



CCD COP-4 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2000

The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) met throughout the day to hear reports from the groups working on scientific and technical information and consider priority issues for CST-5. The Plenary scheduled for the morning to consider the work programme of the *ad hoc* working group (AHWG) to review CCD implementation was cancelled because informal negotiations on issues relating to the AHWG were not completed. It convened briefly in the afternoon to adopt a draft decision on procedures to review CCD implementation. The Committee of the Whole (COW) met briefly in the morning and in the afternoon to consider: the draft declaration to enhance implementation of the Convention; procedures to review reports on CCD implementation; progress reports from regions other than Africa; an additional implementation annex to the Convention; and relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

FRANCE, speaking for the working group on this issue, emphasized indicators and the role of technical information in Party reporting. He stressed indicators as tools for follow-up and evaluation in accordance with national strategies and distinguished between status and impact indicators. He recommended keeping indicators a CST priority and highlighted the need for harmony with other processes. On national reports, he called on the Secretariat, with input from Parties, to provide guidance on how to include scientific and technical information in the reports. He noted that this would involve the scientific and research community.

THE GAMBIA and OMAN noted that the CST can set the framework, but Parties must adopt their own indicators. MOROCCO stressed Convention commitments related to indicators and building on existing initiatives, and with MALAWI, called for capacity building. THE PERMANENT INTERSTATE COMMITTEE FOR DROUGHT CONTROL IN THE SAHEL (CILSS) said indicators are national tools for action, not imposed for control purposes. Chair Smith suggested incorporating scientific and technical information into the current reporting format.

PRIORITY ISSUES FOR CST-5: On behalf of the working group on this issue, SOUTH AFRICA proposed that the CST address strategies for the communication of information and its use to generate best practices for combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. He said this included traditional and scientific knowledge. NORWAY proposed that the Secretariat

compose a report on best practices, drawing expertise from the roster of experts, the database on traditional knowledge, and NGOs.

FUTURE CST WORK PROGRAMME: Delegates heard reports from the Dryland Land Degradation Assessment (LADA) and Millennium Assessment initiatives. FAO presented LADA, a comprehensive project for use by multiple stakeholders. LADA's four main objectives are to: provide basic, standardized information at national, regional and global levels; develop harmonized methods for land degradation assessment; place degradation in its environmental and socio-economic setting through analysis of its causes and impacts; and build capacities for LADA implementation.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is a joint CCD, Convention on Biological Diversity, and Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar) activity described in document ICCD/COP(4)/INF.6. The four-year Assessment is expected to: provide decision-makers with information on conditions and changes in ecosystems; assess their impact on food and water supply and on public health; appraise social and economic consequences; assess future consequences; and present options for how to respond. He called for CCD input to the Assessment.

On the two reports, SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES asked the Secretariat for a strategy for Parties to provide input to these processes and the EU requested it to report on these initiatives. The Secretariat noted its collaboration with both initiatives: it helped initiate LADA and will participate in the Steering Committee, and is a member of both the Millennium Assessment Board and the Executive Committee of the Board. NORWAY, supported by the EU, proposed CST involvement and drawing on the roster of experts. The CST decided to request the Secretariat to continue to monitor and report on these initiatives.

ENHANCING CST EFFECTIVENESS: The EU presented its proposal that includes informal thematic working groups focusing on specific issue areas, including examination of national reports. He said the groups would not imply an additional institutional level of the CST, but the improvement and replacement of *ad hoc* panels.

Summarizing views expressed by delegates including on, the need to stay within existing rules of procedure, financial issues, similarity of proposed thematic groups and *ad hoc* panels, and representation on the basis of regions versus Annexes, Chair Smith proposed that interested Parties exchange views and identify and analyze problems and suggest solutions. Parties were invited to submit views to the Secretariat by 1 May 2001. The Secretariat compilation would be available by 1 August, for consideration at COP-5.

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BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS: CILSS proposed continuing ongoing work coordinated by CILSS and OSS in collaboration with the Secretariat instead of establishing an additional *ad hoc* panel. Chair Smith, supported by the US, EU, and TUNISIA, proposed that GRULAC participate in this collaboration. MEXICO, on behalf of GRULAC, agreed. The CST requested CILSS, OSS and GRULAC to present a proposal for consideration on Friday.

The CST will meet on Friday to consider decisions on: the CST work programme; consideration of national reports; traditional knowledge; early warning systems; review of existing networks; the roster of experts; benchmarks and indicators; and enhancement of CST work.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

DRAFT DECLARATION TO ENHANCE CCD IMPLEMENTATION: The Secretariat introduced two documents (ICCD/COP (4)/3/Add.9 (A) and (B)) containing a compilation of submissions received from eight delegations, including by the EU, the G-77/China, JUSCANZ and two NGOs. Several delegates, including MAURITANIA, speaking for the G-77/China, the EU, SWITZERLAND, BRAZIL and NORWAY, supported Canada's proposal to further consider the draft declaration in an open-ended working group.

