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INCD HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 1996

Delegates spent all day Tuesday in Plenary, where general statements were first presented. They reviewed the Status of Signature and Ratification and dealt with Special Action: Urgent Action for Africa for the rest of the morning and afternoon.

PLENARY

Italy, on behalf of the **European Union** noted that four more EU countries have ratified and several others are in the process of doing so.

Costa Rica, on behalf of **G-77 and China**, said the important ingredients in the CCD are the integrated approach and implementation, which require flexibility on all levels. The work on the Global Mechanism (GM) is on the right path.

Bangladesh ratified the CCD last month and is now implementing its national action programme.

The **Russian Federation** is unlikely to ratify the CCD because it fails to mention countries with economies in transition. A decision to accede to the CCD will be reached if financial consideration for these countries appears in the report of INCD-8.

Afghanistan outlined the causes, effects and processes of desertification in the country and called on UNDP, ESCAP and others to assist in anti-desertification activities.

Iran has set up a national committee to combat desertification which oversees the work of the *ad hoc* committee preparing the national action programme (NAP). The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) membership should not be restricted.

Madagascar said its awareness raising workshop recommended CCD ratification, implementation within Urgent Action for Africa, preparing a methodology for a national plan of action and participation in a sub-regional organization.

Roben Penny of the Environmental Monitoring Group, on behalf of the NGO network **RIOD**, said INCD-8 should make progress on women and desertification including ensuring gender policies at all levels, grass roots research action and electronic mail networking of women's expertise. The CST must recognize skills and knowledge of local people and involve them. Independent NGO reporting to COP is needed for reliable evaluation of Urgent Action for Africa.

STATUS OF SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION:

Executive Secretary Arba Diallo noted that 115 signatures had been received by the closing deadline, and that one country has acceded to CCD since. He said the rate of ratification and accession is increasing, with six ratifications received in January, totaling 25 ratifications. He urged rapid ratification so CCD can enter into force by INCD-9 in September.

Nigeria expects to ratify the CCD before the end of the year. She proposed that submissions on the GM should be in line with those of other conventions. **Bolivia** and **Portugal** hope to deposit their instruments of ratification by the end of February; **Mozambique** and **Nepal** by July; **Israel** within three months; and **Ghana** within the next few months.

URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA: **INCD Chair** Kjellén said the aim of the discussion is to provide a picture of what has been done on the resolution and what lessons can be drawn from these activities.

South Africa's three objectives are to: undertake a national audit; raise awareness on desertification; and design the national action programme. It is unlikely to ratify the CCD before the end of the year.

Many of **Sweden's** new development assistance proposals include the CCD holistic and bottom-up approaches. The work on desertification should be included in the preparatory process of the November World Food Summit.

Lesotho, on behalf of **SADC** region, said most member states will have ratified by June this year. The priorities are capacity building, institutional strengthening and training awareness.

More than half of **Norway's** development assistance goes to Sub-Saharan Africa, approximately US\$1.6 million, while 15% of all the Norwegian development assistance goes to the environment.

Denmark, in collaboration with UNSO, has provided US\$1.8 million to support the activities of the SADC countries, in particular Botswana, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. It also supported a consultation process for East Africa in Asmara, Eritrea, in August 1995.

IGADD said its member countries have commenced the process towards ratification. Sensitization workshops show that stakeholders' awareness is disappointingly low among operational ministries, bilateral and multilateral donor representatives. He supported establishment of interim enabling funds that could become National Desertification Funds (NDFs) when CCD is in force.

Eritrea is in the process of ratifying the CCD and preparing a three-phase NAP. Goals include reduction of land degradation, improving quality of life, rehabilitation of eroded land, and permanent improvement of desertification areas.

Sudan needs to harmonize its five-year programme with the CCD. Although it has requested financial assistance for the CCD process from international agencies, none has been forthcoming. **Djibouti** is in the process of ratifying the Convention.

Ethiopia said its ongoing conservation strategy was developed in line with the provisions of the Convention and is therefore prepared to comply with the CCD.

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The **European Commission** is undertaking a quantitative and qualitative review that will serve as the report of the Community to COP-1. The financial protocol linked to the agreement amending the Lomé IV Convention amounts to 14,625 million Ecu for 1995-2000. African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries signatories to the Lomé Convention will be able to seek support from the Community.

The **UK** supports, through its bilateral aid programmes, 51 projects in 15 countries relevant to the objectives of the CCD, at a value of GBP 22 million. Multilateral programmes exist, but individual African countries must ensure that the objectives of the CCD are reflected in their policies to receive support.

Germany will support IGADD and cooperates with OSS. It has taken the responsibility of being *Chef-de-file* in Mali. DM5.5 million has been devoted to Namibia's national programme to combat desertification, DM2 million to Mali and DM3 million for a desert prevention enabling fund. She regretted that few requests for support for activities in other countries had been received.

