



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## **INC FOR THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: YEAR-END UPDATE**

1994 was a landmark year for those who are involved in combating desertification in the drylands throughout the world. The International Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, was adopted in Paris on 17 June 1994 and was opened for signature in Paris at a signing ceremony on 14-15 October 1994. Yet, even though the Convention has been successfully negotiated there is still much work to be done to ensure that the Convention is effectively implemented.

With this in mind, this special year-end issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* will review relevant activities that have taken place since the fifth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to elaborate the Convention (INCD) in June 1994, summarize the results of the General Assembly's consideration of the INCD and highlight upcoming events. This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* is published as part of a series of year-end issues intended to summarize the current state of play in the various sustainable development conferences and negotiations reported on by the *Bulletin* in 1994.

### **A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INCD**

Desertification affects about one-sixth of the world's population, 70 percent of all drylands and one-quarter of the total land area in the world. The most obvious impact of desertification, in addition to widespread poverty, is the degradation of 3.3 billion hectares of the total area of rangeland; decline in soil fertility and soil structure; and the degradation of irrigated cropland (*Agenda 21*, paragraph 12.2).

While the idea of a convention to combat desertification was discussed during the UNCED preparatory process, it was only in Rio where language was adopted requesting the General Assembly to establish an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the purpose of negotiating a convention. The General Assembly, during its 47th session in 1992, adopted resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of the INCD, and the convening of five sessions in order to finalize the Convention by June 1994.

The organizational session of the INCD was held in January 1993. At that meeting, delegates elected Bo Kjellén (Sweden) Chair of the Committee, elected the remaining members of the Bureau,

adopted the rules of procedure, set the schedule of meetings and established two working groups.

### **FIRST SESSION**

The first session of the INCD was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 24 May-3 June 1993. The first week of the session focused on the sharing of technical information and assessments on various aspects of drought and desertification. Divided into seven sections, the information-sharing segment provided an opportunity for scientists, technical experts, delegates and NGOs to share relevant experiences and learn more about the scourge of desertification and its global dimensions. The second week focused on the structure and elements to be contained in the Convention. Delegates also exchanged ideas about the Convention and its objectives.

Negotiations stalled in Nairobi over the issue of related regional instruments, while still giving priority action to Africa. Kjellén proposed that an instrument on Africa, such as an annex, be negotiated once the main structure of the Convention had been defined, and that similar instruments for other regions be negotiated subsequently. This proposal met with resistance from several countries in regions other than Africa. They felt that their own problems with desertification deserved attention and that similar instruments for their regions should be negotiated simultaneously with the instrument for Africa. The decision was deferred.

### **SECOND SESSION**

The second session of the INCD met in Geneva from 13-24 September 1993. The Committee considered the compilation text of the Convention prepared by the Secretariat and agreed on the future programme of work of the Committee, including the elaboration of regional instruments for Africa, Asia and Latin America. As in Nairobi, the most difficult issue to resolve was the negotiation of regional instruments. At the conclusion of the second session, the two working groups completed their discussion of the Secretariat's compilation text, identifying areas of convergence and divergence. There appeared to be consensus on a number of areas, including the need for: a clear and concise preamble that refers to the history of desertification in the UN system; clear and concise objectives; and implementable commitments that are central to the Convention and articulated at different levels (national, regional and international). Delegates stressed the need for a public awareness strategy, improved education, and increased cooperation and coordination between North and South, South and South, and among donors.

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### THIRD SESSION

The third session of the INCD was held at UN Headquarters in New York from 17-28 January 1994. At this session, the two working groups focused on the draft negotiating text of the Convention that was prepared by the Secretariat and contained in document A/AC.241/15. By the end of the two-week session, the working groups were able to complete at least one and sometimes two readings of each draft article. Progress was made in shaping the Convention and in identifying the areas of convergence and divergence. The INCD also discussed the regional instrument for Africa for the first time. After an initial discussion of the nature of this instrument and its relationship to the Convention as a whole, delegates requested the Secretariat to prepare a draft text for consideration at the fourth session.

