); and Corinne Wacker (Switzerland). Jean Claude Bomba will serve as coordinator.

FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE CST: On Thursday, 3 December, the CST considered its final issue, the future work programme. The UK, supported by many, proposed selecting one institutional and one substantive/technical issue to be considered at each session. She said institutional issues could include training, research and transfer of technology and substantive aspects could include dryland management, drought early-warning systems, and water and soil management. Additional proposed topics included gender issues, the incorporation of water and land management into national policies, water collection technology, desertification mapping technologies, and capacity building.

Additional issues raised in the discussion included France, Turkey and Senegal's suggestion that existing training and research centers should be strengthened over establishing new ones. Several speakers

supported Malawi's call for policy reform to match institutional arrangements. CILSS called for strengthening scientific capacity and facilitating access to it by local communities.

Based on this discussion, the CST Chair presented delegates with a draft decision that identified the priority issue, noted that the CST-3 agenda would include topics on the CST-2 agenda, and requested the Secretariat to facilitate two intersessional extended Bureau meetings. The Chair proposed that CST-3 consider early warning systems. Several speakers, including the WMO, the UK, the G-77/China, Malawi and Sudan, supported the proposal. Egypt said early warning systems would entail too technical a discussion for CST delegates and proposed food security. Brazil, the UK, Saudi Arabia and the Netherlands noted the importance of soil and water management, with the Netherlands highlighting synergies with the UN Commission on Sustainable Development's (CSD) work programme. The UK and Germany expressed concern about the cost of two extended Bureau meetings and proposed one meeting of the Bureau only. The Chair proposed indicating that early-warning systems "in its broadest sense" be considered by CST-3.

During discussion of a revised draft decision in Plenary on Monday, 7 December, the EU proposed adding "water and soil management" as a topic for CST-3 and indicating that the intersessional Bureau meeting should be held "within existing resources." Switzerland proposed a new paragraph calling on Parties to submit contributions on their own experiences with early-warning systems to facilitate discussion at CST-3. Delegates deferred adoption of the decision until the closing Plenary.

The final decision decides that CST-3 address "early-warning systems in its broadest sense" as the priority issue. In presenting the decision, CST Chair Jabbari said this would include water management and protection. The decision also requests the Secretariat to facilitate at least one intersessional Bureau meeting within existing resources and invites Parties to submit contributions by 30 June 1999 regarding experiences with early-warning systems as well as with specialized institutions in this field to facilitate preparations.

INTERPARLIAMENTARY ROUND TABLE

On Monday, 7 December, 35 parliamentarians from 21 countries, two international organizations and one NGO, as well as COP observers, participated in morning and afternoon sessions of a Parliamentary Round Table. At the invitation of the CCD Secretariat, the National Assembly of Senegal and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, representatives discussed the process of and the contribution they could make to the Convention's implementation. Cheikh Abdoul Kadre Cissokho, President of the National Assembly of Senegal, chaired the discussion. Tana de Zulueta (Italy), Ohki Hiroshi (Japan), Hugo Andres Araujo de la Torre (Mexico) and Grant Chapman (Australia) served as Vice-Presidents and Jean Ziegler (Switzerland) served as Rapporteur.

In the Dakar Declaration, the parliamentarians affirmed their commitment to contribute fully to the implementation of the CCD by, *inter alia*: supporting legislation concerning the fight against desertification; subscribing to the promotion of policies and the strengthening of institutional frameworks for the favorable development of cooperation among affected countries; supporting the strengthening of social policies and education, health and public awareness; and subscribing to the initiatives of agencies, donor countries and civil societies to increase financial assistance to promote sustainable development in fragile ecosystems.

They undertook to promote: the formulation of national legislation and harmonization with the provisions of the Convention; integration of the fight against desertification in national agendas as well as those of regional and subregional organizations; the formulation of action programmes in affected developing countries; and the adoption of practical measures to include environmental protection disciplines. They issued an urgent appeal to: financial and business entities worldwide to support the mobilization of financial resources to combat



desertification; academic institutions, the scientific community and research centres to support the various tasks of implementing the Convention in affected developing countries; and the CCD Secretariat to continue actions taken up in support of affected countries.

INFORMAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON NAPS

Based on the EU's proposal to add an exchange of views on NAPs to the COP-2 agenda, an informal session was scheduled on Friday, 4 December. Over 100 participants gathered for the two-hour exchange. Two presentations were offered, following which participants reflected on their experiences with NAP processes. UNSO/UNDP presented "A Preliminary Overview of National Action Programme Processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification" and Sweden discussed indicators for a successful NAP processes, including the level of popular participation in the process and the degree to which the NAP is integrated into institutions and central budgets.

Among the issues participants discussed were:

- the possibilities for creating enabling structures allowing for positive and constructive involvement of civil society, particularly women;
- challenges to civil society involvement, including governments' response to the expectations that the participatory process creates;
- the importance of coordination between existing programmes and active involvement and support from the people;
- the need to address resistance by government administrations to the direct involvement of people and for government departments to develop horizontal coordination of plans;
- the need for better coordination within the donor community and its stronger involvement in all stages of NAPs; and
- the need to build subregional programmes on the basis of complementarity, effective exploitation of comparative advantages and subsidiarity.

CLOSING PLENARY

The closing Plenary convened on Friday, 11 December to adopt draft decisions submitted by the COW and the CST. COP President Souty Touré presided over delegates' consideration of:

- the report of the Bureau on the credentials of delegates (ICCD/COP(2)/13);
- the recommendation of the CST on its programme of work (ICCD/COP(2)/L.3/Rev.1);
- a resolution on solidarity with Central America (ICCD/COP(2)/L.7);
- administrative and support arrangements for the Secretariat, including interim arrangements (ICCD/COP(2)/L.30);
- the report on the Round Table of Parliamentarians (ICCD/COP(2)/L.40);
- outstanding rules of procedure (ICCD/COP(2)/L.35 and L.42);
- the designation of a Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning (ICCD/COP(2)/L.31);
- programme and budget, including adjustment to the Convention budget and programme for 1999 (ICCD/COP(2)/L.28), review of the extrabudgetary funding situation (ICCD/COP(2)/3 and Add.1), medium-term strategy of the Secretariat (ICCD/COP(2)/L.38) and programme of work for COP-3 and COP-4 (ICCD/COP(2)/L.5 and L.36);
- review of the implementation of the Convention, including regional implementation annexes and interregional programmes at platforms of cooperation (ICCD/COP(2)/L.12/Rev.1), regional cooperation between countries of Eastern and Central Europe (ICCD/COP(2)/L.32), procedures for the communication of information and review of implementation (ICCD/COP(2)/L.37) and review of implementation of the Convention (ICCD/COP(2)/L.39);
- review of the report of the Global Mechanism (ICCD/COP(2)/L.43 and L.44);
- promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant

conventions (ICCD/COP(2)/L.34); and

- resolution of questions regarding implementation and annexes on arbitration and conciliation procedures (ICCD/COP(2)/L.33).

The COP eventually adopted these decisions and delegates offered the following comments during the adoption of specific decisions.

On outstanding recommendations from the CST (ICCD/COP2/L.3/Rev.1), CST Chair Jabbari noted that the draft decision was a result of intense consultations and reflects the consensus reached. He said that the theme chosen for COP-3 is "early-warning systems in its broadest sense," which includes water management and protection. Chair Jabbari also announced the experts recommended by regional groups to constitute an *ad hoc* group on traditional knowledge. The list was adopted.

Regarding the decision on administrative and support arrangements for the Secretariat, the US noted its inability to accept operative paragraph 3 on financing of conference servicing costs from the UN regular budget, stating that as a matter of principle Parties to conventions should meet the costs voluntarily. She stressed parity with the other two Rio Conventions and noted that similar language was not adopted during FCCC COP-4.

