



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## SUMMARY OF THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE INC FOR THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 5-15 FEBRUARY 1996

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee of the Convention to Combat Desertification (INCD) met for its eighth session in Geneva, Switzerland, from 5-15 February 1996. The INCD is currently functioning during the interim period between the conclusion of the Convention and its entry into force and is preparing for the first Conference of the Parties (COP).

During the course of the session, delegates reviewed the status of ratification, the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds, and the implementation of the resolution on Urgent Action for Africa, as well as action in other regions. The working groups dealt with preparations for the first Conference of the Parties, which is expected to take place in about nineteen months. Delegates began negotiations on crucial issues, including the global mechanism, the designation of a Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning, financial rules and the rules of procedure. While the meeting was criticized for making little progress on decisions, important steps were taken on organization of scientific and technological cooperation.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INCD

Desertification affects about one-sixth of the world's population, 70 percent of all drylands, and one-quarter of the total land area in the world. The most obvious impact of desertification, in addition to widespread poverty, is the degradation of 3.3 billion hectares of the total area of rangeland, a decline in soil fertility and soil structure, and the degradation of irrigated cropland.

The Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) was formally adopted on 17 June 1994, and opened for signature at a ceremony in Paris on 14-15 October 1994. This first post-Rio sustainable development convention is notable for its innovative approach in recognizing: the physical, biological and socioeconomic aspects of desertification; the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand driven; and the involvement of local populations in the development of national action programmes. The core of the Convention is the development of national and subregional/regional action programmes to combat desertification. These action programmes are to be developed by national governments in close

cooperation with donors, local populations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

To date, the Convention has 115 signatories and has been ratified by 25 countries. The CCD will enter into force 90 days after the receipt of the 50th instrument of ratification.

### NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION

While the idea of a convention to combat desertification was discussed during the UNCED preparatory process, it was in Rio where language was adopted requesting the UN General Assembly (GA) to establish an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the purpose of negotiating the convention. The GA, during its 47th session in 1992, adopted resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of the INCD, with the aim of finalizing the Convention by June 1994.

At the organizational session of the INCD in January 1993, delegates elected Bo Kjellén (Sweden) Chair of the Committee. The first session of the INCD was held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 24 May - 3 June 1993. The first week of the session focused on the sharing of technical information and assessments on various

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aspects of drought and desertification. The second week focused on the structure and elements to be contained in the Convention. Delegates also exchanged ideas about the CCD and its objectives.

The second session of the INCD met in Geneva from 13-24 September 1993. The Committee considered the compilation text of the CCD prepared by the Secretariat and agreed on the future programme of work of the Committee, including the elaboration of regional instruments for Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The third session of the INCD was held at UN Headquarters in New York from 17-28 January 1994. At this session the two working groups focused on the draft negotiating text of the Convention that was prepared by the Secretariat. Progress was made in shaping the Convention and in identifying the areas of convergence and divergence. The INCD also discussed the elements to be contained in the regional instrument for Africa.

The fourth session of the INCD was held in Geneva from 21-31 March 1994. The two working groups continued negotiating the draft Convention text. Delegates also formally considered the Regional Implementation Annex for Africa for the first time. The Asian and Latin American regional groups produced their own draft regional implementation instruments. Although these annexes were not discussed in detail, the initial reaction was positive.

The fifth session of the INCD was held in Paris from 6-17 June 1994. During this session, delegates worked through long nights to reach agreement on the remaining bracketed text in the Convention and to finalize the four regional implementation annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean. The Convention was adopted on 17 June 1994, along with resolutions that recommended urgent action for Africa and interim arrangements for the period between adoption of the CCD and its entry into force.

### POST-AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

**SIXTH SESSION:** The sixth INCD session was held at UN Headquarters in New York from 9-18 January 1995. While this session was mostly organizational, it served two important purposes. First, the Committee reached agreement on the work programme for the interim period and the mandates of the two working groups and the plenary. Second, it alerted delegates, the Bureau and the Interim Secretariat to some of the challenges that lay ahead. These challenges include: reaffirming the equal status of the CCD with other environmental conventions; implementation of the resolution on urgent action for Africa; raising awareness; popular participation; preparation for the first Conference of the Parties (COP); scientific and technical cooperation during the interim period; and funding.

**SEVENTH SESSION:** The seventh session of the INCD was held in Nairobi from 7-17 August 1995. Delegates reviewed the status of ratification and implementation of the resolution on urgent action for Africa, as well as actions in other regions. During this session, delegates discussed and provided input on the structure and elements that should be considered in preparation for the first COP. The working groups also began their work. Working Group I, chaired by Mourad Ahmia (Algeria), addressed four issues: identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism; designation of a Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning; draft financial rules of the COP, its subsidiary bodies and the Permanent Secretariat; and programme and budget. Working Group II, chaired by Takao Shibata (Japan), addressed: organization of scientific and technical cooperation; draft rules of procedure for the COP; and procedures for communication of information and review of implementation. There was also some debate about the periodicity and length of future sessions of the INCD. Some developed countries found it unnecessary for INCD to

hold two-week sessions twice a year. While others felt that it was necessary to meet so as not to lose momentum.

### INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

**50TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY:** The 50th United Nations General Assembly began its consideration of Agenda Item 96(a), "Environment and Sustainable Development: Implementation of Decisions and Recommendations of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development," on Monday, 30 October 1995. In connection with this item, the GA had before it a number of documents, including the report of the Secretary-General (SG) on desertification and drought (A/50/347), and a note by the SG transmitting the reports of the INCD on its sixth and seventh sessions (A/50/74 and Add.1).

The resolution adopted by the GA decides that: the INCD will continue to prepare for the first COP and, for this purpose, will have two sessions in 1996, each of up to two-weeks duration. The resolution also sets the tenth INCD session in New York from 6-17 January 1997 and, pending the entry into force of the CCD, to convene, as necessary, a further session in 1997. Upon entry into force of the Convention, a COP will be convened during the second and third weeks of June 1997 or, alternatively, during the second and third weeks of August 1997.

The resolution also: requests governmental, non-governmental and other interested groups to take action upon entry into force for the prompt implementation of the CCD and its relevant regional annexes; urges all countries and relevant actors to take actions to implement the resolution on urgent action for Africa; decides that the work of the INCD and the Interim Secretariat will continue to be funded through existing UN budgetary resources; and urges States and interested organizations to contribute to the trust fund for the Interim Secretariat and the special voluntary fund for the participation of developing countries. The resolution welcomes the arrangements concluded between the Interim Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) to support activities in affected developing countries and invites the Interim Secretariat to conclude similar arrangements with other relevant organizations, such as UNDP, UNEP, FAO and UNESCO.

