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## SUMMARY OF THE RESUMED TENTH SESSION OF THE INC FOR THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION 18-22 AUGUST 1997

The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Convention to Combat Desertification (INCD) resumed its tenth session in Geneva from 18-22 August 1997. This was the last meeting of the INC before the first Conference of the Parties (COP-1), to be held from 29 September to 10 October 1997 in Rome. Although many delegates arrived in Geneva not expecting to achieve much from this session, they left with a sense of relief that some progress had been made. The discussions, initially planned as the pre-conference consultations for COP-1, also covered substantive matters. Progress was made on the functions of and host institution for the Global Mechanism, the election of Bureau Members and the selection procedure of the country to host the permanent secretariat.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE INCD

The Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) was formally adopted on 17 June 1994, and opened for signature in Paris on 14 and 15 October 1994. Three months following the receipt of the fiftieth ratification of the CCD on 26 September 1996, the Convention entered into force on 26 December 1996. The Convention takes an 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 by national governments in cooperation with donors, local populations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

### NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION

During its 47th session in 1992, the UN General Assembly, as requested by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), adopted resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of the INCD. At the organizational session of the INCD in January 1993, delegates elected Amb. Bo Kjellén (Sweden) as Chair of the Committee. The INCD met five times between May 1993 and June 1994, during which delegates drafted the Convention and four regional implementation Annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean. The Convention was adopted on the closing day of INCD-5 in Paris, along with resolutions recommending urgent action for Africa and interim arrangements for the period between adoption of the CCD and its entry into force.

### POST-AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS

INCD-6 was held in New York from 9 to 18 January 1995. The Committee reached agreement on its work programme for the interim period and the mandates of the two Working Groups and the Plenary.

Delegates at INCD-7, which took place in Nairobi from 7 to 17 August 1995, reviewed the status of ratification and implementation of the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa and Interim Measures. The Committee discussed and provided input on the structure and elements that should be considered in preparation for the first Conference of the Parties, including such issues as the programme and budget, the establishment of the Global Mechanism, the location of the permanent secretariat and the establishment of the Committee on Science and Technology.

INCD-8, held from 5 to 15 February 1996 in Geneva, reviewed the status of ratifications and the implementation of the Resolution on Urgent Action for Africa and Interim Measures. The Committee began negotiations on some of the Secretariat's texts on preparations for COP-1. Delegates requested the Secretariat to prepare new texts for negotiation at INCD-9, based on their discussions and on the programme and budget for INCD-10.

INCD-9 was held in New York from 3 to 13 September 1996. During this session, the working groups continued to prepare for COP-1. Delegates addressed outstanding issues related to preparation for COP-1, except for the programme and budget. Delegates' general impression was that good progress was made, especially concerning scientific and technological cooperation, even though several of the most important, primarily financial, issues remained unresolved.

INCD-10 was held in New York from 6 to 17 January 1997. Although most delegates were pleased with the progress made at this session, some said that the sense of urgency that the coming into force of the Convention the previous month should have brought about was

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This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Elisabeth Corell <elico@tema.liu.se>, Wagaki Mwangi <wagaki@iconnect.co.ke> and Lynn Wagner <lynn@iisd.org>. The Editor is Pamela Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Managing Editor is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The sustaining donors of the *Bulletin* are the Netherlands Ministry for Development Cooperation, the Government of Canada and the United States of America (through USAID). General support for the *Bulletin* during 1997 is provided by the Department for International Development (DID) of the United Kingdom, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, the European Community (DG-XI), the German Ministry of Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, the Ministries of Environment and Foreign Affairs of Austria, the Ministry of Environment of Sweden, the Swiss Federal Office of the Environment, and UNDP. Specific funding for coverage of the CCD is provided by German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). Funding for the French version has been provided by ACCT/IEPF, with support from the French Ministry of Cooperation and the Québec Ministry of the Environment and Wildlife. The *Bulletin* can be contacted at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada; tel: +1-204-958-7700; fax: +1-204-958-7710. The opinions expressed in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications only and with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Managing Editor. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists and can be found on the Linkages WWW-server at <http://www.iisd.ca/linkages/>. The satellite image was taken on 1997/08/24 23:06:49 UTC from 100000 km above Geneva. Copyright © 1997 The Living Earth, Inc. <http://livingearth.com>. For further information on ways to access, support or contact the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, send e-mail to <enb@iisd.org>.



absent. Certain key issues, such as functions of and the institutions to host the Global Mechanism, the physical location of the permanent secretariat and the size and membership of the COP Bureau, remained unresolved.