### FOURTH SESSION

The fourth session of the INCD was held in Geneva from 21-31 March 1994. The two working groups continued negotiating the draft text of the Convention, as contained in document A/AC.241/15/Rev.1. By the conclusion of the session, the substantive problems that remained included: the need for an article on principles in the text; all matters related to financial resources and mechanisms; categories of countries; subsidiary bodies; reservations or exceptions open to the Parties; and the obligations of a withdrawing Party. In order to have a more productive dialogue on the issues of financial resources and mechanisms, the Chair invited Pierre-Marc Johnson (Canada) and Bolong Sonko (The Gambia) to undertake informal consultations among delegations on the provisions of the Convention related to finance. The objective of these consultations was to develop a new negotiating text on finance for the fifth session.

The fourth session was also the first time that delegates formally considered the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa. In general, developed countries thought that the annex was too long and contained a number of articles that were better suited to or already contained in the main Convention. The Africans felt that the level of detail was absolutely essential, otherwise the instrument would not achieve its objective of providing priority treatment for Africa. After a series of informal sessions, the unresolved issues in this heavily bracketed text included: the mandatory nature of the commitments to be taken by Parties; timetable for preparing action programmes; the necessity of regional action programmes; the role of the UN and other international institutions; financial arrangements; and follow-up and coordination.

The Asian and Latin American regional groups also produced their own draft regional implementation instruments. Although these annexes were not negotiated or even discussed in detail, initial reaction was positive. Delegates praised both annexes for their brevity and clarity and supported them as a good basis for further discussion.

### FIFTH SESSION

The fifth session of the INCD was held in Paris from 6-17 June 1994. During this session, delegates worked to reach agreement on the remaining bracketed text in the Convention. They also finalized four regional implementation annexes for Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Northern Mediterranean, adopted resolutions that recommended urgent action for Africa and interim arrangements for the period between adoption of the Convention and its entry into force, which could take at least two years. There were times during this session that delegates thought they would never reach agreement on the financial provisions of the Convention. After three all-night sessions capped by a closing Plenary that did not even begin until 4:00 am, the Convention was finally adopted.

The Convention, which is the first "sustainable development convention" to be negotiated after the Rio Conference, is notable for its innovative approach in recognizing: 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 in the development of national action programmes. The core of the Convention is the development of national and subregional/regional action programmes to combat desertification. These action programmes are to be developed by national governments in close cooperation with donors, local populations and NGOs. The 40-article Convention is divided into the following sections: I. Introduction; II. General provisions; III. Action programmes, scientific and technical cooperation and supporting measures; IV. Institutions; and V. Procedures. For a more detailed summary of the Convention, see *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, Vol. 4, No. 55.

## INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

### SIGNING CEREMONY IN PARIS

Eighty-seven countries signed the Convention to Combat Desertification at a ceremony in Paris on 14-15 October 1994. (See box on page 6.) After signing the Convention, Governments — many represented by their Ministers of Environment — announced their plans for implementing the Convention. Many countries suffering from desertification pledged to step up their national action committees to coordinate their efforts with those of non-governmental organizations, local communities, international agencies and donor governments.

A number of OECD countries announced aid packages, mostly to be reallocated from existing development funds, and to be used primarily to assist African countries in halting dryland degradation. The United States pledged US\$500 million in current or planned projects to fight desertification in Africa. The European Union said that US\$443 million was recently added under the Lomé Convention to fight desertification, on top of the US\$7.6 billion already committed. Germany pledged DM5 million in technical cooperation to be added before the end of 1994 to the DM1.8 billion already committed to combating desertification. Canada pledged over \$100 million, drawn from existing development aid, to be directed over the next five years to fight desertification, especially in West Africa. Denmark announced that US\$200 million has been allocated for the next fiscal year toward a new fund for international environment and emergency assistance, with a goal of targeting one half percent of GNP to this fund by the year 2004. This is above the 1% of GNP already spent on ODA. France said that above the FF1 billion committed for desertification, FF440 million will be allocated for bilateral financing of projects related to desertification and other areas under the scope of the GEF. Also in 1995, France will launch a programme to develop new energy sources for Africa, since the cutting of trees for fuelwood is one of the major causes of dryland degradation. Japan pledged an increase from US\$7 to 7.7 billion in ODA for environmental projects in developing countries for the period 1992-1996.

The Convention remains open for signature at UN Headquarters in New York.