### REPORT OF THE EIGHTH SESSION

The eighth session of the Committee was declared open by INCD Chair Bo Kjellén on the afternoon of 5 February 1996.. Kjellén introduced the draft agenda and organization of work (document A/AC.241/42), which was adopted. Kjellén urged delegates to complete work by Thursday, 15 February rather than 16 February, as initially planned. Delegates also approved an additional five non-governmental organizations (NGOs) recommended for accreditation in document A/AC.241/9/Add.11.

Three new members were elected to the Bureau during the course of the session. A.K. Ahuja (India) replaced T.P. Sreenivasan (India) as Vice-Chair of the Committee. Mahmoud Ould El Gaouth (Mauritania) replaced Mourad Ahmia (Algeria) as Chair of Working Group I because the latter was no longer with the Algerian delegation. Franklin Moore (US) was elected Vice-Chair of Working Group II, a position reserved for the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG) that had been vacant for over a year.

**OPENING STATEMENTS:** INCD Chair Kjellén said he was struck by the common themes of cooperation, the desire to involve NGOs, and the need to emphasize local action and participation. However, despite progress toward entry into force, the CCD is still struggling to become sufficiently well known and to be integrated into development cooperation strategies. He reviewed actions

toward entry into force and said he would be holding consultations during this session on the venue for COP-1.

UNEP Deputy Executive Director Reuben Olembo said UNDP and IFAD are best equipped to host the Global Mechanism (GM). He stated that UNEP, with 20 years experience and as a GEF partner responsible for the Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP), would support close cooperation between the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the STAP. He also said UNEP could host the Permanent Secretariat and suggested that close synergy can be achieved through UNEP's common resources.

UNDP Administrator James Gustave Speth said UNDP contributed US\$1 billion to countries affected by desertification over four years and will provide technical and financial support to establish national desertification funds. UNDP is prepared to act as host for the GM, but its operations, functions and funding arrangements must be clarified. The INCD should consider a co-hosting arrangement under which UNDP would share GM operations with another institution, possibly IFAD.

IFAD's Assistant President for the Economic Policy and Resource Strategy Department, Shigeaki Tomita, said IFAD would pursue the establishment of pilot national desertification funds as part of a coalition of civil society and financial institutions. Its interdepartmental Task Force on the Convention will aim to ensure that its annual budget of US\$150-200 million for dryland and marginal areas programmes contributes to achieving the objectives of the CCD.

Mongolia's Minister for Nature and Environment, Z. Batjargal, stressed the need for increased North-South collaboration in addressing the problem of desertification. Mongolia has already developed its national action programme and is preparing to ratify the Convention this year.

Executive Secretary Arba Diallo outlined the documents before the Committee, including that on the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds, presented new brochures entitled "CCD Update" and highlighted the Secretariat's efforts in awareness raising. He said the dynamics of the signature and ratification processes demonstrate the determined commitment of the international community to the CCD.

**SPECIAL REPORTS:** Dr. Gunilla Bjorklund of the Stockholm Environment Institute presented the Comprehensive Freshwater Assessment, initiated by the CSD in 1994, for presentation at the special session of the General Assembly in 1997. The assessment will review the availability, quantity, quality and use of the world's water, investigation current and future water needs and examine policy options for water resources conservation.

Robert Hamwey of the International Academy of the Environment said that a recent workshop on Energy and Desertification recommended development of alternative energy strategies to reduce heavy reliance on fuel wood and associated deforestation.

### **URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA AND ACTION TAKEN IN OTHER REGIONS**

Discussion on this subject was based on two resolutions adopted with the Convention at INCD-5: the resolutions on urgent action for Africa and on interim action in other regions. Discussions were held in plenary sessions and reports were presented for each region or subregion. Affected countries in one subregion reported their experiences; the donors in the region outlined the support they had provided; and then the NGOs and international organizations outlined their activities and support. The regions were identified on the basis of the regional implementation annexes in the CCD.

**URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA:** In his introduction, Kjellén said the aim was to have an interactive discussion that would provide a picture of what has been done to implement the resolution and what lessons can be drawn from these activities. Delegations mainly focused on what they had done and were planning to do.

Lesotho, on behalf of Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), said most member States will have ratified the CCD by June this year. Their priorities are capacity building, institutional strengthening, training and awareness raising. SADC expects to complete its subregional action programme in 1996, even if the national action programmes (NAPs) are incomplete. He requested donors to brief their embassies so they can respond to CCD implementation requests. South Africa has three objectives: undertake a national audit; raise awareness on desertification; and design the national action programme.

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 started the process towards ratification. Sensitization workshops show that stakeholders' awareness is disappointingly low among ministries and donor representatives. He supported the establishment of interim enabling funds that could become National Desertification Funds (NDFs) when the CCD enters into force.

Eritrea is in the process of ratifying the CCD and is preparing a three-phase NAP. Sudan needs to harmonize its five-year programme with the CCD. Although the Sudan has requested financial assistance for the CCD process from international agencies, nothing 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.

Burundi said decision-makers have difficulty distinguishing between the Desertification, Biological Diversity and Climate Change Conventions. He requested support for awareness raising in countries where desertification is not yet acute. Rwanda said although desertification is not yet perceptible in the country, the massacres and movement of refugees has accelerated fuel wood consumption and, thus, deforestation and soil degradation. Uganda will set up district-level steering committees with government and NGO focal points and hold numerous regional and district workshops. In Kenya, a study on institutional arrangements for the CCD has been undertaken and a national awareness seminar will be held in March.

Australia has provided A\$250,000 to Kenya and Zimbabwe for the preparation of NAPs, is processing an additional A\$120,000 and will continue to fund activities in Malawi, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Eritrea, Mozambique and Namibia. He said UNDP is the appropriate body to house the trust fund and host the Global Mechanism (GM) because it has the necessary infrastructure and personnel.

The Arab Maghreb Union noted that its regional meeting, which was held in Tunis from 8-11 November 1995, recommended the adoption of a programme 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. 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 Tunisia and Egypt, worth approximately US\$12 million and US\$2.5 million, respectively. Japan stressed the need to have at least one project in Northern Africa and said it would like to receive a request for assistance. The League of Arab States detailed the research work undertaken in the region and cited a successful Algerian initiative where shepherds take care of the soil, which demonstrates the need for affected populations to be involved in CCD implementation.

CILSS outlined the difficulties in the subregion, including lack of financial resources and 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 and said a national forum in March will consider partnership, financing, participation, institutional mechanisms, legislative measures, territorial management, the urban environment and workshop summaries.

Senegal said the first priority is to remove constraints that impede dialogue and outlined some decentralization measures undertaken to support emergency preparations to combat desertification. A national forum is planned for June 1996. 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 World Desertification Day. Guinea's and Togo's next steps will entail awareness raising campaigns. In The Gambia task forces on the Conventions on Biological Diversity and Desertification are jointly involved in elaboration of the CCD's national action programmes.