On designation of a Permanent Secretariat, Germany requested that the report of the Plenary reflect that the headquarters agreement is likely to be ratified in early 1999 and that the agreement provides for the equal treatment of the Secretariats of the CCD and FCCC.

The draft decision on programme and budget medium-term strategy of the Secretariat requests the Executive Secretary to elaborate a new document and invites Parties to make submissions by 30 April 1999. The G-77/China noted that the compendium referred to in the decision should include document ICCD/COP(2)/6 concerning the medium-term strategy and the comments, suggestions and proposals expressed by delegations during COP-2 as well as written contributions submitted by 30 April 1999. He requested language in the draft decision to reflect that it is this compendium that would be submitted to COP-3. GRULAC said the strategy should be considered very necessary so that the Secretariat may fulfil its mandate clearly, effectively and efficiently and he called for consideration of all statements made on the subject. The decision was adopted.

The decision on the programme of work for COP-3 calls for a review of, *inter alia*, reports on implementation of affected African country Parties and progress made in the formulation and implementation of SRAPs and RAPS in Africa. COP-4 and, if necessary, COP-5 will review reports on implementation in affected country Parties and the formulation and implementation of SRAPs and RAPS for regions other than Africa. The decision on ordinary sessions of the COP states that the fifth session shall take place in 2001 and, thereafter, ordinary sessions shall be held every two years.

Regarding the regional implementation annexes, the EU said that while the COP has taken useful further steps to strengthen regional cooperation, the facilitating role of the Executive Secretary should not lead to the creation of new institutional structures. The G-77/China requested inclusion in the report of the meeting that they supported the Secretariat's initiatives to facilitate the implementation of regional implementation annexes and cooperation.

The decision on the Global Mechanism (ICCD/COP(2)/L.43) and on the MOU between the COP and IFAD on the GM (ICCD/COP(2)/L.44) were accepted without amendments. The decision on the review of the Global Mechanism notes with concern that the Global Mechanism did not start operating on 1 January 1998, as indicated in Decision 24/COP.1; requests IFAD to pursue modalities of collaboration between itself and the NGO community as well as with other interested organizations; requests the Global Mechanism to establish a consultative and collaborative process with NGOs as well as with the private sector; requests cooperation between the Global Mechanism and the Convention Secretariat to avoid duplication and enhance the effectiveness of the CCD implementation; notes the financial support provided on a voluntary basis and reiterates its appeal to governments, all interested organizations and the private sector to make promptly further



voluntary commitments necessary to support the activities; and decides to undertake at COP-3, the first review of the policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism and take appropriate action on this basis.

The decision on the MOU between the COP and IFAD regarding the modalities and administrative operations of the Global Mechanism transmits to COP-3 the draft decision (ICCD/COP(2)/L.19) submitted by the G-77/China and calls on those to whom the draft MOU is addressed to act, pending its entry into operation, "as if it were already there."

During Plenary adoption, Canada, speaking on behalf of the OECD countries, regretted that the decision on the MOU was not adopted. He proposed textual amendments, which the G-77/China said contravened the language set out in the Convention.

Benin read a revised version of the draft decision noting the COP's gratitude to the Government and people of Senegal for having made COP-3 possible (ICCD/COP(2)/L.41), extending thanks for the warm welcome allotted to all participants, and requesting the President of the COP to convey to the President of Senegal the thanks of the COP participants for having personally opened the proceedings and for his personal commitment to CCD implementation.

The COP President then delivered a summary of the Special Segment, highlighting speakers' reports on contributions their country or organization can make and is making to implement the CCD. He noted that many called attention to the delay in implementation of the Global Mechanism and stressed the need to render it operational and some called on the GEF to shoulder the costs of implementation. Several speakers also hailed the informal exchange on NAPs and supported the proposal to define commitments following the review of action programmes.

