HIGHLIGHTS FROM CCD COP-3
THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 1999

COP-3 delegates met in Plenary during the morning to adopt the CST’s six draft decisions. They also heard statements from two observers. Informal consultations continued throughout the day on outstanding draft decisions on the programme and budget, the Global Mechanism (GM), the Recife Initiative, the inclusion of NGO’s activities in the official programme of work of the COP, procedures for review of implementation and the review of national reports. Delegates left the Pernambuco Conference Center at 10:15 pm with several issues still outstanding.

PLENARY

CST Chair Munemo (Zimbabwe) introduced the CST’s six draft decisions for Plenary consideration.

The decision on the Roster of Independent Experts (ICCD/COP(3)/L.1) was adopted without comment. This decision invites Parties to supplement their submissions to the Secretariat for inclusion in the roster with the aim of making it more balanced in terms of gender and ensuring better representation of all relevant disciplines. It includes an amended list of the disciplines, as contained in an annex to the decision. Parties are invited to report to the Secretariat before 30 June 2000 on their use of the roster. The Secretariat is requested to ensure that an updated roster is made available in electronic format, to distribute a paper copy of the roster to Parties on an annual basis and to inform CST-4 on how the roster has been used.

The decision on Benchmarks and Indicators (ICCD/COP(3)/L.2) was adopted with a technical correction. This decision urges Parties to initiate testing of the impact indicators that the panel that was appointed by COP-2 to develop further appropriate criteria on benchmarks and indicators proposed. It also encourages the use of these indicators as well as the use of numerical indicators that enable comparison in national reports to COP-4. Parties and other countries and international organizations in a position to do so are urged to mobilize technical, scientific and financial support for the affected country Parties and to initiate the testing of impact indicators.

The decision on Traditional Knowledge (ICCD/COP(3)/L.3) was adopted by consensus. Six of the ten nominations for the ad hoc panel were presented for adoption: Mohammad Jafari (Iran); Falah Abounukta (Syria); Ashot Vardevanian (Armenia); Dumitru Mihail (Romania); Amadou Maiga (Mali); and Etumesaku Diungah (Democratic Republic of Congo). The Western Europe and Others and Latin America and the Caribbean Groups are expected to present their nominations on Friday. This decision requests the Secretariat to develop a closer working relationship with related institutions and to generate synergies through collaboration, including fostering linkages between the national focal points of the different environment conventions and facilitating the dissemination of information about actions to implement the conventions. Parties are invited to include in their national reports the use made of traditional knowledge in NAP implementation. The decision also appoints an ad hoc panel to develop further appropriate criteria in line with future work on benchmarks and indicators, to be used by national focal points so as to: measure the reciprocity between traditional and modern knowledge; assess how networks and mechanisms created by the Secretariat are incorporating traditional and local knowledge in their work programmes; and assess the socioeconomic and ecological benefits of traditional knowledge in light of environmental changes.

Concerning the decision on Early Warning Systems (EWS) (ICCD/COP(3)/L.6), the EU proposed removing from the terms of reference the call for the ad hoc panel on EWS “to suggest a medium-term strategy for convention implementation.” He suggested that the call for the ad hoc panel to take into account the results of the UN Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (UNNDNR) be replaced with a call to cooperate with the follow-up to the UNNDNR. The decision was adopted with these amendments. The Chair noted that six of the ten nominations for the ad hoc panel were ready for adoption: Kazuhiko Takeuchi (Japan); Zengyuan Li (China); Richard Muyungi (Tanzania); Abdelah Ghebalou (Algeria); Valentin Sofroni (Moldova) and Giorgi Gotsiridze (Georgia). The Western Europe and Others and Latin America and Caribbean Groups had not yet submitted nominations. The final decision establishes an ad hoc panel comprised of ten experts to review and elaborate on technical topics emerging from national reports and regional forums, specifically concerning data collection, accessibility and integration, as well as evaluating and prediction drought and desertification by offering measures for preparedness in cooperation with UNNDNR. The text also invites relevant institutions from each thematic programme network to provide experts and/or reference materials to support the panel and requests the Secretariat to facilitate its functioning.
Delegates concluded informal consultations on a draft decision for the first review of policies, operational modalities and activities of the GM, which will be recommended to the Plenary for adoption on Friday. This draft decision reaffirms that the GM will function under the guidance of the COP and be accountable to it, and recognizes that the GM’s first priority is to develop its operations as a demand-driven mechanism to facilitate resource mobilization and channeling for the elaboration and implementation of action programmes. On the GM’s operational modalities, the draft includes a recommendation that the GM Managing Director complete the recruitment of staff before COP-4. It also includes a decision to have further consideration of the GM’s operational strategy at COP-4 and a recommendation that the GM develop an information and communication strategy aimed at facilitating contact with Parties and other actors and increase awareness of the CCD. It further invites the Facilitation Committee to explore the possibility of inviting an NGO representative to attend its meetings and to report to COP-4 on the decision taken on the issue.

IN THE CORRIDORS I

Rumblings of concern and continued disappointment rolled through the corridors on Thursday afternoon as delegates continued trying to resolve the impasse on the budget. Some speculated that these discussions could continue until late Friday night and said the problem lay among delegates who constantly shifted “the goal-posts” when consensus appeared within reach. Others criticized the lack of transparency in how the negotiations were proceeding and said the decision to defer most issues to informal consultations before they were adequately dealt with in the COW has contributed to the difficulties now being faced. Whatever the reasons given, many seemed to agree that a main problem lay in the failure to discuss the national reports from affected countries, including those of the donor countries, as a basis to setting the priorities for the budget in the next biennium.

IN THE CORRIDORS II

NGOs circulated a paper voicing their concerns over the budgetary support to the CCD, whereby they expressed deep concern with the delay in the discussions on the issue and regretted the decrease in donor support for their participation at the COP. They called for increased support for NGO participation, as well as for NGO activities in affected countries and the budgetary requirements of the affected developing countries in implementing the NAPs, and also in reaching agreement on efficient reporting mechanisms.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary is scheduled to convene at 10:00 am to consider for adoption decisions on all outstanding issues and the report of CCD COP-3.

Please note: The final ENB summary report of CCD COP-3 will be available on 29 November 1999 at the following website: http://www.iisd.ca/desert/cop3/index.html.