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INCD HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 1996

Plenary met in the morning to review the progress of work and continue discussions on the interim activities in the Latin America and Caribbean and Northern Mediterranean regions and on the situation regarding extrabudgetary funds. Working Groups met in the afternoon, but adjourned at 5:00 pm to enable the INCD Chair to meet with heads of regional and interest groups.

PLENARY

REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF WORK

Working Group I Vice-Chair Erwin Ortiz summarized the Group's progress. Informal discussions have begun on the Global Mechanism. Delegates have considered the designation of the permanent secretariat (PS) and requested additional information from the Secretary General (SG) and other institutions regarding the support they can give the PS. Discussions on the financial rules have been initiated but no agreement has been reached. Working Group II Chair Takao Shibata said the Group has: completed discussion on communication of information and review of implementation; negotiated the first 10 paragraphs of the Rules of Procedure and removed some brackets; and reached agreement on some of the draft terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology.

Greece, on behalf of the **OECD** countries, presented a proposal on how to re-organize the future work of the Committee so as to complete work within a maximum of seven working days. **Mauritania**, supported by **Antigua and Barbuda**, said that INCD is part of the UN and these proposals can only be considered within the overall framework of the UN General Assembly decisions.

INCD Chair Bo Kjellén appreciated the OECD proposals but noted that results of multilateral negotiations are sometimes arrived at in a convoluted manner, thus efficiency, in the commercial sense, is not always possible. The Secretariat will consider ways to increase efficiency. He circulated a revised agenda for the week. The Committee also appointed José Urrutia (Peru) as Rapporteur for the rest of this session.

INTERIM ACTION IN OTHER REGIONS

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION:

Ecuador said it will use an analysis of desertification and drought as guidelines for its National Action Programme (NAP),

which will be produced through a series of workshops. Support is required to complete, publish and implement the NAP. **Bolivia** has submitted its NAP, which addresses social, economic, and physical environmental factors, utilizes input from 100 entities, and is action-oriented. **Mexico**, the first Party to ratify the CCD, said resource allocation should be balanced toward all affected areas, without failing to recognize the gravity of problems in Africa.

Chile believes the main problems are socioeconomic rather than technological. Its NAP will be launched in June following a series of workshops. Chile is collaborating on development of indicators to evaluate desertification. The **Dominican Republic** said it must cooperate with Haiti to create an island-wide programme. **Haiti** said the concept of desertification is not well known, but work on the problem is occurring under general environmental protection efforts. Political constraints from historical dictatorship, the reform process and the recent change of government have hampered ratification.

Argentina said its NAP will be a process programme that continues into the future, based on a series of workshops beginning in March. He emphasized horizontal cooperation, including a programme with Uruguay associated with both CCD and Biodiversity Convention actions and efforts with the Valdivia Group.

UNEP's Franklin Cardy said the institution is working at integrating several initiatives including on water harvesting and desertification to demonstrate their linkages and their long-term interaction with climate.

NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION: Spain reported on the February regional meeting and said countries in the region would soon designate national focal points. A conference on research and development *vis-à-vis* desertification is planned for later this year. **Germany** expressed its interest in hosting the permanent secretariat in Bonn and said it intends to submit its candidacy at INCD-9.

Cameroon said central Africa lacks a subregional organization and suggested assigning the development of a subregional action programme to an intergovernmental organization in the region. **Egypt** proposed that delegations submit written national implementation reports well in advance of INCD sessions to enable the Secretariat to compile a report on actions and funds. He also recommended that the Secretariat commit funds to regional media awareness campaigns.

UNDP provided a written summary of UNSO activities in the Latin America and Caribbean region. **WMO** praised the UNDP

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offer to host the GM, and urged participation of WMO, FAO and CGIAR in the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). He reiterated the WMO's offer to serve as the institutional host of the PS, noting operational and institutional benefits of co-location with relevant organizations involved in CCD implementation and related environmental science and policy activities.

SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS

The **Executive Secretary** said the UN budget has a ceiling of US\$2.608 billion for the biennium 1996-97, which requires reductions throughout the system. The INCD Secretariat has to save approximately US\$232,600. Recruitment for a vacant position must be frozen and US\$160,000 reduced from activities.

The **Netherlands** is funding the negotiation process with approximately US\$600,000. Modalities for trust funds need to be developed by the Secretariat. **Canada** urged the Secretariat to include details in its financial reporting. Various functions and Secretariat staff should be listed along with budget requirements. She proposed that the Secretariat should prepare a six-month work plan. **Germany** reminded delegates of the additional US\$50,000 it committed to the special fund at INCD-7, and said the most important awareness campaign is when delegates inform home governments and the public. In response to Canada, the **Executive Secretary** said most funding must be channeled through the UN system and activities are usually co-financed with other donors. **Maria Sevilla** of the Secretariat said a six-month plan for the Secretariat exists. She suggested meeting with individual delegations to provide details on functions they wanted explained.