COP-2 Rapporteur Samvel Baloyan (Armenia) presented the report of the session (ICCD/COP(2)/L.29 and Corr.1). He noted that it is procedural in nature and will be completed following the meeting. Delegates adopted the report and authorized the Rapporteur to complete it.

Senegalese Prime Minister Mamadou Lamine Loum presided over the closing of COP-2. Executive Secretary Diallo congratulated delegates for exchanging views regarding implementation of the CCD and taking important decisions that show the importance participants give to the Convention. He emphasized the important role that NGOs have played in the whole CCD process, a unique feature of the CCD. He assured delegations that the Secretariat will do everything possible to implement the CCD and called for the international community and civil society to contribute to this end.

Indonesia, on behalf of the G-77/China, emphasized the partnership that both his group and its partners enjoyed during the session and called for international cooperation on financial support and technology transfer. He also commended IFAD and the Secretariat on their efforts to prepare the MOU and expressed the hope that Global Mechanism will be fully operational by COP-3. Austria, on behalf of the EU, expressed pleasure that the COP began promptly and said the solution on budgetary matters leaves his group optimistic for the future. He said the informal exchange on NAPs resulted in a detailed dialogue and fruitful way to progress. He expressed regret that a decision was not reached on the decision on convention implementation and NAP cooperation, said the EU countries remain committed to facilitating action through their development agencies in dialogue with affected countries, and called for this issue to be treated at COP-3. He stressed the importance of strict attention to rules and tasks of the CCD and its bodies to maintain a cooperative atmosphere.

Armenia, on behalf of the Eastern European countries, thanked all regional groups for supporting the launching of a new regional implementation annex for Central and Eastern European countries. Canada, on behalf of JUSCANZ, said his group hopes to continue the discussion on the medium-term strategy and implementation of NAPs, keeping a focus on people in the field. He noted that one country in his group became a Party to the CCD during COP-2 and said more may

participate as Parties at COP-3. Haiti, on behalf of GRULAC, noted the importance of holding the conference in Africa. He supported establishing links with other conventions. Iran, on behalf of the Asian Group, expressed thanks to the Government and people of Senegal for their hospitality.

Prime Minister Mamadou Lamine Loum said it was his pleasure to attend the meeting on behalf of the President of Senegal. He said the promises of future ratifications demonstrate the richness and quality of the COP's deliberations and that the decisions offer serious possibilities for buttressing the NAPs. He thanked the UN system for the honor bestowed on his country and said Senegal will leave no stone unturned to ensure that the CCD is implemented. He declared COP-2 closed at 1:40 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF COP-2

Partnerships between a variety of actors propel CCD implementation and dominated the scene at COP-2 in Dakar. Delegates discussed the importance of bottom-up approaches and involvement at all levels and by all relevant actors, but their deliberations revealed different perspectives on how the Convention should actually facilitate the translation of the theory of partnerships into action. The CCD COP faces a balancing act of communicating with, fostering and learning from actors on the ground while remaining an international coordinating body. To accomplish its goals, it relies on horizontal partnerships ranging from arrangements between the regional implementation annex countries and relationships with related conventions, for example, to vertically reaching partnerships between the COP, national governments and local level actors. The difference of opinion as to how this balance should be struck slowed some work at COP-2 but related discussions may serve as a foundation for building effective partnerships under the Convention. This analysis highlights ways in which some of these partnerships took form and shaped COP-2.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PARTNERSHIPS: Intergovernmental cooperation at the COP level is a prime area where partnerships must be operational if the CCD is to be effectively implemented. In this regard, the continuing debate between the CCD's particularity to Africa while at the same time being a global convention remains a shaping force. The African Group's decision to emphasize this particularity held up the start of COP-1 by two days, but delegates did not delay their deliberations at COP-2 on this point. Their decision was indicative of COP-2 participants' recognition of the need to focus on implementation and avoid situations that might deter their ability to cooperate. On the first day of COP-2, the African Group repeated its COP-1 request for three Bureau seats, which would have created the same problem COP-1 faced. However, in Dakar there was no option of temporarily filling the empty East European seat with an extra representative from Africa, given that three Parties from Eastern Europe participated in COP-2. The African Group's Presidency of the COP and desire to host a successful session offered a solution to the issue. Two African delegates were elected to the Bureau, although the Group indicated the decision did not imply a renunciation of their intention to hold three Bureau seats at future COPs.