## REPORT OF THE RESUMED TENTH SESSION

INCD Chair Kjellén proposed convening a resumed session at the end of INCD-10 in January because a number of issues remained unresolved and no time or funding was available for pre-conference consultations in Rome immediately prior to COP-1. In keeping with the pre-conference consultation theme, delegates to the resumed tenth INCD session met in brief Plenaries throughout the week; most issues were discussed only in regional and informal consultations. The resumed INCD-10 agenda included preparations for the first Conference of the Parties, reports on interim action taken to combat desertification, status of signature and ratification of the Convention, and review of the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds. The agenda item on preparations for COP-1 included consultations on the following issues: selection procedure for the physical location of the permanent secretariat; identification of an organization to house the Global Mechanism; programme and budget; Bureau size and composition; and the Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology. The Plenary discussions and decisions taken by the resumed tenth INCD session are summarized below.

### OPENING PLENARY

**OPENING STATEMENTS:** INCD Chair Bo Kjellén called the first meeting of the resumed INCD-10 session to order Monday afternoon, 18 August. He recognized that many of the delegates had attended the 19th UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) to review the implementation of Agenda 21 in June, and said that while the session was not successful in all respects, it demonstrated the strength of the Rio process. He noted that the outcome contained text related to decisions to be taken for the first Conference of the Parties to the CCD. He called delegates' attention to the Commission on Sustainable Development's (CSD) intention to consider fresh water and integrated planning and management of land resources in the year 2000. He later reported that during the UNGASS meeting, delegates often referred to the three Rio Conventions on biodiversity, climate change and desertification, indicating their equality. He added that at the recent climate change meeting in Bonn, Germany, African governments expressed their fears about the effects of climate change and said they would support steps to implement the Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Kjellén also said the resumed INCD-10's deliberations should accelerate agreement on outstanding issues and that issues already transmitted to the COP will not be re-opened. He hoped that consultations on the Global Mechanism would create conditions for related decisions at COP-1, and consideration of the rules of procedure would produce a decision to allow election of the Bureau at the COP's opening session. He also expected consultations on the programme and budget, the Chair for the Committee on Science and Technology, and the time and venue for COP-2, to prepare the way for related COP-1 decisions.

Delegates then adopted the Agenda and Proposed Organization of Work for resumed INCD-10 (A/AC.241/71) and the programme of work contained in its Annex 2.

CCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo introduced the documentation for the session and the papers that have already been prepared for COP-1. He noted activities that will take place parallel to COP-1: an international forum for mayors, a seminar for the media, an exhibit of comic strips addressing the theme of desertification and an NGO Forum. He also reviewed workshops and interim activities that have taken place since January in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean, and thanked the donors and UN agencies involved with them.

Luxembourg, on behalf of the European Union, declared its preparedness to reach decisions on the host of the Global Mechanism, the programme and budget for the COP, the procedures for the selection of the physical location of the permanent secretariat, and the election of the COP Bureau. He said that, in making such decisions, the CCD should benefit from existing structures.

Tanzania, on behalf of the G-77 and China, stated that the Group was "open to all negotiations." He expressed hope that: there is political will to enable the conclusion of the consultations on the Global Mechanism to accelerate its functioning by January 1998; consultations with UNDP and IFAD regarding the organization to host the Global Mechanism would be concluded to enable the INCD to recommend to COP-1 an appropriate institution; and consensus can be reached on the designation of the Bureau members and the work and agenda for COP-1.

Canada emphasized its contribution to the Convention, in particular to the Interim Secretariat's Trust Fund. He expected this session to address the terms of reference of the Global Mechanism and offered Canada's expertise to facilitate the realization of consensus on the matter. He also reiterated Montreal's offer to host the permanent secretariat.

Cuba said 19 of the 25 countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region had ratified the CCD. He reported on the March regional meeting held in Havana where the 25 countries drafted and approved their plan of action and measures to implement the CCD. The planned activities include: identifying experts for nomination; setting up a network with NGOs as partners; implementing training programmes in education; and designing a unified methodology to harmonize desertification programmes.

Brazil deposited its instrument of ratification on 25 June and has been implementing actions to combat desertification that have contributions from and support of native populations. Haiti is preparing for the arrival of a mission of experts, following an agreement at the Latin American and Caribbean meeting declaring Haiti a priority. Mongolia is establishing a trust fund and hopes it will be supported. Uzbekistan noted national efforts to implement the CCD and said many countries and NGOs from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) are participating in the INCD for the first time.

**NGO AND IGO ACCREDITATION:** Chair Kjellén noted the great number of developing country NGOs in the INCD process and the grass roots experience they have brought with them. The Committee agreed to accredit the additional NGOs listed in document A/AC.241/L.5/Add.14, bringing the total number of accredited NGOs to 360. Syria reiterated its reservation made at INCD-10 regarding the accreditation of the NGO Ecopeace. Kjellén said Syria's statement will be recorded in the minutes. The Committee further accredited the IGOs listed in A/AC.241/L.5/Add.3, 4 and 5.

