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## INCD HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 8 FEBRUARY 1996

Working Group I took up the Global Mechanism (GM) in a morning session and met only 15 minutes in the afternoon to permit regional consultations. Working Group II began consideration of the Rules of Procedure in the morning and completed discussion of the compilation of information and reporting in the afternoon.

### WORKING GROUP I

The Vice-Chair Erwin Ortiz (Bolivia) noted that if consensus can be achieved on the GM, other issues will be solved automatically. The Secretariat introduced the compilation text (A/AC.241/43), which is divided into three sections: delegates' statements at INCD-7 and subsequent submissions; an analysis of the relevant articles of the CCD with a matrix outlining arrangement by the types of Parties; and an appendix grouping possible functions of the GM. Delegates should bear in mind that: the compilation from statements and submissions do not cover the procedures of selecting the institution; the matrix is a summary and certain nuances in the Article may have been lost; the summaries are not substitutes for the articles; and an attempt is made to match each function with Article 21.

**PROCEDURE OF WORK:** The Vice-Chair suggested considering the functions of the GM contained in the Appendix and then defining what mandate to give to the host institution. Following several interventions the Group agreed to have informal discussions.

Costa Rica, on behalf of the G-77 and China, said the Group will set up a drafting group to present its views that could also be used at INCD-9. The UK suggested that the Working Group should first agree on the core functions of the GM and then identify secondary activities, based on the capacity of the selected host. Cameroon, on behalf of Africa, noted that the compilation text serves as a reference, not a working document. More information is needed from the institutions interested in hosting the GM before the Secretariat can prepare the working document. France supported the UK and Cameroon on the status of the document, but said care is needed in analyzing the needs of different Parties by taking into account what is done in other multilateral and bilateral institutions involved in combating desertification.

**FUNCTIONS OF THE GLOBAL MECHANISM:** Costa Rica, on behalf of the G-77 and China, said a detailed analysis of

the roles, functions and mode of operations is needed. Cameroon noted that the GM should be operational. The GM's key role is to mobilize, not distribute resources, which responsibility is the COP's but this role is missing in the document. Colombia and Algeria said the scope of GM functions can still be broadened.

The US said there is need to explore the core functions of the GM. The ideas reflected in the reporting function, advisory function (a) sub-paragraph (iv) and the informal functions, with the exception of paragraph (e), are encompassed in Article 21. It is unclear whether the other proposals are core functions. Article 21.7 suggests that the first three years are a pilot phase. Switzerland agreed with Canada that the GM's role is promoting mobilization of resources, but mobilizing is the role of Parties.

Germany said in addition to comparing the proposals to the CCD, some questions include what is potentially available and disbursed, the greatest needs to be funded and the regions donors are interested in. Gambia said the idea is not to add to the main GM functions but to discuss how those functions can be achieved. Senegal said the "inter alia" in Article 21.5 does not exclude promoting actions and channeling resources. India, supported by China and Argentina, said mobilization and channeling are the key functions, but they are not adequately covered in the appendix. India added that facilitating and coordinating functions have many facets that the Appendix mentions only briefly.

**HOST INSTITUTION:** Costa Rica, on behalf of the G-77 and China, stated that UNDP and IFAD should be requested to submit a document on their respective arrangements to host the GM and how they could operate together. Sudan noted that combining the abilities of IFAD and UNDP would be implementing the CCD partnership approach.

### WORKING GROUP II

The morning and afternoon meetings chaired by Takao Shibata (Japan) dealt with Rules 1 to 9 of the Rules of procedure for the COP (A/AC.241/48) and Communication of information and review of implementation (A/AC.241/49).

**RULES OF PROCEDURES FOR THE COP:** A/AC.241/48 is the same as document 38 except for brackets resulting from discussions held at INCD-7.

**Rule 2:** Austria suggested deleting the bracketed text regarding CCD's entry into force in **paragraph (a)**, which was accepted. Australia suggested bracketing **paragraph (h)** since it is still unclear whether the *ad hoc* panels on science and

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technology will be subsidiary bodies. The Chairman referred to precedents in other conventions and the paragraph was retained.

**Rule 4:** In paragraph 1, dates of sessions, Egypt suggested deleting the bracketed text “In accordance with the provisions of the Convention.” This was accepted. Zimbabwe suggested changing the text in paragraph 3 to state that support from two thirds, not one third, is required to hold an extraordinary session. Based on precedent the paragraph was retained. On paragraph 4, Egypt suggested that an extraordinary session should be held within 45, not 90 days. Austria, supported by US, the UK, Japan, Kenya, Uganda, Armenia and Zimbabwe, preferred 90 days, which was accepted.

**Rule 5** (notification of meeting times and venues): Delegates discussed whether this rule should distinguish between ordinary and extraordinary sessions. No agreement was reached.