On the draft declaration's content, ALGERIA and others stressed that the debt burden should be alleviated for all affected developing countries. The EU proposed synergy with the CST and Global Mechanism, but differed with CHINA's and INDIA's suggestion to delete references to the clean development mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. ARGENTINA emphasized technical and financial cooperation and measures to strengthen the GM's fundraising capacity. EGYPT said the declaration should reflect commitments by all Parties and be binding. The EU preferred a political declaration with concrete actions and without new obligations.

PROCEDURE TO REVIEW CCD IMPLEMENTATION: BENIN presented a draft decision prepared by a contact group to resolve the issues relating to the work of the AHWG to review CCD implementation. In the draft decision, the COP, *inter alia*, decides: to establish a five-member bureau; to authorize a review of all national reports submitted to COP-3 and COP-4 before COP-5; that an interim report by submitted to COP-4 by the AHWG; and to convene one intersessional meeting of a maximum of 15 working days to complete the review. Delegates adopted the draft decision for transmission to the COP.

REVIEW ON CCD IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS IN REGIONS OTHER THAN AFRICA: The Secretariat introduced the synthesis documents on CCD implementation in affected country Parties of regions other than Africa (ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.1-3) and noted that following preliminary consideration by the COW, the AHWG will review these reports and define the appropriate method for their review. He said that: most countries had identified CCD focal points; National Action Programmes (NAPs) have been adopted in seven Asian countries, eight Latin American and Caribbean countries and two Northern Mediterranean countries; and some countries have adopted new legislation while others are reinforcing existing policy instruments linked to poverty alleviation, enhancement of food security and agricultural development. CHILE, speaking for the Latin American and Caribbean group (GRULAC), inquired whether the regional programme reports would be reviewed. The Secretariat said it was too early to start reviewing their progress as they were in the inception phase.

DRAFT ADDITIONAL REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION ANNEX: The Secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.8 and reported that the COP Bureau meeting, held in October 2000, decided that the draft regional annex presented at

COP-3 constituted a proposed amendment to the Convention. He said nine Central and Eastern European countries were Parties to the CCD.

ARMENIA, with KAZAKHSTAN and UKRAINE, urged delegates to adopt the annex as it would make it possible for countries with economies in transition to establish the legal basis necessary for CCD implementation. The CZECH REPUBLIC said it would be important for initiating and promoting efficient subregional, multilateral and bilateral cooperation. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION said the annex's adoption would catalyze Russia's accession to the CCD.

SYRIA, speaking for the Asian region, with TUNISIA and MAURITANIA, welcomed the draft annex and said its implementation should not affect resources for implementation in other regions. An informal group to be chaired by the UK was convened to prepare a draft decision for COP consideration.

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH RELEVANT CONVENTIONS: The Secretariat presented document ICCD/COP (4)/6 that elaborates ways to further enhance cooperation with the GEF and to implement memoranda of understanding signed with other partners. The G-77/CHINA suggested that the COP provide input into the Rio+10 process and should therefore consider what reports to submit. Noting the decreasing presence of developing country delegations in Bonn due to relocation to Berlin, he proposed a modestly resourced CCD liaison branch should be linked to UN Headquarters to benefit from the UN services. SENEGAL said synergies with other conventions should not disadvantage the CCD. ISRAEL drew attention to a 1997 workshop they organized on synergies with the UNFCCC. The LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES said additional financial support to the CCD was needed as its cooperation with the GEF was not at par with that between the GEF and other conventions.

PLENARY

COP convened briefly in the afternoon and adopted a draft COW decision on the AHWG's procedure to review CCD implementation. The COP also elected Mohammed Mahmoud El Ghaouth (Mauritania) and Willem van Cotthem (Belgium), nominated by the COW, to co-chair the AHWG.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Two informal groups established Wednesday by the COW to consider the programme and budget and support to regional coordination units failed to take off due to delegates' reluctance to act as Chairs. Some participants noted the need for a Chair knowledgeable in budgeting. They attributed this reluctance to the limited budgetary expertise within most delegations, who preferred to maintain their positions as negotiators due to the high stakes in the discussions. Others observed general slow pace of the process and speculated that it may be linked to the lack of progress in climate change negotiations a fortnight ago.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: Plenary convenes at 10:00 a.m. in the Plenary Hall for open dialogue with NGOs. It is likely to meet in the afternoon to hear reports from the COW and CST Chairs.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: The CST meets in the Committee Room at 10:00 a.m. to consider draft decisions and conclude its work.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP: This group meets at 3:00 p.m. in the Committee Room to elect its remaining officers and approve its programme of work.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: The COW is scheduled to meet at 3:00 p.m.