A second indication of participants' desire to proceed with the deliberations was the immediate assurance that the appearance of persons from Taiwan during the opening ceremony would not distract Parties from their deliberations. The host country expressed regret for the appearance and affirmed that UN resolutions and rules would be observed, and the COP proceeded to tackle its agenda.

FROM THE BOTTOM UP: While intergovernmental partnerships did not feature as prominently as they did at COP-1, a number of issues regarding other partnerships did emerge. The need to engage all interested actors at all levels is standard rhetoric for those engaged in the CCD process. However, different approaches to how the COP can facilitate action on the ground under the auspices of an international coordinating body for action on desertification were evident in the COP-2 deliberations. Many OECD countries found the COP's *modus operandi* to be out of sync with its objectives. As an example of this



divergence, they pointed to delegates' discussions about bottom-up approaches that resulted in recommendations for panels or studies, which they believed to be top-down solutions. Their emphasis on National Action Programmes was intended to surmount this trap and focus on specific actions and mainstream the issue in development processes through partnership arrangements. Some believed the EU-proposed draft decision on implementation and NAPs was directed to this end. The G-77/China, by contrast, stressed the need to take a holistic approach to implementation and thus did not support some of the OECD countries' singular focus on local level implementation or its draft decision on implementation and NAPs.

ADVANCING VERTICAL PARTNERSHIPS: This difference in approach also underlay the EU and G-77/China positions regarding Secretariat support for activities at the regional level. Most participants do not envision the Secretariat as an implementing body. The OECD countries particularly desire to keep the Secretariat's activities focussed on horizontal partnerships rather than vertical ones, as the Secretariat's regional and national level activities might imply. The G-77/China, however, support a role for the Secretariat as a sponsor of regional and national meetings and regional coordinating units. Such meetings or units reach below the top, international level of actors, but may not result immediately in the concrete actions that some OECD countries emphasized. Supporters see these meetings and units as useful ways to engage actors closer to the local level, while others do not think the action will trickle down that far.

COP-2's efforts to involve parliamentarians and NGOs, particularly through their network, RIOD, provide positive examples of how the CCD COP and Secretariat can advance vertical partnerships while remaining an international facilitative body. The COP-2 experience saw NGO presentations on activities and concerns at the local level. Unlike the NGO forum at COP-1, whose tone some found to be more provocative, these fora embodied the spirit of dialogue with a focus on possible ways to enhance collaboration with governments. This could be attributed to NGOs feeling more secure with their involvement in the COP and the recognition of their important role and the input they can have in shaping the process. However, some participants felt the presentations fell short of providing concrete insights into how the partnerships can be enacted within the framework of the ongoing COP negotiations and subsequent implementation of the CCD. Nonetheless, this was an essential step in charting a process of local level involvement and assisting the COP to visualize CCD implementation and the necessary framework to facilitate it. To this end, the COP will have to engage itself in elaborating an enabling environment for effective involvement of all stakeholders and interest groups.

PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN THE RIO CONVENTIONS: Coordination across the board will be necessary to accomplish this task. This need to identify an enabling environment at the international level fits well with the repeated calls at COP-2 for synergies between the Rio conventions and coordination of their activities. Such coordination would not only result in resource efficiency but also, hopefully, stimulate tangible action. COP-2 participants recognized that the CCD has a lot to offer the other conventions, especially if it is able to find how to balance international, national and local action as well as environmental and development objectives. The goal of such coordination should be to provide an overarching framework under which partnerships can be strengthened and pursued at all levels. The modalities for such coordination promise to be the topic of further discussions as the COP charts CCD implementation in the years to come.

