

# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## INCD HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 17 JANUARY 1995

The Plenary met briefly Monday morning so that INCD Chair, Bo Kjellén, could inform delegates about the day's schedule. The meeting was then adjourned to allow time for regional groups to meet and review the draft resolution on the organization and programme of work for the interim period, which emerged out of the meeting of heads of regional and interest groups on Monday night. The Plenary resumed at 3:00 pm to conclude the discussion on awareness building and adjourned again to enable consultations to continue.

### MORNING PLENARY

Kjellén opened the meeting by offering condolences to the Japanese delegation on the situation in Japan following the early morning earthquake. He then announced that a new draft resolution was produced by the meeting of heads of regional and interest groups Monday evening and has been distributed for discussion by regional groups. He also announced that the Chair's conclusions on urgent action for Africa and interim action in other regions and the review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds have been distributed as documents A/AC.241/CRP.13 and A/AC.241/CRP.14, respectively. The meeting was then adjourned.

### AWARENESS BUILDING

During the brief afternoon session, Kjellén and the Executive Secretary, Arba Diallo, summarized the outcome of Monday morning's discussion on public awareness building and the resolution on World Day to Combat Desertification.

Diallo noted that there appears to be consensus on the fundamental need to raise the public's awareness on the Convention in both developed and developing countries. This is a prerequisite to the implementation of the Convention at the local, national, subregional, regional and international levels. There is also consensus on the types of activities that need to be undertaken, some of which have already been initiated, such as the preparation and dissemination of documents. New ideas have also been generated, including: the commemoration of World Day to Combat Drought and Desertification on 17 June; the creation of a central information service to collect and disseminate information; issuing information bulletins and magazines; holding seminars for decision-makers, technicians, NGOs, local populations and bilateral cooperation agencies; and the involvement of other sectors of society, such as university institutions and intellectuals.

However, there is a divergence of opinion on how this should be done. Developing countries want the Secretariat to have a strong active role and be provided with the means to catalyze action, especially in the least developing countries, without expropriating the roles of other groups. Developed countries prefer that national governments and other sectors play the key role, while a small Secretariat plays a limited role of compiling and disseminating the available documents to the Parties and granting advice upon request. NGOs and specialized agencies should be involved in information dissemination. Given these proposals, the function of the Interim Secretariat would: supplement those of other institutions; involve mobilizing resources on behalf of countries that may not find assistance elsewhere; prepare reports, on request, on the activities it has undertaken, in order to ensure transparency; and set up a partnership to meet the proposed needs, for which the Secretariat is awaiting guidelines from the INCD at the next session.

Kjellén then stated that he does not intend to circulate any written conclusions on the discussion on awareness building. The Secretariat has benefitted from the discussion and it would be desirable to organize a discussion of this kind at the next session. He noted the different levels at which public awareness should be raised: at the village level in affected developing countries; within the governments of both the North and the South; and in the general public in the North. There are variations in approach depending on the target group. More efforts should be made to show that desertification is a global problem. Although it is useful to raise the profile of desertification within the Security Council, by linking it to issues such as environmental refugees and migration that the Council deals with, it should also be addressed as an essential environment and development issue. The delegations could also raise the profile of the issue at the political level in their countries, by educating their leaders during the ratification process about the problems in the drylands. The important role of NGOs in awareness raising has been appreciated and the proposal to organize a global NGO meeting before INCD-7 has been noted. However, there may not be sufficient time to prepare for such a meeting before August, but such a forum is worthwhile. Commemorating World Day to Combat Desertification is important in raising awareness on the Convention. Kjellén concluded the discussion by stating that this issue may be taken up again at INCD-7.

### IN THE CORRIDORS I

Consultations continued throughout the day in the corridors, in regional group meetings and in Conference Room 9 on the resolution on the organization of work for the interim period. While

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there seems to be general agreement on the mandates of the two working groups, other areas of the draft resolution have proven to be more problematic than expected. By lunchtime, consensus was still elusive on the role of the Secretariat in the preparation of documentation and whether or not the Chair should be invited to make proposals to the Committee on the organization of scientific and technological cooperation.