### SECRETARIAT INFORMATION DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

The Secretariat has been working on a number of initiatives aimed at disseminating information about the Convention. One such initiative is a "user friendly" version of the Convention, which will enable greater public understanding of the Convention. This popular version of the Convention is expected to be completed by

March 1995. Initially it will be in English and French and the Secretariat hopes that it will be able to translate it into other languages, including African languages, as well.

### **CILSS MINISTERIAL MEETING**

The environment ministers of the member States of the Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS) met in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 22-23 September 1994. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss subregional follow-up to the adoption of the Convention to Combat Desertification. The Ministers designated the CILSS as the agency responsible for the subregional action programme of the Sahelian subregion, requested the CILSS to finalize the preparation of such a programme by October 1995, and invited developed countries and international organizations to support this process in the framework of a partnership.

### **IGADD SUB-REGIONAL WORKSHOP**

The Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) held a subregional workshop of high level policy makers from 28-30 September 1994 in Khartoum, Sudan. The purpose of the workshop was to: pave the way for signing of the Convention and its early ratification; draw up action programmes and strategies for the implementation of the Convention at the subregional level; and agree on the activities and set up a time-frame for subregional action during the interim period. Participants recognized the need for advocacy at all levels of civil society, particularly at the national level among local communities, NGOs and other target groups at the grassroots level. Member States were encouraged to establish national coordinating bodies and promote the integration of strategic planning frameworks, across sectors and at all administrative levels. With regard to action at the subregional level, participants agreed that IGADD should play a central role in the preparation and elaboration of subregional programmes in conformity with the Convention. IGADD should also review and prioritize existing programmes and undertake specific measures to ensure the establishment of an advisory, technical and scientific network.

### **INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON DESERTIFICATION IN THE MAGHREB**

The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) hosted an International Meeting on Desertification in the Maghreb from 5-6 October 1994, in Rabat, Morocco. One of the purposes of this meeting was to review the case study on desertification in the Maghreb and reach agreement on a regional programme to control desertification in the area for a ten-year period. Components of this regional programme include: the creation of a Maghreb center for strategic studies, research and training for the development of arid zones; a support project for insuring coordination, programming and follow-up of desertification control activities; development of a regional network for continued monitoring of ecosystems; the development of a Maghreb database on desertification; the development of a comprehensive scheme to control drought effects; a regional project for promoting the use of a participatory approach; a pilot programme to control desertification in arid ecosystems; and an integrated cross-the-border development programme.

### **NGO ACTIVITIES**

NGOs held two meetings November to discuss their role in implementing the Convention to Combat Desertification. The first meeting was held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, from 9-12 November 1994. This meeting was aimed at developing an international NGO network called the "Réseau International des ONG sur la Désertification" (RIOD), which will help coordinate NGO participation in the preparation of national action plans.

The second meeting was held in Brussels from 28-30 November 1994. Participants examined the Convention and the challenges of implementation, including the European Union's role in combating desertification, regional aspects in implementing the Convention, coordinated implementation, and the role of NGOs in implementation. They also discussed a North-South NGO partnership and coordination of European NGOs in the implementation of the Convention.

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY HIGHLIGHTS**

The 49th United Nations General Assembly began its consideration of Agenda Item 89(d), "Elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa," on Friday, 21 October 1994. Although the debate on this issue was held in the General Assembly Plenary, action was taken in the Second Committee. In connection with this item, the General Assembly had before it the report of the Secretary-General on the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (document A/49/477) and a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the reports of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification (INCD) on its third, fourth and fifth sessions (A/49/84 and Addenda 1 and 2).

During the course of the debate, most governments noted that this Convention was innovative in its recognition of the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of desertification. The Convention also recognizes the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand driven. The involvement of local populations in the development of national action programmes was also cited as an innovative provision. Most delegates stressed that political commitment is essential at this stage if the Convention is to be a success. Developing countries specifically mentioned the need for new and additional financial resources. While many were pleased with the fact that 87 nations signed the Convention in Paris, they urged more governments to sign the Convention in New York and called for rapid ratification and entry into force.