### PREPARATION FOR THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

**LOGISTICAL ARRANGEMENTS:** On Tuesday, 19 August, Executive Secretary Diallo and Italy provided information concerning logistical arrangements for COP-1. Diallo said the working hours will be those of FAO: 9:00 to 12:00 and 2:00 to 5:00 daily. Services have been scheduled for no more than two simultaneous meetings and no scheduling or budgetary arrangements have been made for evening or weekend services.

A Committee of the Whole (COW) is expected to be established. The COW Chair will have the authority to appropriate work to drafting groups. The COW is expected to meet from 29 September to 3 October, when the Plenary is scheduled to reconvene to take final decisions. A High-Level Segment is scheduled from 7 to 10 October for statements and, possibly, to take decisions on outstanding issues. The concluding Plenary should take a decision on the date and location of COP-2. The Committee on Science and Technology will meet on 30 September and 1 October.

An Italian Organizing Committee has made arrangements with local hotels, but all accommodation and transportation must be arranged by participants. Other arrangements include preparations for



press and computer centers and an Internet cafe. Document ICCD/COP(1)/1 contains an annotated agenda and ICCD/COP(1)/Info.1 contains further logistical information.

Italy said it has contributed more than US\$600,000 to the Trust and Voluntary Funds during the INCD process. He also said it has given US\$2 million to COP-1 and is working together under a host agreement with FAO and the INCD Secretariat to organize the conference. In September, there will be a UN-Italian briefing in Rome for the local diplomatic community.

**AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK FOR COP-1:** On Thursday, 21 August, Chair Kjellén asked delegates to comment on the tentative schedule of work for COP-1, as contained in Annex II of document ICCD/COP(1)/1, but no discussion was forthcoming. Kjellén concluded that the subject would be discussed again at COP-1. He hoped the Committee of the Whole would start its work on 29 September.

Australia, supported by the EU, suggested that preliminary views should be presented on the proposed programme of work for 1999 (ICCD/COP(1)/3 and Add.1). The G-77 and China objected because the Group was not prepared for this discussion, since it was not on the agenda for the resumed INCD-10 session. He also announced that the Group intended to submit three draft decisions for circulation to delegates as official documents before COP-1 on: the establishment of a committee on the review and implementation of the Convention; hosting of the Global Mechanism; and collaboration between the permanent secretariat and sister conventions. Kjellén requested the G-77 and China to submit the proposals to enable consideration of how their proposals could be transmitted to the COP.

Kjellén also highlighted that he would transmit to COP-1: the main text adopted by INCD-10 in January (A/52/82) and document ICCD/COP(1)/2 containing the recommendations of decisions to be taken at the COP; a draft decision on the location of the permanent secretariat based on the agreement reached in the contact group (discussed below); and text that sets out the nominations received for the election of officers.

**NGO PARTICIPATION:** During the discussion of NGO accreditation, Norway emphasized the need to ensure that delegates and NGOs interact at COP-1. Kjellén said he expected that the INCD's method to facilitate NGO input and participation will be used. Following Thursday's discussion of the COP-1 agenda, Norway again stressed the need to promote an active exchange between the grass-roots and international levels. The CCD is an international legal instrument for promoting local participation and therefore an open session for the exchange of views between NGOs and delegates should be included on the COP agenda. He also suggested that in the future, conference reports should be complemented with reports from different stakeholders. Canada concurred, pointing out that NGO ideas not only have to be heard but should be sought out.

Kjellén reminded the Committee that decision 10/12, taken at the first part of INCD-10, concerns the participation of IGOs and NGOs. He pointed out that UN rules have to be observed and noted that organizing dialogues of this kind can be difficult. The official session will be accompanied by various external activities, such as seminars. Kjellén appreciated the large NGO participation in the INCD process, where there have been more NGOs from developing countries and with local connections than in any other negotiating process.

Executive Secretary Diallo explained that whatever the situation has been in the past, the CCD, unlike any other convention, aims at installing a new regime by bringing in civil society and NGOs. Delegates need to demonstrate flexibility from COP-1 onwards, to leave UN rules behind and face new partnerships. He said this flexibility is also crucial at the national level. Regarding the financing of NGOs, he asked States to facilitate NGO participation. Diallo said the Secretariat wants States to support their local, spontaneous NGOs and not "Secretariat NGOs."

**DESIGNATION OF A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUNCTIONING: PHYSICAL LOCATION:** A contact group composed of the Bureau and representatives from Canada, Germany and Spain, the countries bidding to host the Secretariat, met on Tuesday afternoon, 19 August, to finalize the procedure to be used to select the host country and prepare a draft decision. The group met again Wednesday to review their draft decision, which was later circulated informally to delegates.