WORKING GROUP I

PROGRAMME AND BUDGET: The Secretariat presented the subject as contained in document A/AC.241/46. **Costa Rica**, **Panama** and **Cuba** sought clarification on several issues in the programme of work, including the criteria to be followed to implement the programme before the GM begins functioning, the cost of implementing the CCD and the approval of expenditures of the two trust funds. The **UK** and **Antigua and Barbuda** suggested that the Interim Secretariat's organigram and responsibilities may provide an idea of the permanent secretariat's staff requirements and functions. **Switzerland** and **Argentina** lamented that responsibility on the subject was getting handed over from one body to another. The Secretariat said it could only provide an outline of the format to be used in preparing the anticipated budgets because other ongoing negotiations must be completed first. The Vice-Chair proposed a draft decision that requests the Secretariat to prepare a revised programme and budget for the period following COP-1, for the INCD session immediately preceding COP-1. The draft decision is expected to be circulated Tuesday morning.

FINANCIAL RULES OF THE COP: Delegates resumed consideration of the financial rules as contained in document A/AC.241/45. Several delegates suggested reformulations of Rule 6 defining conditions under which the head of the PS may transfer funds between budget lines. At issue were what rules, institutional authority and limits, if any, should apply. **Uganda** and **Benin** called for use of UN rules and transfers in accordance with the same. **Canada**, supported by several countries, said transfers should be up to limits decided by the COP. **Germany** supported language setting specific numerical limits. The **UK** said to use limits COP may decide. The understanding should be that the COP decision would be by consensus. **Bangladesh** noted that the rule determining the method of decision had not been

agreed. **Cuba** said authorization should be from a body designated by COP. The Secretariat said UN rules did not appear to specify procedures for budget line transfers or appropriate authorities, so referring to UN rules would likely place the decision with the COP. The Chair asked the Secretariat to compile the various reformulations for consideration Wednesday.

WORKING GROUP II

The Group, Chaired by Takao Shibata (Japan), resumed negotiation of the organization of scientific and technological cooperation as contained in document A/AC.241/47. **Paragraph 2 (Functions) subparagraph (d)** that deals with technology was accepted after deleting a number of words in subparagraph (ii) on exchange of information. Delegates debated a reference to evaluating "quality and feasibility" of research in subparagraph 2(e) (ii), with several suggesting that evaluating quality was not an appropriate task for the CST. It was amended to "relevance and feasibility" and adopted.

Paragraphs 3 and 4 addressing networking institutions, agencies and bodies were adopted after deleting the last sentence of paragraph 3 that refers to cooperation in the evaluation of existing networks.

Paragraph 5, which states that the CST shall be multidisciplinary and open-ended, was adopted. In **paragraph 6**, designation of experts, the discussion dealt with whether the number of Party representatives should be limited. Uzbekistan emphasized that the relevant issue is that each Party has one vote. The paragraph was deleted.

Paragraph 7 refers to the composition of the Bureau. Brazil said the GRULAC proposal from INCD-8 that the CST should be organized in sub-committees was not mentioned in the text. The four vice-chairmen, representing the four regional Annexes of the CCD, should be represented on the Bureau. The US supported the Secretariat language and said there was no need for more vice-chairs. Spain clarified that the paragraph has two facets: the number of vice-chairmen; and how they are elected and who they represent. The Bureau should be kept small. How the vice-chairmen are elected and who they represent is related to the rules of procedure and should be dealt with when the rules are discussed again. The paragraph remains bracketed.

IN THE CORRIDORS

When the Working Groups adjourned at 5:00 pm Monday, it was anticipated that INCD Chair Kjellén's meeting with heads of regional and interest groups was to discuss the Chair's summary and the Global Mechanism. Some suggest discussions would center on how to progress on the GM during the intersessional period, including the possible appointment of an expert group whose composition could be identified during this meeting. The regional groups have been consulting on the GM since Thursday afternoon, when meetings also broke early. Look for draft proposals from the OECD countries, G-77 and China and possibly Asia.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

WORKING GROUP I: The Group meets in the afternoon to continue discussion of the Global Mechanism.

WORKING GROUP II: The Group will meet in the morning to deal with the organization of scientific and technological cooperation and then resume discussion on the rules of procedure of the COP as contained in documents A/AC.241/47 and A/AC.241/48 respectively.