In his introductory remarks, INCD Chair **Bo Kjellén** commented that the Committee managed to produce a robust Convention that is coherent, legally consistent, innovative and balanced between the perception of desertification as a global problem and the obvious need for specific recognition of regional differences. Although there was disappointment over the relative lack of precision in the financial provisions of the Convention, the global mechanism in the Convention may turn out to be a useful tool. He stressed the importance of implementing the resolution on urgent action for Africa and called on developed countries as well as international and multilateral organizations, agencies and programmes to provide enabling funds to support partnerships at the national and subregional levels in Africa. He urged the General Assembly to adopt a resolution on interim arrangements, which would include the convening of further sessions of the INCD in 1995 and 1996 and the continuation of the interim Secretariat to provide the necessary support for the work of the Committee.

**ALGERIA (ON BEHALF OF THE G-77 AND CHINA):** Amb. Ramtane Lamamra expressed satisfaction with Convention's legal framework that provides a multidimensional, action-oriented approach to combat desertification worldwide. He expressed concern about the continuing problems with the availability of funding and the slow pace of the transfer of technology. He emphasized that the tenuous position of Africa warrants immediate action. He urged signatory countries to ratify without delay, and hoped that the links between the developed and developing countries provided for in this Convention could serve as the basis for new prospects in international cooperation.

**GERMANY (ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION):**

Gerhard W. Henze said that combating desertification is a central element in the EU's development cooperation programmes. The funds allocated for this purpose through the Lomé Convention in 1992 alone amounted to US\$1.9 billion. The process of elaborating national action programmes in developing countries is of the utmost priority. A closely coordinated effort between donor countries and affected developing countries is imperative. The quick follow-up to the signing of the Convention, in particular the resolution on the urgent action for Africa, must be ensured.

**CANADA:** Amb. John Fraser stressed the need for an integrated approach to combating desertification. The affected countries have the responsibility of assuming the leadership role in their own action plans, while the donor countries are there to provide financial and technical support. The Canadian International Development Agency will commit \$4 million for urgent assistance to Africa as well as an additional \$100 million for anti-desertification programmes in Africa over the next five years.

**MAURITANIA:** Amb. Hamoud Ould Ely supported the unanimous adoption of the Convention and the identification of the need for urgent action for Africa. The growing awareness worldwide is a result of the global nature of desertification. He expressed concern over the constant delays in action and added that because of the scope and immediacy of the problem, no more delays can be tolerated. Remedies cannot be limited to humanitarian operations.

**INDIA:** Amb. T. P. Sreenivasan said that the most satisfying feature of this Convention is that it reflects a basic concern of the developing world and seeks to tackle real human problems. The Convention also correctly distinguishes between deserts and lands prone to desertification and drought. Adequate financial and appropriate technological resources need to be made available if the implementation of this Convention is to become a reality.

**AUSTRALIA:** Richard Rowe stressed the need to ensure that the provisions of the Convention are converted into effective and practical action. In Paris, the Australian Treasurer announced a special contribution of up to A\$250,000 over several years to combat desertification in Africa. Australia also plans to undertake a joint feasibility study with the World Meteorological Organization for the establishment of a network linking the two drought monitoring centres in Nairobi and Harare with the African Centre of Meteorological Application for Development in Niamey.

**NORWAY:** On behalf of the Nordic countries, Amb. Arne Hønningstad said that the Convention provides a framework for affected countries and peoples, as well as relevant organizations and donors, to address the serious problems caused by land degradation and the increasing imbalance between people and available resources. The Nordic countries will actively participate by reviewing development cooperation in areas such as poverty alleviation, land degradation and freshwater in light of the provisions of the Convention.

**ISRAEL:** Amb. Israel Eliashiv welcomed the coordinated activities aimed at supporting the effective implementation of the Convention and the urgent measures for Africa. Israel has already initiated its activities under the Convention by elaborating a master plan for an international center for combating desertification.

**BENIN:** Amb. René Valéry Mongbe said that the resolution on urgent action for Africa urges African countries to take steps to elaborate national action programmes and recommends that African countries and donors strengthen their partnerships. Countries must show their firm commitment to the resolution of this problem. With regards to technical assistance, the African Annex mentions the need to give preference to African experts whose services will be cheaper than those of foreign consultants. Now the time has come to join actions with words.

**BANGLADESH:** Amb. Reaz Rahman said that Bangladesh fully supports the need for priority to be accorded to affected African countries. Bangladesh attaches particular importance to the implementation of preventive measures for lands that are not yet degraded. The role of NGOs is critical for effective implementation and follow-up. Bangladesh supports the idea of the global mechanism and hopes that it will be successful in the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources, including the transfer of technology on a grant basis or on concessional terms.