Côte d'Ivoire aims to: emphasize awareness raising; establish a national committee on desertification; create a national desertification fund; and avoid inappropriate allocation of funds. Niger said its national sustainable development and environment plan includes a NAP for desertification that defines policies, strategies and priorities. Ghana said the CCD provided the impetus to re-establish a national committee on desertification established for an earlier UNSO project.

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 firewood project in Mali. Portugal, in cooperation with the FAO, Cape Verde and Senegal, is planning a meeting on desertification on 24-28 June 1996 in Lisbon. The conclusions of this meeting will be transmitted to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests. Japan said it is supporting a project in the Niger river basin.

From the Central African region, Cameroon said it ratified the Convention in August 1995 and added that the region lacks a subregional organization and suggested assigning the development of a subregional action programme to an intergovernmental organization in the region. The Central African Republic said its decision on ratification will be taken in March.

The OAU said a regional coordinating unit has been established. Cooperation is planned with IGADD, AMU, CILSS and SADC. On behalf of the African NGOs, Jacqueline Nkoyok of CONGAC said only a small portion of the resources for preventing desertification reaches the grassroots, making it hard for NGOs to fulfill their CCD responsibilities.

Sweden said many of its new development assistance proposals include the CCD's holistic and bottom-up approaches. More than half of Norway's US\$1.2 billion development assistance goes to Sub-Saharan Africa. 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 ECU14.625 million 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 £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. The Netherlands requested that at INCD-9 countries should make presentations on how coordination between an affected country and the donor community could be structured. Canada stated that ratifying the CCD is essential and said Canadian International Development Agency's (CIDA) 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 has set aside US\$1.6 billion for activities in Africa and proposed an Asia-Africa forum for desertification to encourage exchange of experiences between regions. UNSO Director Sam Nyambi reviewed UNSO's activities, including US\$11 million to support work in about 20 African countries and 10 countries elsewhere and almost US\$500,000 to establish NDFs. He said getting the NAP process right, establishing true partnerships between governments and other actors, and harmonizing external parties' contributions to NAPs are the challenges.

Switzerland stressed the need for information and awareness and the appropriate adaptation of new technologies. It is important to involve institutions other than governments, such as the private sector. Germany said it will support IGADD and already cooperates with CILSS and 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.

Egypt proposed that delegations should submit written national implementation reports well in advance of INCD sessions to enable the Secretariat to compile a report on actions and funds. Summarizing the discussion, INCD Chair Kjellén concluded that there is an impressive scope of action involving many stakeholders. Coordination with donors is complicated and continued efforts are needed. Despite positive indicators, the following are needed: improved coordination; cross-fertilization; the inclusion of desertification in World Food Summit preparations; holistic and integrated approaches; and recognition of the role of women.

**ACTION TAKEN IN ASIA:** India offered to host consultations on the Asian Regional Annex and is coordinating a concept paper on its implementation. ESCAP said a regional meeting held in Myanmar discussed the region's response to the CCD and prepared an analytical review of the NAPs and follow-up action for the period 1995-2000.

China elaborated on its experiences with desertification prevention. The Desert Reclamation Association, a Chinese Women's NGO, communicated success in reclaiming previously arid lands.

Activities in the Aral Sea basin were reported by Uzbekistan, which has hosted a UN conference on sustainable development in

the basin, and Turkmenistan, which plans to establish a center for scientific information and sustainable development of economies. Kazakhstan pointed out problems related to awareness-raising, including authorities who do not see the value of international participation and lack of initiative in people trained under the socialist system. UNDP said it is ready to collaborate with affected countries around the Aral Sea to provide technical backstopping and mobilize additional resources. The Russian Federation suggested establishing an arid lands center. Armenia is giving priority to creating a NAP and staff training and cooperates with FAO and the World Bank.

UNDP and UNEP plan to hold a workshop involving the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries as well as Jordan, Yemen, Iran, Syria and Lebanon. Saudi Arabia reported on a conference on the CCD for the GCC countries held in November 1995 and Iran emphasized the need for a strong regional mechanism, where experience should be used through enhanced partnerships.

Israel has collaborated with Jordan and the PLO, as well as with China and India, and plans to establish an international educational institute for desertification. Palestine announced plans to ratify the CCD.

Nepal said financial resources are needed to implement its NAP. SCOPE, on behalf of Asian NGOs, said following their regional meeting in Islamabad NGOs resolved to organize national forums in each country, an electronic mail conference and a resource center on desertification.

**ACTION TAKEN IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN REGION:** Ecuador will use an analysis of desertification and drought as guidelines for its NAP, which will be produced through a series of workshops. Bolivia has submitted its NAP, which is multidisciplinary, 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, while recognizing the gravity of Africa's problems.

Chile believes the main problems are socioeconomic rather than technological. Its NAP will be launched in June following a series of workshops. The Dominican Republic said it must cooperate with Haiti to create an island-wide programme. Haiti said work on desertification is occurring under general environmental protection efforts. Political constraints have hampered ratification.

Argentina emphasized horizontal cooperation, including a programme with Uruguay associated with both CCD and Biodiversity Convention actions and efforts with the Valdivia Group (Argentina, Australia, Chile, New Zealand, South Africa and Uruguay). Panama said despite the warm, humid climate it has areas of major soil degradation requiring increased environmental protection. Cuba said the GM should not only facilitate and coordinate but also manage and administer its own funds. Latin American NGOs highlighted the broad regional participation at an NGO meeting in Ica, Peru, which proposed regional action, use of local and national funds, and a participatory approach.

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

**ACTION TAKEN IN THE NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN:** The discussion on this region was brief. 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.

## STATUS OF SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION

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. To date, the following 25 countries have ratified the Convention: Mexico, Cape Verde, the Netherlands, Egypt, Senegal, Ecuador, Lesotho, Finland, Togo, Tunisia, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Peru, Sudan, Canada, Sweden, Denmark, Switzerland, Niger, Mauritius, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso and Spain. He urged rapid ratification so that the CCD can enter into force by INCD-9 in September. Nigeria, Bolivia, Portugal, Mozambique, Nepal, Israel and Ghana said they expected to ratify the CCD by year's end.

## REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS

Discussion of this issue was scheduled for the second week, but Kjellén said that in response to inquiries by various delegations on the voluntary funds, Diallo would present the document during the first week. Substantive discussion was held during the second week.

In his introduction of document A/AC.241/52, Diallo said the report reflects contributions received by 30 November 1995, while document A/AC.241/52/Add.1 indicates the countries that have received support to attend INCD-8 and the size of the budget. Some organizations had preferred co-financing activities with the Interim Secretariat, but their contributions are not reflected in the document. Austria, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Malaysia, Norway and Switzerland contributed to the special voluntary fund after the November deadline. The Netherlands pledged approximately US\$600,000. Voluntary funds were used to support participation of 67 delegations to INCD-8. Due to UN budget cuts for the biennium 1996-97, the INCD Secretariat is required to save approximately US\$232,600. As a result, recruitment for a vacant position must be frozen and US\$160,000 reduced from activities.