With regard to the working groups, it appears as though Working Group I will be responsible for: initiating measures relating to the identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism; the designation of a Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning; and financial rules, programme and budget. Working Group II will be responsible for: organization of scientific and technological cooperation; rules of procedure for the Conference of the Parties; procedures on questions of implementation; procedures for conciliation and arbitration; and the system for communication of information for review of the implementation of the Convention and its institutional arrangements. There was also talk in the corridors that the Chairs of these two working groups will be Takao Shibata of Japan and Mourad Ahmia of Algeria.

### IN THE CORRIDORS II

In the draft resolution dated 17 January 1995, which was circulated on Tuesday, paragraph six invites the Chair "to make proposals to the Committee, at the seventh session, on the organization of scientific and technological cooperation." The apparent intention of this proposal is to take care of organizational matters during the interim period so that the Committee on Science and Technology (as called for in Article 24 of the Convention) can begin substantive work as soon as the Convention enters into force. The language in the draft resolution could also enable the Chair to convene his own scientific and technological advisory group during the interim period. Members of the OECD group reluctantly supported this proposal. Meanwhile, the OECD group has set up its own small scientific group, consisting of representatives from Canada, Belgium, Australia and Spain. This group will prepare scientific background information for the OECD.

The G-77 and China, on the other hand, find the proposal in the draft resolution questionable because it gives an unprecedented role to the Chair. In their view, there is no need to make this an explicit part of the resolution. Another argument is that governments and NGOs should have the opportunity to give input on these issues and the process should not be controlled only by the Chair. Negotiations continued throughout the afternoon.

### IN THE CORRIDORS III

NGO and European Union representatives met Tuesday in an informal meeting that focused on: the relationship between the

Lomé IV and Barcelona Conventions, which are in the process of being renegotiated, and the Convention to Combat Desertification; and funding issues. There is concern that while there is pressure not to create new institutions under the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) and to instead, utilize existing ones, no efforts have been made to ensure this in the Lomé IV renegotiations, which have focused on financial matters and have not dealt with the environmental section, DG11, under which other negotiated environmental conventions are placed. Consequently, while there is a provision for funding other environmental conventions, no such provisions exist for the CCD. Similarly, when the re-negotiation of the Barcelona Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean Against Pollution starts in June 1995, the sections dealing with desertification need to be harmonized with the provisions in the CCD's Regional Implementation Annex for the Northern Mediterranean. From the discussions it appears as though the funding structure likely to emerge is where an EU country identifies a country of interest in Africa, and the donor then acts as the coordinator or focal point for other donors willing to fund projects in that particular country. At 1:15 pm on Wednesday, NGOs will meet donors to make a proposal on how donors can fund NGOs within the RIOD structure.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**PLENARY:** The Plenary is expected to resume this morning to continue its consideration of the programme of work for the interim period. If the Committee is to conclude its work today, the following tasks must be accomplished: finalizing elections to the bureaux of the working groups; adopting the agenda for the seventh session; adopting the resolution on the programme of work for the interim period; adopting a resolution on the observance of World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought; and adopting the report of this session. The Chair is also hopeful that there will be time to hold short organizational sessions of the two working groups. If the Committee is unable to conclude its work today, it is likely that INCD-6 will adjourn by 1:00 pm on Thursday.

**BUREAU MEETING:** The INCD Bureau will meet at 9:30 am in Conference Room 9.

**NGO MEETINGS:** NGOs have a meeting with representatives of the FAO at 9:00 am in Conference Room 8. There will also be a meeting between NGOs and donors at 1:15 pm to address funding within the RIOD structure. The room will be announced.

**US-SPONSORED MEETING:** The US will hold a provisional meeting at 1:30 pm in Conference Room E to begin organizing a symposium and workshop on preventing desertification. This workshop will be held in May 1997 in Tuscon, Arizona. All delegates and NGOs are invited to attend.

### CCD ON THE INTERNET

<http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/desert.html>

The Linkages World-Wide-Web server, a multimedia database provided by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), includes a special area for the Convention to Combat Desertification. This on-line service includes the full text versions of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, special hypertext versions of the Convention, photos and links to official documentation. For more information send e-mail to <enb@igc.apc.org>.

**If you would like to receive a copy of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin's* final summary of INCD-6, give your business card or a piece of paper with your name and address to a member of the *Bulletin* team or contact IISD at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada; tel: +1-204-958-7700; fax +1-204-958-7710.**