



UNCCD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2013

Contact group discussions continued throughout the day and evening to finalize decisions on CRIC, and budget and non-budget matters. In the afternoon, an informal open-ended drafting group met to consider text relating to Rio+20 outcomes.

In the evening, delegates convened for the plenaries of the CRIC and COW, following which the COP reconvened to consider draft recommendations from the two committees.

CONTACT GROUPS

The COW contact group on non-budget matters made progress in negotiations on RCMs, discussing, inter alia, the role of new initiatives for strengthening the implementation of the Convention and its Strategy at the regional level. The group reached agreement on draft decisions on RCMs and accreditation of CSOs and the private sector, while negotiations continued on GM-related matters. An informal open-ended drafting group established on Wednesday evening began consideration of Rio+20 follow-up.

In the CRIC contact group, delegates removed brackets in draft decisions on financial flows and the GEF. The group made progress on draft text inviting the GEF to: continue raising awareness on UNCCD issues; use financial resources with Rio+20 outcomes on DLDD in mind; and support capacity development on issues in line with the implementation of the Convention in the GEF's 6th replenishment.

The COW contact group on programme and budget also met to discuss budget related matters in other decisions.

CRIC

CRIC Chair Mary Rowen called the CRIC to order. She thanked members of the CRIC for their hard work and cooperation, and invited delegates to consider eight draft decisions.

Strengthening and enhancing the process of alignment and implementation of action programmes with the Strategy: The Secretariat noted that the financial implications for this decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.1) were estimated to be €1,049,000, and said the programme and budget contact group would consider it. The CRIC agreed to the draft decision without comment.

The draft decision addresses the need to: integrate NAPs into national development plans; facilitate and simplify access to financing, including through the GEF and climate financing; and include private sector and grassroots organizations in the alignment process. The draft decision also recommends that parties intensify efforts to, inter alia: formulate and/or align their NAPs to address gaps in SLM and ensure coherence with other sectoral policies; incorporate SLM monitoring into existing national monitoring systems; and consider the added value of the

alignment process as an awareness-raising tool for policy makers, and in light of the outcome of the mid-term evaluation of the Strategy, including possible incentive schemes for alignment. The decision further calls on the next CRIC session to agree on a clear understanding of the integrated financing strategy and integrated investment framework processes, and discuss a plan for the NAP alignment process in relation to overall SLM goals. It also invites various multilateral entities to continue their work on a coherent UN system-wide contribution to implementing the Convention and tackling land challenges.

Promoting and strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies: On this draft decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.2), the Secretariat said the financial implications are estimated to be €696,000. The CRIC agreed to the draft decision without comment.

Among its preambular paragraphs, this draft decision: takes note of the Rio+20 outcome document's call for further mainstreaming sustainable development; reaffirms that the impacts of DLDD on economic and social development and poverty eradication are global challenges; welcomes the proposed standard approach and process for the formulation of future advocacy policy frameworks; and recognizes joint initiatives such as Global Drylands. The decision makes recommendations for further strengthening international partnerships, following up the outcomes of the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy, and taking action on advocacy policy frameworks. The decision also requests the Secretariat to explore the possibility of creating a "Global UNCCD Platform," in partnership with key stakeholders.

Assessment of the implementation of the Convention against strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3: On this draft decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.3), the Secretariat said the financial implications of the decision would be absorbed within the existing budget. The CRIC agreed to the draft decision without comment.

The draft decision acknowledges work done by the CST to refine the set of impact indicators and methodologies for monitoring and reporting, and calls on affected country parties to, inter alia: make further efforts to increase coverage of spatially explicit data on affected areas; strengthen institutional coordination to improve data accessibility; build synergies with the other Rio Conventions; and consider establishing targets using progress indicators adopted by the COP. The decision also invites global and regional partners to support improving reporting and access to, or harmonization of, data.

Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention: On this draft decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.4), the Secretariat said the financial implications would be absorbed within the existing budget, and the CRIC agreed to adopt it without comment. The draft decision highlights the importance



of allocating sufficient time for parties to review implementation of the Strategy at intersessional meetings of the CRIC and makes recommendations for improving how reviews of performance indicators by the CRIC are communicated to, and implemented by, UNCCD entities and country parties.

Programme of work for the 13th session of the CRIC: The Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.5) are estimated to be €42,500. The CRIC agreed to the draft decision without comment.

Date and venue of the 13th session of the CRIC: the Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.6) will be considered further during the negotiations on the programme and budget. The CRIC agreed to the draft decision without comment.

Iterative process relating to the assessment of implementation, including performance and progress indicators, methodology and reporting procedures: On this draft decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.7), the Secretariat said the financial implications are estimated to be €96,000. The CRIC adopted it without comment.