Canada urged the Interim Secretariat to include details in its financial reporting, including listing the various functions and Secretariat staff along with budget requirements. The Executive Secretary said most funding must be channeled through the UN system and activities are usually co-financed with other donors.

The INCD Chair's conclusions summarize the review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds in document A/AC.241/CRP.18. The document notes discussions on extrabudgetary funds at INCD-8, describes a US\$600,000 pledge to the fund from the Netherlands and progress on transfer of a German pledge, recalls Canada's request for improved reporting and invites delegations to contact the Secretariat for details. The document also thanks INCD members for their generosity and stresses the importance of contributions.

## WORKING GROUP I

During the two-week session, Working Group I was chaired by Vice-Chair Erwin Ortiz (Bolivia) because the Group's Chair, Mourad Ahmia, was no longer on the Algerian delegation.

The Group considered four subjects: identification of an organization to house the global mechanism; designation of a Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning; draft financial rules of the Conference of the Parties, its subsidiary bodies and the Permanent Secretariat; and programme and budget. They also adopted draft decisions on each of these subjects.

## **IDENTIFICATION OF AN ORGANIZATION TO HOUSE THE GLOBAL MECHANISM**

Discussion of the Global Mechanism (GM) was based on the Secretariat's document A/AC.241/43. The document has three sections: delegates' statements at INCD-7 and subsequent submissions; an analysis of the relevant articles of the CCD; and an appendix grouping possible functions of the GM.

Only preliminary remarks were made on the functions of the GM and its host institution because regional and interest groups needed time for further consultations. The OECD Group later presented its positions on the functions of the Global Mechanism and the African Group circulated an informal paper.

During the preliminary discussions, debate centered on the status of the Secretariat's document, the host institution and the proposed functions of the GM. Delegates questioned whether the document should be used as negotiating text. Costa Rica, on behalf of the G-77 and China, viewed the document as a compilation text and said it would set up a drafting group that would prepare and present its views. France stated that during preparation of the document attention should be paid to the needs of different regions.

There was little discussion on the host institution. Costa Rica, on behalf of the G-77 and China, stated that UNDP and IFAD should be requested to submit a document providing their proposals to host the GM and provide details of how they could operate together. Sudan supported the notion of co-hosting, noting that combining the abilities of IFAD and UNDP would be implementing the CCD partnership approach.

With regard to the functions of the GM, developing countries, including Cameroon, on behalf of the African Group, India, China and Argentina, said the GM's primary role is to mobilize and channel resources. Costa Rica, on behalf of the G-77 and China, said a detailed analysis of the roles, functions and mode of operation of the GM should be provided. Colombia and Algeria said the scope of GM functions could still be broadened.

Some developed countries, including Switzerland and Canada, said the GM's role is "promoting the mobilization" of resources. Mobilizing resources is the role of the Parties. The UK suggested that the Group should compare the Interim Secretariat's proposals on the functions of the GM with the stated objective of the GM stipulated in Article 21 of the Convention. This would help determine which are core and which are secondary functions. The US concurred and said some of the proposals by the Secretariat on the reporting, advisory and informal functions are reflected in Article 21, but it is not clear whether the facilitation and coordination functions should be part of the GM's core activities. In determining the GM's functions, Germany said delegates should also consider what funds are potentially available and disbursed, recipients' funding needs and donors interests.

At the final Working Group meeting on the GM, Greece, on behalf of the OECD, said a drafting Group under France would present the OECD's views. France said the functions of the GM should include: compiling a database of bilateral, multilateral and private sector finance; encouraging co-financing and other mechanisms; advising NGOs or private entities on national desertification funds; and possibly providing advice on mechanisms for channeling resources.

On the last day of INCD-8, the African Group informally circulated a six-paragraph draft proposal on the GM's functions. The paper states the main objective of the GM as promoting the mobilization of financial resources and increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms. Some of its functions should include financing activities of action programmes,

updating the inventory of needs of affected countries and coordinating multiple-source funding approaches.

The Working Group adopted a procedural draft decision contained in document A/AC.241/WG.I(8)/L.4, which invites written comments by 1 May, requests a compilation from the Secretariat for INCD-9 and requests that the Secretariat should prepare a preliminary negotiating text on GM functions and criteria for an institution to house it.

## **DESIGNATION OF A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUNCTIONING**

Debate on the designation of a Permanent Secretariat (PS) and arrangements for its functioning (A/AC.241/44) centered around what relationship the PS should have to the United Nations Secretary-General (SG) or to other agencies. Concerns were also expressed over how financial support from the SG, thrown into question by the UN financial crisis, could be ensured or replaced.

The Interim Secretariat explained that the issue had two tracks: location, which will be addressed through written submissions for INCD-9, and administrative arrangements for the PS. Most of the document contains a response by the SG to a request from INCD-7 regarding possible support for the PS without fully integrating it into the work programme or management structure of any programme. Paragraph 21(a), paying for core staff from the UN regular budget, should be disregarded because of the UN's current financial uncertainty. Some delegations, such as Argentina, said the PS should be institutionally linked to, but not integrated into, any UN department. Others, including Senegal, said the decision could be a middle ground between attaching the PS to the UN Secretariat or another institution. He favored attaching the PS to the UN with support from specialized agencies. France said discussion should not preclude consideration of other organizations such as UNEP and that integrating the PS with UNEP or UNDP would support it with funds the SG cannot supply. Numerous delegations requested additional information from the UN and potential host agencies.

Germany expressed its interest in hosting the Permanent Secretariat in Bonn and said it intends to submit its candidacy at INCD-9.

The draft decision on the Permanent Secretariat, as contained in document A/AC.241/WG.I(8)/L.1: transmits to INCD-9 a draft decision from the G-77 and China; invites written comments by 15 April on the SG's note; requests UN agencies and international organizations to submit, by 15 April, written descriptions of support and administrative arrangements they would provide; requests governments to submit offers to host the PS by 1 June; and requests a compilation of the submissions for consideration at INCD-9.

## **DRAFT FINANCIAL RULES OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES, ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT**

The Working Group also considered the financial rules as contained in document A/AC.241/45. The Group was only able to consider the first ten rules that cover the scope, financial period, budget and part of the section on funds. Three agreements were reached, but some delegations expressed frustration at the inability of the Group to reach agreement on majority of the issues.

As an introduction, the Secretariat highlighted three points. Models on percentage rates for the scales of contribution were available but because these vary depending on the number of Parties to the Convention, presentations are best done to individual delegations to demonstrate the scenarios of interest to them. The models indicate that the effect of large or small contributions is

insignificant, thus, the issue is whether to do away with small contributions. The cost of processing a financial contribution of any amount is US\$500. With respect to the administration of different trust funds, the costs for all three are comparable, although for practical purposes, financial experts prefer the option with three separate accounts.