TOWARD EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION: While COP-2's decisions were not earth shattering, its deliberations served to highlight areas and partnerships that need reinforcement and further opened opportunities for more representation in the process. Whether COP-3 delegates will be able to steer away from sensitive issues that emerged in COP-1 and continued at COP-2 remains to be seen. Delegates' high regard for the informal dialogue on implementation of NAPs and dialogues with NGOs show a way forward as they consider the ways and means to accomplish their goals. The deadlocks and

deferred decisions from COP-2 resulted more from differences in emphasis on partnership building strategies rather than from differences in objectives. To this end, intersessional activities, active nurturing of partnerships and continuation of a dialogue between all actors is essential to the success of the CCD.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE COP-3

JOINT NGO-GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS UNDERLYING CAUSES OF DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION: This meeting, which will be held in Costa Rica from 18-22 January 1999, will contribute to the UN Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. For more information contact: Global Secretariat, Simone Lovera; e-mail: slovera@nciucn.nl.

EXPERT GROUP MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS AND MECHANISMS TO PROMOTE THE MANAGEMENT, CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF ALL TYPES OF FORESTS: The meeting is scheduled to be held in February in San Jose, Costa Rica. For more information, contact: Patricia Chavez, Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the United Nations; tel: +1-212-986-6373; fax: +1-212-986-6842.

RIOD GLOBAL MEETING: This meeting is tentatively scheduled in March 1999, in Dakar, Senegal. For further information, contact ENDA at: fax: +221-8217595; e-mail: masselo@enda.sn.

SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE RAMSAR CONVENTION: The meeting will be held in San Jose, Costa Rica, from 10-18 May 1999. For more information, contact: Ramsar Convention Bureau, Rue Mauverney 28, CH-1196 Gland, Switzerland; tel: +41-22-999-0170; fax: +41-22-999-0169; e-mail: ramsar@hq.iucn.org; Internet: <http://www.iucn.org/themes/ramsar/index.html>.

SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ECOSYSTEMS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: The meeting will be held in Lemnos, Greece, from 31 May-2 June 1999. For more information, contact: Wessex Institute of Technology; tel: +44-1703-293223; fax: +44-1703-292853; e-mail: wit@wessex.ac.uk.

THIRD SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS: The meeting will be held in Geneva from 3-14 May 1999. For more information, contact: IFF Secretariat, Two UN Plaza, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10017 USA; tel: +1-212-963-6208; fax: +1-212-963-3463; e-mail: hurtubia@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/iff.htm>.

CULTIVATING OUR FUTURES: THE MULTIFUNCTIONAL CHARACTER OF AGRICULTURE AND LAND: The FAO/Netherlands meeting will be held in Rome, Italy, in September 1999. For further information, contact: Lucas Janssen, FAO/SDRN, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla 00100, Rome, Italy; tel: +39-6-57053369; fax: +39-6-57055246; e-mail: agr99-conference@fao.org; Internet: <http://www.fao.org/sd/agr99>.

THIRD SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: COP-3 is scheduled to be held in Recife, Brazil, from 15 - 26 November 1999. Preparatory meetings for COP-3 include: Bureau meetings, the intersessional meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology, and the meeting of the *ad hoc* panel on traditional knowledge. For dates, venue or any other information, contact the CCD Secretariat at: Geneva Executive Center, 11/13 Chemin des Anemones, 1219 Chatelaine, Geneva, Switzerland; tel: +41-22-979-9111; fax: +41-22-979-9030/31; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.ch; Internet: <http://www.unccd.ch>. Effective in early 1999, the Secretariat can be reached at: PO Box 260129, Haus Carstanjen, D-53153 Bonn, Germany; tel: +49-228-8152800; fax: +49-228-8152899; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.de; Internet: <http://www.unccd.de>.