The decision (A/AC.241/L.40) was adopted without discussion during the closing Plenary. It recommends that an informal and confidential poll be conducted during a Plenary meeting on Friday, 3 October. Only accredited delegates of Parties will participate and their votes will be counted in the presence of the three countries offering to host the permanent secretariat and the Executive Secretary. If one city obtains an absolute majority of valid preferences it shall be proposed as the consensus decision. If no city obtains such a majority, a second round of "eliciting preferences" shall be carried out.

**COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:** Executive Secretary Diallo presented the documentation for Committee on Science and Technology (CST) meeting at COP-1 during Friday morning's Plenary. The CST will meet in conjunction with the COP on Tuesday and Wednesday, 30 September and 1 October. The Secretariat has prepared the following documents: agenda and organization of work (ICCD/COP(1)/CST/1); survey and evaluation of existing networks (CST/2 and 2/Add.1); work on benchmarks and indicators (CST/3 and 3/Add.1); work of other bodies performing work similar to that envisaged for the CST (CST/4); and modalities and timing of future work on inventories of research and traditional knowledge — establishment of research priorities (CST/5). Finally, he introduced documents ICCD/COP(1)/6 and Add.1, regarding a proposed roster of experts. He said the Secretariat only took account of candidates proposed through normal diplomatic channels. An expert cannot propose himself or herself, but has to be nominated by the government. Diallo asked delegates to consider the list and make additional nominations before COP-1. Chair Kjellén said that the CST can be used to rapidly transmit scientific information from one part of the world to the other.

**GLOBAL MECHANISM — ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS:** Two brief Plenaries were held on the question of administrative arrangements for the Global Mechanism. The meetings were followed on both days by lengthy regional and interest group consultations. Informal consultations between the Chairs of the regional and interest groups took place Thursday evening to consider the modalities for designating an organization to house the Global Mechanism, and resulted in a draft decision that requests IFAD, UNDP and the World Bank to develop a proposal for a joint hosting arrangement.

Kjellén introduced the discussion by reiterating the background of the issue. At INCD-6 he was mandated by the INCD to transmit requests to institutions that might be interested. The World Bank replied by indicating a general interest. UNEP said it would not be an appropriate host. Replies from IFAD and UNDP indicated that they were interested and would submit further information. He suggested that statements from IFAD, UNDP and the World Bank regarding their offers to host the Global Mechanism could assist regional group consultations. IFAD and UNDP's offers are contained in ICCD/COP(1)/5.

IFAD gave the historical background of its offer and summarized its proposal. At INCD-6, IFAD submitted its proposal subject to the emergence of a shared vision with member States. The Global Mechanism should be small, with not more than seven staff, and be proactive to enable catalytic resource mobilization. The 26 functions allocated to the Global Mechanism can be grouped into two broad areas. The first, mobilizing and channeling resources, will aim at marketing and promoting catalytic financing of the CCD and direct grant financing for enabling activities. The second is knowledge development, information dissemination and analyses, and advising the Parties. The Global Mechanism should undergo a two-year test phase. IFAD is



prepared to: provide an initial grant of US\$10 million during the first year and some financial support during the second and third years for the enabling activities; allocate US\$100 million per year for the first three years, from the US\$300 million allocated to dryland management, for priorities indicated by the head of the Global Mechanism; and adopt a holistic and participatory approach that could involve UNDP, FAO, the World Bank and others, in particular in marketing the Convention.

UNDP noted its involvement with many interim national and sub-regional level activities and looked forward to continued involvement in CCD implementation. UNDP views the CCD as a broad framework to support dryland development and stressed the need for a strong Global Mechanism because of the magnitude and complexity of the problems faced in the drylands. She noted that many countries are weighed down by debt burdens and said these burdens should not be exacerbated. She stressed UNDP's ability to mobilize and leverage additional resources for development and UNDP's in-house resources, including its communication infrastructure. If selected as host, UNDP will provide US\$1 million to jump start the Global Mechanism and another US\$6-8 million as in-kind contributions, in addition to programme resources that are channeled on a regular basis to affected countries. UNDP would also build a consortium of key concerned organizations, including NGOs.

The World Bank said it was not asking to host the Global Mechanism. IFAD and UNDP have comparative advantages for hosting the Global Mechanism and the Bank could instead assist them in establishing it. The failure of the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, developed in 1977 by the United Nations Conference on Desertification, was partly due to the lack of political will and the inability to mobilize financial resources to support the Plan. The Bank could provide help through its global networks to mobilize financial resources. The Global Environment Facility (run jointly by UNEP, UNDP and the World Bank), the Bank's Consultative Group to Assist the Poorest (run by a number of organizations including IFAD) and the Global Water Partnership could provide good examples for the Global Mechanism. He said the Bank would like a lean structure with a council and a secretariat. The three organizations should be represented in the council, headed by the COP Chair. He stressed that the Bank's proposal did not indicate any financial resources and said he was available for further discussion with delegates during Tuesday afternoon's regional meetings.