Delegates debated the currency to be used, whether the budget could be considered at extraordinary sessions, the terms under which the secretariat could make budget transfers, all without agreement. Delegates agreed to establish three separate trust funds. Language was added in brackets focusing some financial support on representatives from least developed countries. Delegates deleted "30 percent" of core budget expenditure from a list of options for a capital reserve, but they did not agree on how to set the size of the reserve. Some delegations preferred the option of a capital reserve which is "a percentage of" core budget expenditure "set by the COP". One delegation said it may be premature to define the expenditures because the COP will need experience on the flow of resources, while another said the programme and budget issue needs to be addressed before finalizing this matter.

The Group adopted a draft decision, contained in document A/AC.241/WG.I(8)/L.3, inviting the Secretariat to prepare a revised version of the rules for INCD-9.

### **PROGRAMME AND BUDGET**

Discussion of the programme and budget, as contained in document A/AC.241/46, was brief. After the Secretariat's introduction, several delegates commented on the content of the programme of work, but the Secretariat said in view of ongoing negotiations on related subjects, the details could not be made available. Delegates were requested to comment on the format.

In its introduction of the document, the Secretariat said it had incorporated suggestions from delegates at INCD-7 on the format and concepts. In view of the fact that the first few years would be experimental, the Secretariat restricted suggestions on the programme of work to the first two years. The document takes account of the progress of work achieved in negotiations on related issues, such as financial rules and the PS. Some delegations 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, a breakdown on the expenditures on the programme budget and the approval of expenditures from the two trust funds. Delegates requested specific budgets on the administrative costs of the Permanent Secretariat. Some suggested that the current structure and responsibilities of the Interim Secretariat could be used to provide these estimates. Two delegations lamented that responsibility on the subject was getting handed over from one body to another, and another delegation added that there is a greater relationship between this subject and the GM that is not reflected in the document, in particular, relating the estimates to the contributions.

The Secretariat reiterated that 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 Group then adopted a draft decision contained in document A/AC.241/WG.I(8)/L.2 that requests that the Interim Secretariat should submit at the last session of the Committee preceding COP-1 a draft programme of work and budget estimates of the Convention for the first financial period following the first session of the COP. The document should use document A/AC.241/46 as a basis and take into account opinions expressed at INCD-8 on this subject and Committee deliberations on financial rules and the Permanent Secretariat.

## **WORKING GROUP II**

Working Group II, chaired by Takao Shibata (Japan), addressed: organization of scientific and technological cooperation; draft rules of procedure of the COP; procedures for communication of information and review of implementation; procedures to resolve questions on implementation; and procedures for conciliation and arbitration.

### **THE ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION**

The Secretariat document, "Organization of scientific and technological cooperation" (A/AC.241/47), is a compilation of the discussions held at INCD-7. Section I, Draft terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), is a negotiating text, whereas Section II, on the roster of independent experts and *ad hoc* panels, is not.

#### **DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:**

Although this issue attracted lengthy debate, consensus was reached on most of the issues in Section I, Draft terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). The Committee is to be a subsidiary body of the COP that provides it with information and advice.

Most of the debate covered specifying the CST's functions: advisory, data and information, research and review, and technological. Under advisory functions, a delegation supported specifying that bodies such as IGOs and NGOs can provide information to the CST. This was not agreed to and all references to institutions were deleted. It was emphasized that the COP establishes *ad hoc* panels, but that, in practice, the CST will recognize the need for such panels and could make recommendations to the COP for their establishment. It was agreed that it is important to bear in mind the Convention's recognition of local knowledge and expertise when addressing the issue of advice on the roster of independent experts.

Delegates rejected a proposal to replace all paragraphs on research and review functions with one sentence referring to Article 17 of the Convention. An amendment provides for making recommendations for promoting research on relevant traditional and local knowledge. Under evaluation functions, delegates debated whether evaluating the quality of research is an appropriate task for the CST. They preferred that the CST should evaluate the relevance and feasibility of research.

The discussion on designation of experts dealt with whether the number of Party representatives should be limited. One delegation emphasized that the issue is that each Party has one vote. The paragraph specifying the number of experts was deleted. Delegates also debated whether the CST should be organized in sub-committees, with four vice-chairs representing the four regional Annexes of the CCD included in the Bureau. Some delegates emphasized the need for a small bureau. It was agreed that how the vice-chairs are elected and who they will represent should be dealt with under the rules of procedure.

One issue where no agreement was reached with respect to the functions of the CST is on monitoring developments in science and technology cooperation. Delegates disagreed on whether monitoring implies assessing. Another outstanding issue is the availability of the results of the CST. Even though it was agreed that the results shall be in the public domain, some delegates felt that there was need for stronger language to assure transparency. One delegation was concerned that there was no language included on the activities of the CST between sessions and submitted text to

the Interim Secretariat, which provides that the Chair shall be responsible for work between sessions.

#### **THE ROSTER OF EXPERTS AND AD HOC PANELS:**

Section II of document A/AC.241/47 deals with the roster of experts and *ad hoc* panels. It is the Interim Secretariat's compilation of discussions held at INCD-7. Comments were invited from delegates to prepare a revised document for INCD-9.

There seemed to be general agreement on most paragraphs regarding the roster of experts, even though some details attracted debate. One delegation said Parties could recommend any expert, especially those from NGOs, and that the question of removing experts from the roster should be addressed. Many agreed that nominations for the roster should be decided by the COP, not subjected to examination by the CST. Some said the CST could provide guidelines for choosing experts and evaluate the composition of the roster and recommend changes. It was emphasized that the roster should reflect geographic distribution.

Disagreement on the roster of experts had to do with whether it was necessary to make a detailed list of disciplines to be represented on the roster, and whether there should be financial support for all, or only for developing country experts. One delegation suggested a joint fund for these costs.

There was general agreement that *ad hoc* panels should be efficient, multidisciplinary, representative, not too large, limited by a time frame, and emphasize local knowledge and expertise. Their terms of reference and modalities are the task for the COP to determine. Delegates said the CST should not amend the conclusions reached by these panels. Regarding financing, it was agreed that the expenditures of panels should be included in the budget of CST to insure the panels' independence.

The language that suggests restricting panels to 12 members was controversial, as was the proposal to permit the COP to appoint a coordinator. It was proposed that the Interim Secretariat should add an appendix to the revised document on precedents on how experts for *ad hoc* panels are chosen. Some rejected choosing panel members from the roster of experts because it is too restrictive. There also was no agreement on the maximum number of panels. Some suggested deleting text that proposes two *ad hoc* panels. The provision for reporting was also deleted.

The Group finally adopted document A/AC.241/WG.II(8)/L.1 that requests the Secretariat to prepare a revised draft decision on the CST terms of reference and, using comments from INCD-8 and written remarks submitted by 15 April, a new draft decision on the roster of experts and the *ad hoc* panels.

