



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## INCD-9 HIGHLIGHTS THURSDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 1996

Delegates to INCD-9 met in working groups in the morning and in Plenary in the afternoon, where they heard approximately 21 statements regarding interim activities on desertification in Asia, Latin America and the Northern Mediterranean. Working Group I also met in the evening to adopt their draft decisions.

### PLENARY

Executive Secretary Diallo reviewed the issues raised during Wednesday's discussion on urgent measures for Africa. Some delegates raised problems they had encountered. Questions were raised on whether difficulties were due to lack of information or lack of access to information. He recalled Germany's suggestion that developed countries prepare information for their administrations and public.

**INTERIM ACTION IN ASIA:** CHINA's national actions include enhancing the role of governmental organizations in coordinating policies related to drought and training local policy makers to better understand CCD-related policies. Ms. Niu Yuqin, NGO representative of the China Desert Reclamation Association, discussed efforts to fight desertification in her village, for which she has been awarded the national labor hero award.

ARMENIA has introduced bills on environmental, vegetation and wildlife protection to create a system to protect natural resources. Armenia will look at atomic energy because it is the most acceptable of traditional energy resources. AFGHANISTAN reviewed the topographical and climatic characteristics of his country. Due to landmines and damaged bridges, a small area of rangeland is used for grazing. He called on UNDP, FAO and other agencies to help Afghanistan's efforts.

IRAN elaborated on eight activities the country has initiated to implement the CCD, including involving women and youth. He stated that the Asian regional network, DESCONAP, can be the main mechanism through which the regional Annex can be implemented.

RUSSIA stated that although it has not yet ratified the CCD, it has undertaken various initiatives to implement the CCD. Russia hopes to bring together the administrative heads of the countries in the region to develop a plan of action to combat desertification.

India, on behalf of the ASIAN region, reported on the regional meeting held in August in India, at which several resolutions were reached, including the need to: have institutional arrangements and the involvement of all relevant government actors; and establish regional institutional networks that are coordinated by a national institution that could act as focal points for the NAP.

BANGLADESH emphasized two points that are central to the fight against drought and desertification: eradication of poverty and people's participation. JORDAN's efforts in affected areas include land rehabilitation and the development of a land inventory. Jordan is cooperating with its neighbors, including Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Syria. YEMEN is helping local sectors and NGOs take part in the struggle against desertification. He expressed hope that considerable outside support would be available to help develop the national programme and support its implementation. ISRAEL noted joint initiatives with several Middle East countries. Negotiations with Germany are expected to conclude soon, resulting in a new academic programme offering a masters degree in desert sciences.

MYANMAR is planning an awareness raising seminar. He stated that desertification is a barrier to sustainable food security and that land use patterns should be made environmentally sound. NEPAL has tried to include local people in all activities. He hoped the GM would mobilize substantial resources, and that the least developed countries would receive special attention. Executive Secretary Diallo noted that the bulk of bilateral funding for activities in Asia has come from Switzerland, Japan and the Netherlands.

**INTERIM MEASURES IN LATIN AMERICA:** CUBA has created an advisory body to elaborate the national programme and has special programmes for territories in affected areas. URUGUAY described its drylands situation emphasizing the socio-economic dimensions. CHILE has carried out two pilot studies, organized awareness raising activities, and initiated regional cooperation on research. BRAZIL highlighted: the creation of a NAP; the establishment of the national information network, "Redesert"; and the regional development of indicators and benchmarks.

In PERU a third NAP has been completed and a political decision has been made to include NGOs as much as possible in decision-making on drylands problems. BOLIVIA has officially

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adopted its NAP and held awareness days involving the media and local communities. MEXICO has organized national workshops to develop state plans to combat desertification, is sponsoring a national reforestation programme, and is cooperating with Brazil to assist Haiti to combat desertification. Spain, on behalf of the ANNEX IV COUNTRIES (Northern Mediterranean), elaborated on their cooperation. A regional reflection group was created in the interim period, national focal points were identified, and contacts between organizations were established. SPAIN emphasized its own commitment to the CCD process and implementation, through participation in regional meetings and funding to activities in Latin America and Africa.

### WORKING GROUP I

The Group convened briefly in the morning and heard a statement from INCD Chair Bo Kjellén and then adjourned to enable the informal, open-ended contact group to continue negotiating the Global Mechanism's fourth function on mobilization and channelling of financial resources. Kjellén stated three reasons for satisfaction with this INCD session: the CCD's entry into force is only five ratifications away; the additional activities, such as the Panel, indicate the vitality of the CCD; and progress has been made laying the groundwork for action to be taken at the next session.