During a half-hour Plenary Wednesday morning, Tanzania, on behalf of the G-77 and China, referred to the World Bank's proposal to assist IFAD and UNDP in hosting the Global Mechanism. He said the establishment of a Global Mechanism is an important step towards combatting desertification and that it is crucial to avoid the failure of the 1977 Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. It is also important to ensure that the Convention to Combat Desertification receives the same global attention given to the sister conventions on biodiversity and climate change, so that the CCD does not become a second class convention. The G-77 and China was pleased to learn that the World Bank is ready to assist in hosting the Global Mechanism, but wanted clarification on what kind of assistance that would be. Would the Bank contribute to financing? What resources would the Bank make available to the Global Mechanism? Will the Bank still assist if IFAD and UNDP do not co-host? The G-77 and China said a decision on the hosting of the Global Mechanism should be made on the basis of the offers from IFAD and UNDP. They welcomed the offer from the World Bank, but preferred that the Bank only assist. The G-77 and China recommended steps that should be taken. The Bank should submit a formal proposal on how the Global Mechanism could be hosted and spell out clearly the resources they are willing to provide. The Bank should also indicate, prior to COP-1, the assistance it had in mind and the three institutions should submit a joint proposal to COP-1.

The World Bank clarified its interest in co-hosting, but not housing, the Global Mechanism. He said he would take the G-77 and China's questions back to Washington. Kjellén suggested that the regional and interest group meetings immediately following the

Plenary should consider whether the INCD should ask for further documentation from the organizations regarding collaborative hosting arrangements, to facilitate a decision by the COP.

Delegates developed a draft decision, which the closing Plenary adopted. The draft was under negotiation up until Friday afternoon, and therefore was circulated in English only as an informal paper. It requests COP-1 to consider the offers of IFAD and UNDP and requests the Secretariat, in consultation with IFAD and UNDP, to develop proposals on administrative and operational modalities of the Global Mechanism. Finally, it invites IFAD, UNDP and the World Bank to consult on and develop a proposal for a possible collaborative institutional arrangement.

**GLOBAL MECHANISM — FUNCTIONS:** Chair Kjellén requested that Pierre-Marc Johnson (Canada) facilitate consultations deemed necessary on the Global Mechanism during the resumed INCD-10. The consultations commenced Wednesday night and exclusively focused on the two alternatives of paragraph 4(e) (in Appendix I of ICCD/COP(1)/5) on the function of mobilizing and channeling resources. This paragraph was the subject of negotiations in January and was left bracketed with two alternatives regarding whether the Global Mechanism would guide and direct all resources mobilized through the Convention or only those it was requested to guide and direct. Delegates agreed on a new paragraph 4(e) that was transmitted to COP-1 as document ICCD/COP(1)/5/Add.1. Thus, in mobilizing and channeling resources, the Global Mechanism would "guide and direct as requested [and as appropriate], the channeling and allocation of resources mobilized for the purposes of the Convention, including [its own] resources made available to it for its functioning and activities [, as defined in section A of this Appendix,] from bilateral and multilateral sources through the host and other organizations, in [a continuous,][and adequate,] predictable and timely fashion to local, national, sub-regional and regional levels for the implementation of action programmes, projects and activities to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought in affected developing country Parties, particularly in Africa."

**NGO INPUT:** NGOs were invited to make statements to the Plenary on Friday morning, 22 August. Hilde Bigaré (Friends of the Earth), on behalf of the NGOs at the resumed session, noted the importance of prioritizing and making effective use of existing resources, but stressed the necessity of substantial additional resources. She welcomed the World Bank's interest, but said it could have come earlier. The NGOs would like to see a greater emphasis in the CST on disciplines other than the physical sciences and urged countries to include NGO experts. The NGOs have submitted a request to the CCD Secretariat to incorporate NGO activities in the official programme of work during COP-1. She also said the role foreseen for women within the Convention's text is not sufficiently reflected in the number and quality of their representation in the structures and mechanisms of the Convention.

### **SPECIAL ACTION**

On Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning, 20 and 21 August, delegates heard a number of reports regarding interim activities in the Annex regions.

**URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA:** Morocco's national actions to combat desertification include: training of trainers, national workshops, a study to reconcile different implementation schemes, the creation of a national fund to combat desertification and a number of local-level projects that have been implemented with national funds and no outside assistance. Egypt welcomed all the ratifications of the CCD, but was disappointed that certain countries have yet to ratify. He encouraged NGOs to lobby their governments to ratify the Convention. He recommended that experts participate in establishing national action programmes and said it would be useful if developed countries could provide resources for these activities. He emphasized that the first meeting of the Committee on Science and Technology will set a



precedent for its future work and said its Chair should be an expert who is familiar with the scientific aspects of desertification and aware of its global character.

Djibouti deposited its instrument of ratification on 14 June. National activities since CCD adoption include workshops, observance of the World Desertification Day and implementation of the national action programme. He stressed that without a Global Mechanism the CCD will not be effective.

Benin noted that, in spite of being one of the first countries to hold a national forum, the process to elaborate the national action programme has slowed down to allow the farmers time for restitution. This work will be taken up again by the next dry season and finalized by April 1998.

Burkina Faso reported on the strategy they set up to: implement the CCD; establish partnerships with other stakeholder groups; and prepare and implement the national action programme. A national forum was held and institutional measures addressed. He gave detailed statistics of some of the meetings: 350 departmental steering committee meetings; 450 information sessions for 8000 villages; 30 provincial sessions; 10 regional forums involving 351 participants; and the first national forum of 184 participants. A methodological guide and a simplified and illustrative version of the CCD have been prepared. He thanked the donors that provided over US\$1 million for this strategy and suggested a review of the bilateral and multilateral procedures that, based on their experience, appeared inappropriate to the principles of the CCD. Burkina Faso also hosted a regional meeting in Ouagadougou, from 18 to 21 April, to prepare African participants for COP-1.

Senegal adopted new environmental laws in January 1997, including forest legislation, and is preparing a national action programme that should be concluded by the beginning of 1998. Côte d'Ivoire has devoted two weeks to awareness raising on desertification and the President has launched a new tree plan, which allows every person to plant a seedling.

Mauritania's strategy is to take an integrated approach to environmental issues in line with Agenda 21. All activities related to sustainable development are being taken into account while drawing up the national action programme, which should be concluded by February 1998. Niger has drawn up a national environment plan for sustainable development in which action against desertification is the core. An Asia-Africa forum will be held from 2 to 5 September 1997 in Niamey and a national forum will take place in October.

The OAU discussed the outcome of the recent Pan-African Conference in Ouagadougou. He said it allowed African decision makers to partially assess achievements so far and identify the difficulties that remain. He invited the international community and Africa's partners in development to give attention to the conclusions of that gathering. CILSS discussed a recent sub-regional meeting that identified eight priority areas. He said timetables have been established and the stages of implementation of the regional programme have been fixed. He also stressed that the Global Mechanism should be effective in mobilizing funds and said a lack of funds has meant that some national programmes have not been elaborated in a timely manner.

The EU noted the need to consider how to organize the discussion at COP-1 on measures to be taken to implement the resolution on urgent measures for Africa. He stressed the need to facilitate a dialogue between partners and aid receivers. Such a dialogue should cover issues including problems in formulating national action programmes, how to address links between poverty and desertification, and conflicts of interest in the drylands between different resource user groups.

**ACTION TAKEN IN THE ASIAN, LATIN AMERICAN AND THE CARIBBEAN, AND NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN REGIONS:** China reported on the Asian region ministerial meeting held in China, in cooperation with the INCD Secretariat, in May. The 187 delegates from 44 States focused on: reports of successful experiences in CCD implementation and progress in implementing the Asian

Annex; measures to facilitate the elaboration and approval of a national action programme; and a framework to revise international cooperation for the Asian Annex. The meeting adopted a framework for regional cooperation in six areas. A detailed report will be distributed at COP-1.

Syria reported it had elaborated a National Action Programme, which contains 32 projects. He highlighted some of the activities carried out, including the creation of a green-belt area covering 95,000 hectares. However, some efforts to combat desertification cannot be dealt with due to Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights. He asked the Secretariat to distribute Syria's request of 5 May, to host the Asian network at the Arab Centre for the Study of Arid Zones and Dry Lands in Damascus, and to consider this request as part of the official documentation for this session. Iran, as coordinator of the Asian Group, reported they had discussed the issue of elections of the COP-1 Bureau members that morning. He then reported on various activities undertaken in Iran and stated that a documentary on Iran's initiatives to combat desertification will be submitted to the Interim Secretariat. He indicated Iran's willingness to host the Asian network for CCD implementation, through the DESCONAP programme.

Israel has established a steering committee to structure a national action programme and commissioned an international school for desert studies, which will commence in October 1998. In March, Israel hosted a meeting on the synergies between the Rio conventions and the Statement of Forest Principles. Pakistan reported on various activities undertaken, including those in collaboration with NGOs and academics. Pakistan has prepared a national conservation strategy and is in the process of establishing an environmental act. The draft national action programme is being reviewed in light of contributions made at a national seminar held in Islamabad in April. Pakistan can provide its expertise on water-related issues in CCD implementation.