#### **DRAFT RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES**

The draft rules of procedure (A/AC.241/48) was discussed in two separate sessions where delegates managed to review 22 of the 63 rules. Delegates reached agreement on the rules that covered management and scheduling of meetings, as well as decision making procedures in a few specific areas.

Extensive debates were held regarding ordinary and extraordinary sessions and notification of the sessions. Delegates agreed to require that one-third of the Parties must support the request for an extraordinary session within 90 days after such a request is made.

A rule allowing the possibility that more than one institution could house the GM was added in brackets in a section on observers.

It was agreed that the PS, in agreement with the President, shall prepare the agenda of each session and add supplementary items. Delegates also agreed not to specify that the COP would have to

agree "by consensus" to include incomplete agenda items from an ordinary session in the agenda of the following session.

Debate on Rule 22 on the election of officers to the Bureau resulted in the elimination of the footnote that describes how the rule is to be organized. The debate centered on three aspects: the size of the bureau; geographical representation; and participation and status of the Chair of the CST. Most delegations supported ensuring equitable geographical distribution in the Bureau. A majority of the delegates supported having nine vice-presidents. Benin supported Nigeria's proposal to have an additional member from Africa, but the UK opposed this. Delegates did not agree on whether the Chair of the CST should be an *ex-officio* member of the Bureau or a regional representative.

The Working Group concluded their discussion on the rules of procedure by adopting document A/AC.241/WG.II(8)/L.2, which requests a revised text from the Secretariat for INCD-9.

#### **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.

NGOs said the procedures do not sufficiently address institutional mechanisms, community involvement or capacity building.

Following a suggestion from Iran, delegates debated whether objectives of the procedures should "ensure that each party has undertaken its" CCD obligation, but did not agree to the amendment.

Germany, supported by Uganda, said Parties need a set of indicators to use in compiling reports. Without clear, consistent indicators, the reports could be too lengthy, overwhelming for the Secretariat to analyze and difficult to compare. He suggested that the Secretariat should compile a report on the development of standard indicators by UNSO and others.

The Working Group decided that Parties should send the secretariat contact information for national, subregional and regional focal points and coordinating bodies. They also agreed that the least developed countries should receive assistance in their preparation of reports.

Working Group II adopted decision A/AC.241/WG.II(8)/L.3 on Procedures for communication of information and review of implementation that requests the Secretariat to prepare a revised draft decision for INCD-9 and a report on benchmarks and indicators.

#### **CLOSING PLENARY**

The final plenary session of INCD-8 was convened on Thursday, 15 February. After adopting the reports of the two working groups and the report of the Committee, Kjellén outlined a possible work plan for INCD-9.

**WORKING GROUP I:** Vice-Chair Erwin Ortiz summarized the four subjects discussed by Working Group I. He said progress was made on financial rules through an exchange of views, but the Group needed more information before taking an appropriate decision. After the exchange of views on the programme and budget, delegates also decided they did not have enough information and requested the necessary documents to be prepared for the last INCD before COP-1. Further regional group



consultations are needed on the GM. He observed that more information, preparation, and work in regional and subregional groups was needed. Delegates requested that the Interim Secretariat provides further material on the GM.

Ortiz then presented the four draft decisions, noting amendments that had been agreed in the Group but were not reflected in the documentation. The Committee then adopted the following decisions: A/AC.241/WG.I(8)/L.1 on designation of a Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning, A/AC.241/WG.I(8)/L.2 on programme and budget, A/AC.241/WG.I(8)/L.3 on draft financial rules and A/AC.241/WG.I(8)/L.4 on the global mechanism.

**WORKING GROUP II:** The Chair, Takao Shibata, described the Group's work. Some brackets were removed from the rules of procedure, but delegates could not deal with a substantial part of the document. The communication of information and review of implementation were discussed and considerable progress was made. Thanks to an excellent document and the Interim Secretariat's preparations on scientific and technological cooperation, delegates completed consideration of draft terms of reference for the CST and forged a broad consensus on the roster of experts and *ad hoc* panels. He said the next INCD will have a draft decision on these two issues that already commands substantial agreement. The legal issues of conciliation and arbitration and of procedures to resolve questions of implementation were left to the COP.

The Committee then adopted the following draft decisions: A/AC.241/WG.II(8)/L.1 on scientific and technological cooperation, A/AC.241/WG.II(8)/L.2 on the draft rules of procedure and A/AC.241/WG.II(8)/L.3 on communication of information and review of implementation. Draft decisions A/AC.241/WG.II(8)/L.4 on conciliation and arbitration and A/AC.241/WG.II(8)/L.5 on procedures to resolve questions on implementation were adopted as orally amended.

Kjellén said ongoing work by other conventions on conciliation and arbitration, procedures to resolve questions of implementation and the rules of procedure will provide guidance to the INCD. He then introduced the provisional agenda for INCD-9 which contains the following items: adoption of the agenda and organization of work; preparation for the COP; special action in Africa and other regions; status of signature and ratification; review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds; adoption of the agenda for INCD-10; and adoption of the report of the Committee. Following interventions by Costa Rica, on behalf of the GRULAC, and Senegal, he suggested changing the item on interim action taken in other regions to refer to "actions taken in the Latin American, Asian and Northern Mediterranean regions." The provisional agenda was adopted, as amended.

Greece, on behalf of OECD, suggested that because Working Group I would be occupied with the GM and Working Group II had cleared two legal matters from its agenda, it would be best to consider all legal items, including the rules of procedure and the financial rules, in Working Group II. Costa Rica, on behalf of the G-77 and China, said that while the idea was interesting, the Group needed time to consult. Cameroon, on behalf of the African Group, said a change in the distribution of Working Group tasks would cause difficulties for African delegations. If financial rules were moved to Working Group II, it would be difficult to follow because not all African delegations have legal specialists. The Chair said that this issue would be addressed at INCD-9.

**ADOPTION OF THE REPORT:** Acting Rapporteur José Urrutia (Peru) presented his draft report and its addendum on the status of signature and ratification, as contained in documents A/AC.241/L.29 and A/AC.241/L.29/Add.1, respectively. He said

the changes in the Bureau would be reflected in the documents. The Report and Addendum were adopted.

INCD Chair Kjellén presented his three summaries reflecting special action, as contained in document A/AC.241/CRP.16, preparation for the Conference of the Parties, as contained in A/AC.241/CRP.17 and review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds, as contained in A/AC.241/CRP.18. The documents are not negotiated texts, but are aimed at providing a picture of the negotiations and the salient points raised. The Committee authorized the Rapporteur to annex the papers to his report.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS:** Kjellén noted that the status of ratification at present indicates that the CCD should enter into force this year. Thus, he will continue consulting on the venue of COP-1. However, there is concern that the Convention is still not sufficiently known. While progress was made during this session, much still remains to be done. Therefore, at INCD-9 priority will be given to negotiations on the preparations for the COP.