**LIBYA:** Amb. Mohamed A. Azwai said that desertification is one of the most important problems facing Africa. The need to combat desertification is now widely recognized and Libya hopes that the Convention will enjoy the necessary political and financial support. Libya has established a special institute to combat desertification, but efforts have been hampered by two factors — the mines planted during World War II and the unjust embargo that has paralyzed research projects.

**FRANCE:** Herve Ladsous said that the signing ceremony held in Paris exceeded all expectations. As a result of this Convention, donors can become true partners with the countries in need. France will make implementation of the Convention one of its priorities, with assistance committed to reducing the effects of desertification at FF\$1 billion per year, plus a contribution to the GEF.

**IRAN:** The representative said that INCD-6, in January 1995, is of significant importance to ensure progress in combating desertification. The implementation of the Convention depends on the provision of substantial new and additional financial resources — between US\$10 and 22.4 billion, as estimated by UNEP. The GEF will serve as a financing source for the Convention, but the GEF replenishment is insufficient.

**BARBADOS:** Amb. Besley Maycock, on behalf of the 12 States of the Caribbean Community, supported the call for prompt action to combat desertification. The Convention is a balanced document that addresses physical, biological, social and cultural issues related to desertification. The focus on the elaboration of action programmes is important. The Caricom States expressed hope for the necessary political will during the implementation stage to ensure the early and effective operation of the Convention once it enters into force.

**MONGOLIA:** The representative said that a concerted response of all actors at the national and international levels is needed to implement the Convention. One of the significant aspects of the Convention lies in its addressing food security and other socio-economic causes of desertification. The momentum created by the adoption of the Convention must be sustained. NGOs and local populations must be involved in the formulation of national action plans. He stressed the importance of new and additional resources and expressed hope that the global mechanism will help mobilize these resources.

**TUNISIA:** Amb. Slaheddine Abdellah said that the binding nature of this Convention is a positive step in the implementation of the commitments undertaken in Rio. At the OAU Summit in Tunis in June 1994, African States committed to setting up the necessary structures for the application of the Convention and the African Annex. Affected countries need technical and financial support. The international community, in particular the donor countries, needs to afford the importance due to desertification as a worldwide environmental problem.

**UGANDA:** The representative said that there is insufficient funding available for combating desertification. The case for new and additional funding must be recognized. He appealed to the international community to support early implementation for Africa with regard to finance and technology. The interim secretariat should undertake activities on issues such as the financial mechanism and the Committee on Science and Technology.

**NIGERIA:** The representative underscored the continued relevance of international efforts to combat desertification and drought. The most significant accomplishment of the INCD is the international attention that has been mobilized around desertification. The negotiations have linked those affected with desertification with donors, UN agencies, IGOs and NGOs and have laid the foundation for future global partnership arrangements. He called on the international community to provide the necessary financial and technological assistance.

**TANZANIA:** Amb. Daudi N. Mwakawago said that the international community should take measures to reduce the excessive burden of debt on developing countries and to check deteriorating rates of exchange and improve international economic relations. Particular attention should be directed at increasing financial and technical assistance to help poor developing countries implement their strategies for development of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid zones. The international community should mobilize the existing network of institutions to effectively organize the gathering, analysis and distribution of data in the observation and forecasting of drought and desertification.

**SUDAN:** The representative said that Sudan has established a supreme council on environment and natural resources to implement the Convention. Widespread grassroots reforestation campaigns are currently underway to combat desertification. While Sudan welcomes the Convention, there is concern that it will remain a "dead letter" if it does not have the necessary financing.

**PHILIPPINES:** The representative said that subregional, regional and international collaboration is essential to mitigate the effects of drought. Countries in South Asia suffering from drought should have been considered as affected countries under the Convention. The prevention of drought helps prevent land degradation and desertification. The Philippines will pursue this issue at the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Philippines joined the Convention in the hope that drought-affected countries in South Asia will not be left out.

**PAKISTAN:** Mir Mushtaq Ali Talpur said that failure to deal with drought and desertification accelerates impoverishment of the populations in dry lands and exacerbates famine and drought relief, thereby diverting resources from addressing long-term development issues. Substantial new and additional resources are needed since nearly US\$22 billion will be required annually for the next 20 years to finance the rehabilitation of land and halt the decline in fertility. Adequate technology and know-how are also critical. He welcomed the decision that UNSO will now deal with the needs of all countries facing drought and desertification.