Armenia stressed the need for regional and sub-regional programmes, noting that there are signs of desertification in Armenia that could spread to the rest of the region. He said NGOs have played an important role in combatting desertification, in particular in poverty alleviation initiatives at various levels.

Cuba, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group and as Chair of their Executive Committee, reported on their third meeting held in Havana in March. He highlighted several planned CCD-related initiatives. Priority action will be given to Haiti. He reported that the region has reached a resolution on the CST: the Interim Secretariat should include within the budget the necessary resources to enable participation of experts from developing countries, and the CST should elaborate a list of indigenous technologies and practices, but observe intellectual property rights. He also said: affected countries should receive new and additional resources from donor countries; the Global Mechanism should play an active role in channeling resources; and the financial institution selected to house the Mechanism should indicate its capacity to mobilize resources for CCD implementation.

Haiti described the process initiated to elaborate a national action programme. The preparation and screening of an amateur video on the desertification process by a grassroots group in a Haitian region had resulted in a collaborative initiative by five NGOs. Peru has taken on commitments to deal with existing and prevent future problems. Its focus on desertification is in the broader context of the fight against poverty. Peru recognizes the important role played by universities and the growing role of NGOs in combatting desertification. Bolivia noted international, regional and national level CCD-related activities. National activities include legislation on land use, management and conservation. In October 1997, Bolivia will host a roundtable for national actors and international donors within the framework of the CCD. Mexico hosted the Region's Executive Committee meeting in June. Argentina is finalizing their national action programme and its Executive Committee includes representatives from the federal states, national agencies, experts and NGOs. It is also setting up a national committee on scientific and technical cooperation.



Portugal, on behalf of the countries of the Northern Mediterranean, reported on the activities of a regional Reflection Group set up to further the work of their Regional Implementation Annex. The Region hopes to foster collaboration with the Southern Mediterranean region and ensure that the EU takes up the issue of desertification. Spain will soon have a national action programme. It has financed activities of the Interim Secretariat and activities in many regions. Spain will continue to stimulate both bilateral and multilateral cooperation and is studying the possibility of making additional contributions to fund sub-regional programmes. Greece discussed several studies and activities it has been involved with in the last year. It established a committee on desertification that will support and coordinate research and elaborate a national action programme. Greece has organized, with UNESCO, a conference entitled "Environment and Society: Education and Public Awareness for Sustainability," which will take place from 8 to 12 December 1997 in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Russia is evaluating accession to the Convention and supports adoption of a fifth regional implementation annex for European countries. It is making efforts to realize the provisions of the CCD and is elaborating a national action programme. She offered to share Russia's experience with others and proposed establishing a teaching and data center on satellite monitoring of desertification.

Canada is making efforts to sensitize Canadians and others about desertification and drought issues. He discussed Canadian involvement in efforts to combat desertification and development of programmes of action in many regions. Canada recognizes and confirms the importance of the involvement of local populations in such activities.

Kjellén summarized the statements. He stressed the importance of urgent action for Africa, but added that it was encouraging to see action taking place in all regions. He highlighted the regional meetings and said reports will be distributed at COP-1. He also noted that many questions remain with regard to action. How can the affected populations be reached and how can we make the Convention better known?

#### ***STATUS OF SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION***

On Monday, 18 August, Executive Secretary Diallo told delegates that as of 31 July 1997, 107 countries had deposited their instruments of ratification. Of those, 43 are African, 19 Latin American, 25 Asian, and 20 OECD. Diallo said the ratifications provide unquestionable proof of the importance the international community attaches to the Convention's effective implementation. The ratifications also place responsibilities on the INCD. Diallo encouraged more ratifications and hoped for 120 by COP-1.

Kjellén said the countries that deposited their instruments of accession and ratification by 30 June 1997 will participate as Parties at COP-1.

The 108th ratification from Cambodia was received during the course of the session.

#### ***REVIEW OF THE SITUATION AS REGARDS EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS***

Executive Secretary Diallo updated delegates on the situation as regards extrabudgetary funds on Thursday morning, 21 August. He used the document prepared for COP-1, ICCD/COP(1)/4, and reported that for the resumed INCD-10 session, travel for 104 delegates from 65 countries was financed from the Special Voluntary Fund. Travel was financed through the Trust Fund for 37 NGO representatives. He listed the countries and amounts contributed to the extrabudgetary fund since January. He urged those with outstanding pledges aimed for COP-1 participation to make the transfers to enable timely administrative arrangements. Diallo noted that if all pledges are received, there will be effective participation of developing countries at COP-1. He also urged countries that have not submitted the names of nominated participants to do so by 31 August 1997 and to ensure that credentials are issued by competent authorities. The Interim Secretariat will not be

able to process last-minute nominations or changes in nominations. Luxembourg announced it is considering making a contribution to the extrabudgetary fund but could not indicate an amount.