He then outlined a possible work plan for INCD-9, which will start on Tuesday, 3 September 1996. After a brief opening plenary, regional groups will have time to meet. The second day will feature a morning plenary for general statements, special action in the regions, the status of ratifications, the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds and accreditation of NGOs. The working groups will meet from Wednesday afternoon until Friday afternoon when the plenary will reconvene to review the progress of work. One session for regional consultations will be provided. Working Groups would continue to meet during the second week. Panels and written submissions could be organized for reporting work in the regions and on special subjects. As would be the case in the COP meetings, reports on special action in the regions could be done once a year.

Italy, on behalf of the EU, said reports on special action demonstrated a collective effort with affected countries and what needs to be done. Costa Rica, on behalf of the G-77 and China, said although discussions on the GM had been slow, they now have a sound position. Greece, on behalf of the OECD countries, said their proposed organization of work was primarily due to the UN's financial crisis.

South Africa said the environment- and science-focused Valdivia Group had established cooperation between NGOs and governments. Gabon, on behalf of the African Group, appreciated support from the international community and said the contents of the GM are important. China said the session was an encouragement for continued national desertification prevention. The League of Arab States stressed the importance of representation of Arab States in the institutions provided by the CCD. On behalf of the NGOs, Ruth Mubiru of the Uganda Women Tree Planting Movement, gave an account of NGO inputs provided at this session, which included the CST, energy, women and desertification, and communication procedures.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF INCD-8

When Chair Bo Kjellén brought down his gavel to open the eighth session of the INCD at 3:15 pm on 5 February 1996, few delegates seemed convinced that this session should start at all. Many arrived in Geneva questioning the necessity of a session only six months after the last one. At the end of the two-week session, the modest achievements induced divergent views. Experienced negotiators had arrived with low expectations and seemed to think that the lack of decisions was a natural ingredient in the negotiation process. Some left feeling disappointed while others were positive and said remaining work could warrant an eleventh INCD session.

Most delegates agreed that negotiations moved slowly and pointed to common reasons for the pace. Progress occurred when preparation and key people coincided at the right point in negotiations, as in discussions of the CST. When these factors were lacking, particularly in sensitive financial matters, negotiations halted and gave way to relatively limited activity in the form of consultations within or between regional groups. Without negotiating texts, and with delegations unwilling or unable to concur on presentation of possible negotiating texts, little happened.

Some delegates noted that the pace was slow because of incomplete organization within regional groups. This was not surprising. In fact, at the last session, developing countries expressed a preference for holding this session in New York where the G-77 is better organized. Another explanation was that documents reached delegates late, preventing some regional groups from greater coordination prior to their arrival in Geneva.

Expectations for substantive achievement were higher than at INCD-7, when many delegates felt a general exchange of views was sufficient for that stage in the INCD process. At INCD-8, the lack of negotiations in some areas caused one delegate to say that compared to Nairobi, there was no "passion" in Geneva. The pace became a motivation behind OECD proposals to restructure and shorten future INCD sessions. Financial concerns related to the UN's budget crisis were another undercurrent beneath many INCD-8 discussions. These concerns were a key element in curtailed debates on the Permanent Secretariat and, to a certain extent, programme and budget.

Delegates pointed to the interrelationship with other conventions as the final limiting factor on the work of INCD-8. Negotiations on CCD's rules of procedure and financial rules cannot overtake negotiations on similar subjects in the Climate Change and Biodiversity Conventions, because those conventions are in force and some delegates say the procedural debates should be resolved across the treaties. Constant references to precedent caused some delegates to doubt whether the CCD has the same status as these other two conventions.

Another cause for concern during the session related to the debate on urgent action for Africa and action in other regions. While the Chair said the objective was to provide information on what is happening and to learn lessons for further implementation, many delegates disagreed with the manner in which the debate was organized and the way in which issues were presented.

The proportionately large amount of time allocated to the African region led some delegates to question the sufficient attention granted to other regions. Some observers argued that it was the numerous complaints by delegates from the non-African developing regions at INCD-7 that inspired accelerated activity in these regions since that session. The possible influence of reports in the sessions on implementation becomes more critical in light of proposals that would re-organize work in a way that marginalizes the reporting sessions.

Some observers and delegations see the reporting sessions as important, but affected and donor countries alike voiced frustration over each other's overly general statements. Some delegates said negotiators should address the inability of governments working in the same regions to achieve partnership instead of viewing reduction of reporting sessions as the solution.

Informally, developing country delegates said that partnership building that donors want them to initiate was difficult to attain. They say staff from donor countries never turn up for meetings and are unaware of the CCD and processes of accessing funds. Developed countries responded that desertification is not mentioned as a priority when they conduct missions to affected

countries. In some instances, even where new funding has been set aside requests have not yet been received. This points to poor information flows and lack of national political will in both cases, which both sides say have slowed progress.

As processes of consultation and coordination are still not well understood, greater consideration should also be given to the negotiations on the agenda item on communication of information and reporting. The type of information donors think is useful and what developing countries feel is needed should be used as a basis to define a set of parameters that can be used to measure progress.

Two regions revealed gaps that could affect the implementation of the CCD. The division of Africa into subregions left Rwanda, Burundi, the Central African Republic and Cameroon isolated. This prompted Cameroon to suggest that a subregional body should be designated with responsibility to assist Central Africa in CCD implementation. Some delegates were quick to point out that the absence of a subregional body may indicate that the problem does not exist there. Others noted that coordinated efforts are needed in the Central African countries if the problems of drought and desertification are to be dealt with effectively in Africa.

The Russian Federation stunned many delegates with the announcement that it is unlikely to ratify the Convention in view of the Convention's omission of countries with economies in transition. Although some delegates were sympathetic to their situation, they said the pursuit of a regional annex during the negotiation of the Convention would have been the best option. Given the current circumstances, some delegates thought that pursuing the matter within the UN General Assembly would be more promising.

On the positive side, the negotiations on the scientific and technological cooperation seemed to be the one area where delegates could point to having made progress. Discussions moved beyond details such as whether experts in the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) would have to provide CV's, a topic at INCD-7. Delegates sought means to most effectively tie the CST and the *ad hoc* panels to the COP, emphasizing that the CST is subsidiary to the COP. Delegates wanted to keep the CST, its Bureau and the *ad hoc* panels small and efficient, yet demands for geographic, multidisciplinary, gender, NGO, and IGO representation may complicate selection of *ad hoc* panel members. Considerable discussion was spent on the availability of information, with emphasis on NGO representation to provide local knowledge and expertise. The agreement that the results of the work of the CST "shall be in the public domain" may provoke discussion at INCD-9.