**JAPAN:** Amb. Shunji Maruyama said that Japan has announced a plan to increase ODA for environmental projects from US\$7 billion to US\$7.7 billion over the five-year period from 1992 through 1996. The African Programme for the Supply of Potable Water provides grant aid for the development of groundwater and water-supply systems. To assist in the implementation of the Convention, Japan will: strengthen the dialogue with affected countries to see if projects carried out with Japanese ODA are actually helping to combat desertification; dispatch survey missions to clarify needs in the field; and assist in the development of programmes of action in the most affected countries.

**CHINA:** The representative said that the Chinese Government has put enormous human and material resources to combating desertification and hopes that the international community will help them combat desertification more effectively. The rights and obligations under this Convention are not balanced between developed and developing countries. The shortage of financial resources is a major element in the lack of desertification prevention. He urged the international community to help developing countries with financial resources and technology to assure implementation of the Convention.

**BRAZIL:** On behalf of the Rio Group (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela), Amb. Ronaldo Mota Sardenberg noted that desertification and drought affects 75% of the land surface in Latin America. Major amounts of resources and international cooperation are needed to combat desertification. The Rio Group recognizes that the problem is of extreme importance in Africa and stresses the need for preventive measures.

**THE GAMBIA:** The representative said that The Gambia will continue to review and improve its national action programmes and coordinate its efforts with other parties at the regional and subregional levels, however, more financial and technical resources are needed. The success of the global mechanism will be based on the contribution of the Parties. He called on the international community to cooperate in the implementation of the Convention. He also expressed support for the adoption of a resolution to enable the Secretariat to function during the interim period.

**SENEGAL:** Amb. Kéba Birane Cissé said the global dimension of desertification and drought is now a fact and priority is now recognized for Africa. The innovations introduced by the Convention include that action will be carried out at all levels with the participation of the populations concerned, as well as intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations. Only concrete results in the field will allow measurement of success. Sufficient financial and technical resources are needed, however, the bilateral and multilateral commitments announced at the signing ceremony are promising.

**UNITED STATES:** Herman Gallegos said that the US has identified US\$500 million in current or planned projects that can be utilized to support the Convention. African countries have to decide how they will use the Convention to meet their own anti-desertification plans and programmes. He called for reducing the January meeting of the INCD to one week, cancelling the May meeting and postponing a decision on meetings in 1996 until the January session. The US believes that the secretariat should not assume the burden of reviewing preparation of action programmes and other activities under the urgent action resolution.

**ETHIOPIA:** The representative appealed to partners in developed countries to make available adequate, timely and predictable financial resources and technical assistance, especially for the least developed and African countries. It is imperative to ensure effective participation of developing countries during the interim period. He also called for contributions to the voluntary fund. The secretariat for the Convention should be located in Africa and its location should be the subject of discussion at the first Conference of the Parties.

**KENYA:** Amb. Francis K. Muthaura said that a critical element in the success of the strategy is the financial mechanism, with the emphasis on multiple-source financing. The concrete responses that the Convention will be able to attract from donor countries and international organizations will determine the impact of the Convention on local efforts to combat desertification and achieve sustainable development. He supported the call for two interim meetings each in 1995 and 1996 and one meeting in 1997. He called for more contributions to the voluntary fund.

**BOTSWANA:** Constance Mompei noted that socio-economic factors, including an unevenly distributed but rapidly growing population, concentrated livestock rearing activities and poor arable farming practices, aggravate the already vulnerable landscape of Botswana. Regional cooperation is essential and Botswana has started to consult with its neighbors to prepare the Kgalagadi/Namib Action Plan to combat desertification.

**BURKINA FASO:** The representative said the Convention ensures a balance between the globality of desertification and the specific nature of certain regions. Burkina Faso has put together a

national environmental programme. The necessary resources must be provided and the institutional, financial and follow-up machinery must be available as soon as possible.

**ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY:** The representative welcomed the completion of the Convention. The effects of desertification and drought in Africa must be checked if the continent is to have a firm basis for sustainable development. The Convention will be meaningful only if it is effectively and promptly implemented. He called on the international community to ratify and implement the Convention.