Netherlands requested that at INCD-9, countries should make presentations on how coordination between an affected country and the donor community could be structured. The Netherlands will provide US\$600,000 for the negotiation process.

Australia has provided A\$250,000 to Kenya and Zimbabwe for the preparation of national action programmes, is processing an additional A\$120,000 and will continue to fund activities in Malawi, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Eritrea, Mozambique and Namibia. UNDP is the appropriate body to house the Trust Fund and host the GM because it has the necessary infrastructure and personnel.

Canada stated that ratifying the CCD is essential. CIDA's field representatives will receive information on the CCD at their annual meetings. In collaboration with IFAD, Canada will provide support to Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Uganda and Tanzania.

Japan proposed an Asia-Africa forum for desertification to encourage exchange of experiences between regions. **UNSO** Director Sam Nyambi reviewed UNSO support, including US\$11 million to support work in about 20 African countries and 10 countries elsewhere and almost US\$500,000 to establish NDFs. Getting the NAP process right, establishing true partnerships between governments and other actors, and harmonizing external parties' contributions to NAPs will be challenges.

SADC said its Namibia meeting set targets for completion of its subregional programme of action in 1996 even if NAPs are incomplete. He asked donors to brief their embassies so they can respond to CCD implementation requests.

The **Arab-Maghreb Union** held a regional meeting in Tunis 8-11 November 1995, which recommended the adoption of a program with four main components: a bank of information on desertification; a network to monitor the ecosystem; a study center; and a follow-up unit on desertification in the Maghreb countries.

Tunisia has carried out natural resource sectoral studies, and Germany has contributed to the implementation of urgent measures. A working group on desertification has been set up.

Spain has supported projects on: renewable energy and energy planning in Morocco and Algeria amounting to US\$700,000, integrated land management in Mauritania, Tunisia, Jordan and Equatorial Guinea at a cost of US\$1.1 million; and waste and drainage management in Palestine for US\$5.9 million.

Italy described the two projects it is supporting in Northern Africa: a US\$12 million project in Tunisia on technology transfer and a US\$2.5 million project in Egypt on agriculture and tree-planting.

Japan stressed the need to have at least one project in Northern Africa and said it would like to receive a request for

assistance. US\$1.6 billion has been set aside for activities in Africa.

The **League of Arab States** detailed the research work undertaken in the region. The need for affected populations to be involved in CCD implementation was demonstrated in an Algerian example where shepherds take care of the soil.

CILSS said difficulties in the sub-region include a lack of financial resources and of coordination by cooperating partners. He noted several activities related to strategies for mobilization of funds. CILSS' action programme will develop decision-making tools and support information exchange, NAPs and NGO participation.

Mali reviewed stages of its methodology: awareness building; local and regional workshops; launching a national forum; disseminating results; and a final forum to review the process in 1997. The national forum in March will consider partnership, financing, participation, institutional mechanisms, legislative measures, territorial management, urban environment, and workshop summaries.

Senegal said the first priority is to remove constraints that impede dialog. Decentralization measures, such as a new forest code and the transfer of some state forests and funds to local management, support emergency measures against desertification. Senegal's NAP is part of a global framework for environmental planning that began before the CCD signing. A national forum is planned for June 1996.

France has: signed an agreement with CILSS involving FF12 million; agreed to be *Chef-de-file* in Cape Verde and Chad; assured continued cooperation with the OSS; financed a remote sensing center in Nairobi worth FF1.6 million; and contributed to a fire wood project in Mali.

Cape Verde said elections demonstrated local community support for the programme to combat desertification. The CCD has been disseminated nationally, seminars have been held in all municipalities and various activities were carried out in connection with the World Desertification Day.

Switzerland stressed the need for information and awareness and the appropriate adaptation of new technologies. Desertification does not yet seem to be of strategic concern for affected countries, but in the future the political will may be stronger. It is important to involve other institutions than government, such as the private sector.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates have observed that the discussions on the Resolution on Urgent action for Africa and interim arrangements in other regions are at a standstill. Although delegates agree that lack of awareness is central to this problem, there are divergent views on where this gap lies. Some think the diplomats negotiating the Convention have failed to sell the CCD to their governments and ensure it becomes the reference point of all desertification initiatives. Others point to the lack of awareness in affected countries. Another viewpoint is that progress is frustrated by developing countries' failure to be blunt about their problems in INCD meetings.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary meets all day. Delegates will continue discussions on the resolution on urgent action for Africa with presentations by Guinea, Togo, Côte d'Ivoire, Burundi and Japan. They will hear presentations on the relationship between water and land management and on energy. The meeting will also discuss interim activities in the Asian, Latin American and Caribbean and Northern Mediterranean regions.

AWARENESS RAISING MEETING: UNEP is organizing a meeting on Next Steps in the Development of a Global Awareness Raising Strategy for the Drylands and Desertification Control at 6:00 pm in room 2070.