**Rules 6 and 7** (observers): A discussion was initiated by AMU, which said regional and sub-regional organizations with observer status in the UN should be mentioned because the CCD emphasizes the importance of participation at all levels. Egypt suggested in Rule 6, paragraph 2 that observers’ participation could be objected to by two thirds of the Parties and not one third. This was followed by suggestions to merge the two rules on participation of UN and specialized agencies, and other bodies or agencies. Finally, the Chair concluded it was necessary to retain the same language as in Article 22 of the CCD. Thus, it was decided to keep the one third vote. As it is not determined whether one or more organizations will house the GM it was decided to bracket “the” and add a bracketed “s” at the end of “organization” in Rule 6, paragraph 1.

**Rule 8:** Austria said the language entitles observers to be represented by observers and suggested deletion. Switzerland’s proposal to delete “so that they may be represented by observers” in the last line was accepted.

**Rule 9:** It was agreed that the Permanent Secretariat shall prepare the agenda of each session in agreement with the President, as proposed by Egypt.

**COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AND REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION:** The Chair said that the document on Procedures for Communication of Information and Review of Implementation (A/AC.241/49) should be considered as a negotiating text. The Secretariat introduced the document, noting sections on presentation and content of reports, a timetable in which affected Parties report every fourth year, and methods and criteria for review of reports by region.

Venkat Ramnaya of the Indian NGO **Youth for Action**, said the procedures do not sufficiently address institutional mechanisms, community involvement or capacity building. He suggested ensuring women-to-women communication, utilizing traditional knowledge, reporting at various levels and a report section on women’s participation.

Iran suggested adding language to **paragraph 2** (objectives of procedures) “to ensure that each party has undertaken its” CCD obligation. The UK said COP will evaluate whether countries meet obligations. A Party might communicate that it has not met its obligation. The objective of the reporting document should be to meet the procedures. India said one CCD reporting obligation is for donors to demonstrate how they have mobilized financial resources, so the amendment was appropriate. The Chair said it is not necessary to elaborate the objective of procedures. The paragraph, and the preceding introduction in **paragraph 1** were agreed. The Chair also noted that **paragraphs 3-7** (general obligation to report) were taken from CCD Article 26 and they were adopted.

Germany, supported by Uganda, said the reference in **paragraph 10** (format and content of reports) to indicators was premature, and that the reports could be overwhelming for the Secretariat and difficult to compare. He suggested this discussion should be withheld until the Secretariat compiles a report on the development of standard indicators by UNSO and others. The Chair said the paragraphs would be deferred until INCD-9, and the Group would request a report on indicators.

**Paragraph 12** (official languages) was agreed, as were **paragraphs 13-5** (timetable). **Paragraphs 16-17** (compilation and synthesis) were amended to refer to trends “or characteristics” emerging in implementation.

**Paragraph 18** (review process) was adopted with minor amendments. Uganda said COP should produce conclusions of the review process, not the Secretariat as described in **paragraph 19** (periodic reports). Senegal questioned in which languages the Secretariat’s conclusions would be available. The Chair said **paragraph 20** (official documents) does not yet refer to the report described in 19, so it would not necessarily be translated into all languages. Paragraph 19, and the references to numbered paragraphs in 20 were bracketed.

**Paragraph 21** (availability of reports) was accepted with deletion of references to specific means of distribution. The UK said the requirement to collect contact information in **paragraphs 22-23** (institutional information) was excessive. The paragraphs were accepted with reference only to focal points and coordinating bodies. Delegates added a reference to least developed countries to **paragraph 24** (assistance in preparation). They also amended the language on facilitating assistance and “compilation and communication” of information from CCD Article 23.

The Chair said he had received a response to an enquiry on whether the GEF could assist affected countries to collect information for CCD. The GEF said that it provides financing for preparation of national strategies and communications in GEF focal areas and thus could assist indirectly.

## IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates have several explanations for why discussion on the Global Mechanism (GM) did not delve much into the content of the Secretariat’s document. Some delegates say that the document fails to reflect the resource mobilization function of the GM outlined in Article 21.4 of the CCD, and some point out that the delegates simply have not read the document. Others argue that the central issue is whose draft document will become the basis for negotiation, so acknowledging details in the current version would prematurely concede a critical debate.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**WORKING GROUP I:** The Group will discuss designation of a permanent secretariat (A/AC.241/44) in the morning and financial rules (A/AC.241/45) in the afternoon.

**WORKING GROUP II:** The Group will review the Committee on Science and Technology (A/AC.241/47) beginning at 10:00 am with draft terms of reference and considering the compilation of views on the roster of experts and *ad hoc* panels in the afternoon.

**SYMPOSIUM STEERING COMMITTEE:** The Steering Committee for a symposium and workshop entitled “Combating Desertification: Connecting Science with Community Action” will meet in Room XXII at 1:00 pm. Delegates and NGOs are invited.