NGOs praised delegates' prioritization of local knowledge and expertise and NGO participation as a sign that participation, a central principle of the Convention, is being written into implementation structures. NGOs had targeted CST deliberations at INCD-8 with some success getting their proposals for attention to women, local peoples, and traditional and local knowledge and technology incorporated and adopted by the governments. Some have observed that collaborative initiatives between national governments and NGOs laid the basis for the NGOs' success. Others noted that good organization, coordination and pointed interventions made the difference.

The areas where the least progress occurred were negotiations on the GM and the financial rules. The causes can be attributed to the same factors. Delegates said documents on the GM were distributed late, limiting preparation of positions prior to the meeting. The documents discussed in this and other subjects were compilation texts rather than negotiating texts, triggering maneuvers around whose basic document would become the negotiating text. Unlike during the negotiation of the CCD when

the G-77 and China, and in particular Africa, set the pace by providing draft text and consolidating positions well in advance, at INCD-8 they only managed to develop a concerted position on the GM on the last day of the session. Individual participation, or lack thereof, played a part as well. Some delegates noted that key negotiators with leadership and a historical perspective on the financial issues were missing along with their knowledge and ability to move negotiations forward.

Delegates say two visions of the GM are emerging. The one supported by many developing country delegations would establish a central fund with its own resources. The one described by OECD delegates would provide motivation and be an information source that would leave funds in existing bilateral and multilateral funds. These functions are critical to the Convention's implementation and countries' decisions on ratification, so delegates say the decision cannot be rushed. Some observers noted that the extensive regional group consultations on the GM, Kjellén's comments to give priority to the GM during the intersessional period and future sessions, and the divergence between the OECD and the G-77 and China indicate the challenges that lie ahead. Steps toward regional coordination and a negotiating text during the intersessional period will be critical.

In spite of these setbacks, many delegates and observers believed that INCD-8's work could contribute to more substantive work at the next session. The new additions to the bureau, progress on the CST and the consolidation of regional positions on the GM may allow INCD-9 to conduct more detailed negotiations. Furthermore, if the ratification process continues at its current rate, delegates will have to increase their pace. However, forces beyond the INCD's control could also have significant effects. Constraints resulting from the UN budget crisis could continue to delay decisions, while procedural issues could gain if progress occurs in other negotiations. The full impact of these changes will only be seen at INCD-9.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR DURING THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

**AFRICAN REGIONAL ACTIVITIES:** CILSS will hold a subregional meeting with intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to coordinate CCD implementation on 23-24 February in Lomé, Togo. Contact Idé Bana or Issa Aboubacar, CILSS, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Tel: +359 317896, Fax +359 317896.

The IGADD, in collaboration with ECA and OSS, will hold a workshop on land tenure in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in March. Contact: Dr. A. Trux, 1 Rue Miollis, F-75015, Paris, France. Tel: +33 1 4568 2876, Fax: +33 1 4567 2686.

IGADD and the subregion's NGOs will hold a workshop on cooperation in the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification in June 1996, possibly in Uganda. Contact: Roselynn Amadi, PO Box 2653, Djibouti. Tel: +253 354050, Fax: +253 356284/353195.

**ASIAN REGIONAL ACTIVITIES:** A regional meeting is planned to be held on the Asian Annex in India before INCD-9. For information contact, at the Indian Ministry of Environment and Forests, Director K. Sethuraman, Tel/Fax: +91 11 436 2746, or Joint Secretary Alok Jain, Tel: +91 11 436 0894, Fax: +91 11 436 0678.

A meeting inviting delegates from the Arab States and Asia is to be held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, during the third week of May to discuss the Asian Annex and awareness raising. It is a joint project

of the INCD Secretariat, UNEP, the Islamic Bank and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). For further information, contact G. de Kalbermatten at the INCD Secretariat, Tel: +41 22 979 9111, Fax: +41 22 979 9030, E-mail: secretariat.incd@unep.ch.

**LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL ACTIVITIES:** The second regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean will be held in Mexico in June. For specific dates and other details, contact Lic. Diana Ponce Nava, Unidad de Cooperación Internacional, Subsecretaría de Recursos Naturales, Secretaría de Medio Ambiente, Recursos Naturales y Pesca (SEMARNAP), Av. Progreso 5, Col del Carmen, Coyoacan, 04100 Mexico, D.F. Tel: +52 658-4853, Fax: +52 658-6059.

The Dominican Republic will host a subregional meeting on island ecosystems and desertification tentatively scheduled for 18-20 April at the Hotel Hamaca Boca Chica, Santo Domingo. For further information contact Hilton N. Cabral Burgos, Secretariado Técnico de la Presidencia, Oficina Nacional de Planificación, Oficinas Gubernamentales, Anexas al Palacio Presidencial, Bloque A-B, 2da Planta, Av. México, Santo Domingo, R.D. Tel: +1 809 221-5140, ext. 214, Fax: +1 809 221-8627.

**OECD ACTIVITIES:** The OECD Group will meet at the end of June to prepare its positions for INCD-9. For information, contact Marilyn Yakowitz at OECD, 2 rue André Pascal, F-75116, Paris, France. Tel: +33 1 4524 9058, Fax: +33 1 4524 9031.

**WMO SEMINARS:** The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) will conduct a seminar on Drought Preparedness and Management in Rabat, Morocco, in April 1996. Contact Dr. Yeves Ruiz of WMO for further information. WMO will also host a Workshop on Desertification and Drought from 23-28 May in Bet Daga, Israel. Contact N.G. Kové, WMO, Tel: +41 22730-8274, Fax +41 22 734-2326 for additional information.

**SECRETARIAT ACTIVITIES:** The Chair plans to hold consultations with the Bureau and Secretariat during the month of July on the negotiations and, specifically, on the Global Mechanism.

**NGO MEETINGS:** SADC NGOs will hold a regional workshop on preparation of the subregional action programmes in Harare, Zimbabwe from 31 July to 2 August. Contact: Roben Penny, Environment Monitoring Group, Wycroft Street, PO Box 123 Observatory, Cape Town, South Africa. Tel: +27 21 448 3900, Fax: +27 21 479 784, E-mail: envmongr@wn.apc.org.

The Sahelian NGOs Regional Forum will be held in Bamako, Mali. Contact: Falaye Doumbia, CCA-ONG, 330, Porte 119 Hippodrome, BP 1721, Bamako, Mali. Tel: +223 230414/222112. Fax: +223 222359.

West African NGOs/CBOs Subregional meeting will take place on 25-27 April 1996 in Lomé, Togo. Contact: Masse Lo, ENDA-TM, 55 rue Carnot, BP 3330, Dakar, Senegal. Tel: +221 225983/222496, Fax: +221 235157/222695, E-mail: masselo@endak.gn.apc.org.

**INCD-9:** The next session of the INCD is scheduled for 3-13 September in New York. However, since the Commission on Sustainable Development's Intergovernmental Panel on Forests has scheduled meetings during the same period, there may be a change in the dates.