### GENERAL ASSMEBLY RESOLUTION

Algeria, on behalf of the G-77 and China, introduced the draft resolution on the Convention to Combat Desertification in the Second Committee on 15 November 1994. During the informal consultations on this draft resolution, it appeared that the major problem was the number of meetings that that INCD would need during the interim period. Whereas the original draft resolution (A/C.2/49/L.13) called for two two-week sessions each in 1995 and 1996 and one in 1997, a number of developed countries did not feel that such a large number of meetings was necessary. The final consensus was that, in addition to the sixth meeting of the INCD in January 1995 (which was already approved by the 48th session of the General Assembly last year), there will be a two-week session in Nairobi from 7-18 August 1995, and, "pending the entry into force of the Convention, to hold further necessary sessions in 1996 and 1997, the venue and timing of which shall be recommended by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee."

The final resolution (A/C.2/49/L.30), which emerged from informal consultations, was adopted by the Second Committee on 7 December 1994. It is expected to be formally adopted by the General Assembly Plenary before Christmas. The resolution decides that the INCD will continue to function in order to:

- prepare for the first session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention;
- facilitate the implementation of the provisions of resolution 5/1 of the INCD on urgent action for Africa, through the exchange of information and the review of progress made thereon;
- initiate measures relating to the identification of an organization to house the global mechanism to promote actions leading to

the mobilization and channelling of substantial financial resources, including its operational modalities;

- elaborate the rules of procedure for the Conference of the Parties; and
- consider other relevant issues, including measures to ensure the implementation of the Convention and its regional annexes.

The resolution also urges countries to sign and ratify the Convention, and calls on all countries, the UN system, appropriate scientific and business communities, trade unions, NGOs and other interested groups to take action for the prompt implementation of the Convention and its relevant regional annexes upon its entry into force. During the interim period before entry into force, the resolution urges all relevant actors to take actions and measures to implement the resolution on urgent action for Africa. The Secretariat will continue to function and be funded through existing UN budgetary resources and voluntary contributions.

After the resolution was adopted, the Philippines took the floor to say that while it joined the consensus, it feels that tropical humid areas have not been sufficiently considered in the Convention. The resolution should have mentioned combating drought, but these elements were removed. Algeria, on behalf of the G-77, thanked everyone for joining the consensus and said that hope is now reborn with the signing of this Convention. Now we need to see rapid entry into force. Benin supported the G-77 statement and appealed to all countries to take urgent steps for Africa by supporting national and sub-regional action programmes.

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR IN 1995

**SIXTH SESSION OF THE INCD:** The sixth session of the INCD will meet in New York from 9-20 January 1995. The objective of this session will be to review the situation before the Convention enters into force, in particular with regard to the implementation of provisions that are to be adapted to the specific needs of each region. The provisional agenda for this session, as adopted in Paris, includes: adoption of the agenda and organization of work; work programme for the interim period; preparation for the Conference of the Parties; status of signature and ratification of the Convention; review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds; and adoption of the report.

## SIGNATORIES TO THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION PARIS — 14-15 OCTOBER 1994

Algeria	China	Georgia	Libya	Senegal
Angola	Colombia	Germany	Luxembourg	Seychelles
Argentina	Comoros	Ghana	Madagascar	Spain
Armenia	Congo	Greece	Mali	Sudan
Australia	Costa Rica	Guinea	Malta	Sweden
Bangladesh	Côte d'Ivoire	Guinea Bissau	Mauritania	Switzerland
Benin	Croatia	Haiti	Mexico	Syria
Bolivia	Cuba	India	Mongolia	Tanzania
Brazil	Denmark	Indonesia	Morocco	Togo
Burkina Faso	Djibouti	Iran	Netherlands	Tunisia
Burundi	Egypt	Ireland	Niger	Turkey
Cambodia	Equatorial Guinea	Israel	Norway	United Kingdom
Cameroon	Eritrea	Italy	Pakistan	United States
Canada	Ethiopia	Japan	Peru	Zaire
Cape Verde	European Union	Kazakhstan	Portugal	Zambia
Central African Republic	Finland	Kenya	Republic of Korea	Zimbabwe
Chad	France	Lebanon	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	
	Gambia	Lesotho		