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INCD HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 16 AUGUST 1995

Since Working Group I concluded its work on Tuesday, only Working Group II held a morning session. The Group completed Sections F to H, of Procedures for communication of information and review of implementation (A/AC.241/39). It went on to consider the part of the section on the Committee on Science and Technology in the informal paper (A/AC.241/WG.II(VII)CRP.1).

WORKING GROUP II

COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AND REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION

Modalities of review: Benin, supported by Sudan and the Congo, suggested including that review materials should be distributed six weeks before the session of the COP. Regarding paragraph 28, he suggested providing computers to needy countries. He further suggested that the INCD Chair should send a letter to the Chair of the Global Environment Facility to enquire whether the Permanent Secretariat could access funds for developing countries' compilation and communication of information. The Permanent Secretariat of the Convention could indicate the approximate figures. The UK doubted whether the Permanent Secretariat should assist developing countries to obtain funds from donors. This might be a role for the Global Mechanism.

Products of review: In paragraph 29, distribution of review materials, Benin amended the text to: "...transparency and the facility to the access of information." In paragraph 30, he suggested that the periodic report should be published every two years. The UK proposed "appropriately, at a two year period."

Evolution of review system: There were no amendments or comments on this section.

The Group then adopted a draft decision on Communication of information and review of implementation. It reads: "The INCD, invites its members to communicate to the Secretariat, by 15 October 1995, further views on procedures for communication of information and review of implementation. Requests the Secretariat to prepare, for the eighth session, a draft decision of the Conference of the Parties on this subject based on document A/AC.241/39, on comments and suggestions of its members in Working Group II at the seventh session."

THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Transparency: One delegation suggested deleting the second part of the paragraph on the accessibility of the work of the CST to all those who are interested because it would be too costly for the CST to publish its work. He proposed wording that would state the results should be prepared in a form that can be used by all those interested.

Programme and budget: Several delegates suggested deleting the first paragraph that instructs the CST to develop a plan of action and a budget, which should be part of the overall budget of the COP. One delegate noted that it is unclear how the plan of action can be separated from the budget and wanted to retain the first part of the first paragraph. Another suggested keeping the second paragraph, which states that the COP should make available sufficient funds for the CST to enable it to carry out its activities. Some delegates wanted to delete the second paragraph, since the CST should not give any directives to the COP, while others suggested deleting the first paragraph and amending the second.

Sessions of the CST: Delegates discussed the meaning of the expression "in conjunction with," mentioned in the first paragraph referring to the CST meetings and those of the COP. It should be possible for the CST to meet just before the COP meetings. The Chair recalled that the expression had caused some confusion earlier but noted that the language from the Convention should be used. This is also connected to the second paragraph, which states that the sessions of the CST may be held immediately before or during the sessions of the COP. A suggestion was made to state, "may be held before or after" but some delegates said the CST meetings should not be held after the COP as the CST is required to make a report to each COP.

A proposal was made to delete the last line in the first paragraph referring to the CST presenting a report of its activities. It was also suggested to create a third paragraph, from the last sentence of the fourth paragraph on the operations of the CST proposing that "most of the Committee's work should be done during the intersessional period."

The CST and the roster of experts: The paragraph states that the CST shall advise the COP on the structure and membership of the Roster of Independent Experts.

Some delegations suggested deleting the paragraph as it does not conform to Article 24.2 of the CCD in two aspects: the CST can only provide guidance to the COP on updating the roster of experts; and the COP will not be able to adopt the roster of

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experts at its first session because that is when the CST will be established. The roster can only be available during the second meeting of the COP. The INCD can only state that the CST will have, among its functions, that of updating the roster of experts. Three alternatives were suggested: "the COP may invite the CST to advise....;" conclude the paragraph by "...Independent Experts, in consonance with the methodology stated in Article 24.2 of the CCD;" or "The CST shall propose the selection and evaluation criteria of members in the roster of experts, take decisions on the nomination of candidates and propose the removal of any candidates on the basis of evaluation or assessment." With respect to the last proposal, some delegates noted that only the COP has the authority to determine who is placed on or removed from the roster.

The CST and *ad hoc* panels: The three paragraphs provide for the CST to establish or propose to the COP the establishment of *ad hoc* panels, as necessary, and set their TORs, at the COP's request. In addition the CST will: identify the issues the panels would address; define the duration of the panels; evaluate their work and communicate to the COP; and develop guidelines for the functioning of the panels, for consideration and adoption by the COP.

Delegates pointed out that the Convention provided for the COP, not the CST, to establish *ad hoc* panels. Thus, the CST can only be "invited to advise" the COP. Similarly, the COP may request the CST to prepare TORs and guidelines for the panels, on which the COP may base their TORs. The text could also be amended to state that "one of the tasks of the CST is to evaluate the work of the *ad hoc* panels and communicate this to the COP."

The CST and the Permanent Secretariat: The paragraph reads: The CST will make use of the Permanent Secretariat for organizational elements of its work. It will also have Permanent Secretariat support for communicating with the appropriate bodies of other pertinent conventions.

Delegates noted that this paragraph is already in the Convention and should therefore be deleted.

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Relations with other conventions and international organizations:

The two paragraphs state that the CST shall keep itself informed of the activities of the scientific advisory committees of other conventions and of relevant international organizations to ensure that its work does not duplicate, but complements, the work of these committees. There was no debate on the paragraph but delegates requested a more concise phrasing.

Areas of activities of the CST: The section lists 17 areas of activities that the CST could focus on. Majority of the delegates objected to the listing because it is difficult to list all the disciplines. Before delegates could engage in further debate, the Chair noted that the Secretariat's revised terms of reference would not list any disciplines.

The Chair then introduced a draft decision on the Terms of Reference, which reads: "The INCD, decides to use the information compilation prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.241/WG.II(VII)/CRP.1) on the organization of the scientific and technological cooperation for further discussion. Requests the Secretariat to prepare, for the eighth session, draft terms of reference of the Committee on Science on Technology on the basis of comments and suggestions at the seventh session and of any further views that might be communicated by its members to the Secretariat, in writing, before 15 October 1995." The decision was adopted without debate.

At the request of several delegates, the Secretariat explained that the document to be prepared will contain two sections. Section one, which will be negotiated at INCD-8, will cover the terms of reference on the CST based on the discussions at this session and written comments that might be received before the stated deadline. Section two, which will only be discussed at INCD-8, will be a compilation text on the *ad hoc* panels and roster of experts as contained in the current CRP document, as well as additional comments that may be received by 15 October. With this, the Working Group concluded its work for the session.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Over the last two days, the funding situation of the Interim Secretariat has raised concern among several developing country delegations over the venue of INCD-8. Following the Executive Secretary's report on extrabudgetary funds and the observation that few developed countries have made concrete commitments to provide funds for both the Trust and Voluntary Funds, delegations have questioned the rationale of holding the next session in Geneva. Some suggest that the 1995 General Assembly should discuss the venue of INCD-8, moving it to New York if the funds are not forthcoming for attendance by developing country delegations by the time the GA is held. Even then, some delegates see a different problem in New York: INCD-8 will entail negotiations outside the familiarity or expertise of several members of the Second Committee, who would substitute there for regular INCD delegates. On average, it costs approximately US\$250,000 to fund the participation of 65 delegates from developing countries. In view of the pressure to redress this problem, it is likely that INCD Chair Kjellén could present a draft decision to Thursday's plenary requesting the GA to address the issue.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The final Plenary convenes Thursday morning at 11:00 am to adopt its report and the provisional agenda and programme of work for INCD-8.

Look for the Chairman's conclusions on the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa and action in other regions.