The Group re-convened at 5:30 pm for three hours and completed consideration of the Global Mechanism, administrative arrangements for the Permanent Secretariat and financial rules.

**GLOBAL MECHANISM:** In spite of the day-long informal negotiations, no solution was reached on the text for paragraph 4, promoting actions to mobilize and channel financial resources.

When the meeting started in the late afternoon there seemed to be consensus on text that incorporated both the wishes of the OECD group of countries and the G-77 and China. The proposed text had all the functions in the Secretariat's text, with minor amendments, preceded by chapeaux that would make the function facilitative in nature, except for the paragraph stating "to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of existing financial resources..." However, this lack of a chapeau was unacceptable to the OECD group of countries. Consequently, it was agreed that the Secretariat's text, the new version introduced Thursday evening, and the text submitted by the OECD group of countries (on Monday) should become subparagraphs (e), (e)(bis) and (e)(ter) respectively. All three will be bracketed. The G-77 and China insisted that the document is a package so it is entirely bracketed.

A procedural decision was adopted that: transmits the document to INCD-10; requests IFAD and UNDP to submit their updated offers to the Secretariat by 21 October 1996; invites delegates to submit to the Secretariat written comments to the updated offers; and to consider the selection of the GM at INCD-10.

**FINANCIAL RULES:** Delegates then considered the draft decision to transmit the financial rules (A/AC.241/45/Rev.2) to INCD-10. The decision noted that Rule 23 (decision procedures) remained bracketed along with the name of the relevant institution. Austria said he and others in the OECD had understood that Rule 23 would be deleted. If it were not he had some minor amendments to introduce. The Chair said he would tell the Plenary that Rule 23 should be deleted.

**ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS:** Greece, on behalf of the OECD group of countries, proposed text for the draft decision on the designation of a Permanent Secretariat and arrangements for its functioning, calling on the UN

Secretary-General and UNEP to answer questions posed by INCD members, for consideration at INCD-10. Delegates agreed.

### WORKING GROUP II

Chair Shibata (Japan) introduced five draft decisions proposed for adoption by the Plenary. The first, draft decision for submission to the COP on procedures for communication of information and review of implementation, was adopted without amendments.

During discussion of the second draft decision (draft rules of procedures of the COP) Spain noted that a suggested amendment in Rule 22 in A/AC.241/48/Rev.1, which was discussed at INCD-8, had not been taken note of. He insisted that the draft decision include the language, within brackets. The amendment, regarding adequate representation of "Annex" affected country Parties, was supported by Portugal, Turkey and Greece, and relates to similar text in Rule 31 on the election of officers to subsidiary bodies. The Chair said that note would be incorporated. The draft decision was adopted with minor changes.

In the third draft decision (report on work being done on benchmarks and indicators to measure progress in the implementation of the Convention) subparagraph (b) was amended by Benin, on behalf of the G-77 and China, to read: "to establish under its authority an informal open-ended...regional and/or sub-regional groups...and non-governmental organizations referred to..." The decision was adopted.

Under the fourth draft decision (organization of scientific and technological cooperation) Spain again asked to include, in paragraph 6 in A/AC.241/57, text noting that the Vice-Chairpersons should be elected from an "Annex" affected country Party. After some debate, delegates replaced the draft decision with the text from the negotiated document (A/AC.241/57, page 2).

In the fifth draft decision (program of work for the Committee on Science and Technology), in subparagraph (c), delegates decided to delete language so that the first two lines would read: "Requests the interim secretariat to identify bodies of other relevant organizations."

### IN THE CORRIDORS

The Thursday morning statement of the Chair of Working Group I that we are revisiting the last night of negotiations of the Convention in Paris (June 1994) was echoed by many delegates. The repeated adjournments of the Group on Wednesday and Thursday for informal negotiations, numerous new drafts that emerged after short breaks, and shuttle diplomacy between the contact and regional groups left many frustrated. As one delegate said, "this animal called the Global Mechanism will haunt us forever." Some delegates said one reason consensus could not be reached was the lack of direct contact between the regional and interest groups, who were informally exchanging text after negotiating within their group instead of sitting around the table to negotiate and draft consensus text. Others noted that although the text presented at 5:30 pm might please both sides, it made no grammatical sense.

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**PLENARY:** The Plenary will meet at 10:00 am in Conference Room 2, with the aim of adjourning by 1:00 pm. Arrangements have been made to meet again at 2:30 pm, if necessary.