Among key recommendations, this draft decision requests the Secretariat and GM to prepare revised guidelines and templates, and the Secretariat to simplify the PRAIS, including the requirements for financial reporting, and reduce the number of performance indicators to lower the reporting burden on parties and other entities. Other recommendations address, inter alia: providing targeted capacity building to improve reporting; and improving the functioning of PRAIS and implementing plans to establish a public interface that allows for dynamic and analytical online functions.

Assessment of the Convention against the operational objectives of the Strategy: On this decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.8), the Secretariat said the financial implications would be absorbed within the existing budget, and the CRIC adopted it without comment.

The draft decision acknowledges the work of the IWG and recommendations contained in its report (ICCD/COP(11)/21). With regard to operative objective 1 on advocacy, awareness raising and education, the draft decision encourages parties to: strengthen linkages among national stakeholders; explore ways to communicate “desertification” to the public while sending a positive message on SLM; promote integration of DLDD within school curricula; and enhance awareness raising at sub-regional and regional levels, among other actions. It also calls on the Secretariat to enhance the SKBP to increase access to databases on best practices and lessons learned.

With regard to operational objective 3 on science, technology and knowledge, the draft decision recommends, inter alia: strengthening national support for DLDD monitoring and evaluation systems, and bridging the gap between local and national monitoring; sharing lessons learned with regard to obstacles and challenges in supporting national environmental and DLDD monitoring; and strengthening coordination among Rio Convention focal points.

With regard to operational objective 4 on capacity building, the draft decision encourages affected country parties to further mainstream DLDD issues in national initiatives carried out by science, technology and research institutions.

COW

COW Chair Norbu opened the session and introduced CRIC Chair Rowen, who reported on matters relating to sub-items considered by the CRIC on the independent mid-term evaluation of the Strategy and alignment of action programmes with the Strategy.

Review of progress in the implementation of the comprehensive communications strategy: The Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.3),

are estimated at €1,580,300, and that it would be further considered in the contact group on programme and budget. The decision was recommended for adoption by the COP.

In this decision, the Committee welcomes progress in advancing operational objective 1 of the Strategy, in particular initiatives to promote best practices in SLM, and called for greater attention to awareness raising and educational activities on DLDD issues through the World Day to Combat Desertification, UNDDD, SKBP, Land for Life and Drylands Champions awards, and other public outreach tools.

Rule 47 of the rules of procedure: With regard to this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.1), the Secretariat said the financial implications would be absorbed within the existing budget. The decision was recommended for adoption by the COP. The decision recommends postponing consideration of this item to the next COP session, and including reporting on the status of similar rules of procedures under other multilateral environmental agreements.

United Nations Decade for Deserts and the fight against Desertification (UNDDD): The Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.2) would be absorbed within the existing budget and the decision was recommended for adoption by the COP. The decision recognizes the importance of the Decade in awareness raising on the value of deserts, and the need to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaboration among UN entities to scale up observance activities.

COW Chair Norbu closed the meeting and explained that five draft decisions remain for consideration at the final meeting of the COW.

COP

COP Vice-President Honadia called the ninth meeting of COP 11 to order. He invited CRIC Chair Rowen to introduce the CRIC decisions that had just been adopted. CRIC Chair Rowen introduced the eight decisions and the Secretariat reported on the budget implications for each. The COP adopted each decision without comment.

COW Chair Norbu then introduced the three COW decisions that had just been adopted, and the Secretariat reported on the budget implications for each. The COP adopted each decision without comment.

COP Vice-President Honadia thanked delegates and informed them that the CRIC, COW and COP plenary would reconvene on Friday evening to consider further draft decisions. He adjourned the meeting at 9:30 pm.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On the penultimate day of COP 11, with negotiations on some issues reported to have picked up speed in contact groups, some observers remarked that this COP, more than the previous ten, involved the introduction of more private sector references in the language used by delegates as well as the topics of many side events. Some welcomed this change as a sign that all three key stakeholder groups – public, private sector and CSOs – are engaging in the search for solutions to combat DLDD. Others expressed concern with the trend towards “mainstreaming” concepts like the green economy in COP decisions, or with the possibility that, in public-private partnerships in drylands, affected communities’ interests could lose out.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The Earth Negotiations Bulletin summary and analysis of UNCCD COP 11 will be available on Monday, 30 September 2013 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/desert/cop11/>

LAND POLICY & PRACTICE: A Knowledgebase of International Activities Addressing Sustainable Land: For weekly updates on follow-up to COP 11 and more, subscribe at: <http://land-l.iisd.org/about-the-land-l-mailing-list/>