Kjellén thanked those who have contributed to the Trust and Voluntary Funds and noted that the CCD is based on national action and the contributions have enabled the relevant people at that level to participate in the process and prepare for COP-1.

#### ***CLOSING PLENARY***

INCD Chair Kjellén called the seventh and final Plenary session to order at 4:30 pm on Friday, 22 August. Delegates proceeded to consider a number of draft decisions. Following adoption of the draft decision on the procedure for selection of the city to host the permanent secretariat (A/AC.241/L.40), Kjellén said the contact group on this issue agreed that each country would make a fifteen-minute oral presentation, without audio-visual aids, during COP-1. Each country will also host a reception and organize an exhibition.

Delegates also adopted a draft decision on the housing of the Global Mechanism. Following adoption, UNDP requested clarification on the call for the Secretariat, in consultation with IFAD and UNDP, to develop proposals on administrative and operational modalities of the Global Mechanism. He asked if this entailed a set of modalities for a single host and another for a co-hosting arrangement. He expressed concern that the Secretariat might have developed a preference for the housing arrangement, leading to unequal consultation. Executive Secretary Diallo rejected any allegation of impartiality.

Kjellén then introduced document ICCD/COP(1)/5/Add.1, which conveys to COP-1 agreements reached on paragraph 4(e) on the functions of the Global Mechanism. He said it represents many steps forward in defining the functions of the Global Mechanism and thanked Pierre-Marc Johnson for carrying out consultations on his behalf.

Kjellén said he had hoped the resumed session would develop recommendations for all COP-1 Bureau members, but the slate was not clean. The coordinators of the regional groups indicated the status of their deliberations for Vice-Presidential candidates. The African Group will recommend Mauritania, Tanzania and Uganda, one of whom could be appointed to chair the Committee of the Whole. The Latin American and Caribbean Group could not name the countries they will nominate, but they will recommend Cuba to chair the CST. The Asian Group will recommend Iran and Syria and recommend Iran as the rapporteur of COP-1. Armenia said the Eastern European Group will discuss the subject in New York. The Western Europe and Others Group noted that Italy will be elected President and will nominate Switzerland as a Vice-President. Delegates welcomed the Presidency of Italy with a round of applause. Italy said it is committed to kicking-off the Convention at COP-1.

Kjellén summarized elements he intended to include in his statement at the opening session of COP-1. He said the work of the INCD has been largely successful, which is reflected in the number of draft decisions to be taken at the COP. The INCD could not find solutions to all issues, but only the COP can make some decisions. An example is the Global Mechanism; the COP has to make a decision on the functions as well as identify the organization. The crucial questions in the programme and budget were not discussed by the INCD because delegations felt they needed more time to consider these issues. Kjellén further noted that the CST session has been thoroughly prepared for with an extraordinary package of decisions. The INCD has taken a decision on the active participation of NGOs and IGOs at the COP. The INCD recommendations regarding the work programme reflect the priority issues that need to be addressed at the COP. He also said there are links between COP-1 and 2. The first session will mark the end of a negotiating period and the second the establishment of a permanent secretariat before 1 January 1999. Egypt and Senegal have offered to host COP-2. He said it would be good to hold COP-2 in Africa. Finally, Kjellén stressed the close links with other conventions and the CSD's coming priorities of fresh water and land management give hope that attention will be given to desertification.



The EU, supported by Switzerland and Australia, gave advanced notice to delegates that substantial changes would have to be made in order for them to agree to the draft programme and budget, as contained in ICCD/COP(1)/3/Add.1. They were concerned with the Secretariat's staff increase from the current 24 to 43. They said the proposed budget, minus the likely costs of the Global Mechanism and the working capital reserve, will be in the range of US\$10 to 12 million and pointed out that the first budget of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity was US\$4.8 million. The Group of 77 and China said the EU statement came as a surprise because the session was not supposed to consider matters of substance. He said the INCD has always operated with transparency, but this INCD session had uncharacteristically lacked transparency, and pressure from a group of countries or a country had been allowed to prevail.

Regarding the programme and budget, the US said the staff numbers exceed the work programme and the focus should be at the local and national, and less at the regional, levels. He hoped to see more references to women as target groups for proposed activities and as members of the Secretariat staff. Tunisia hoped the G-77 and China's partners would reconsider their position regarding Secretariat staffing levels. Cuba expressed concern with the positions being set forth on the programme and budget. Benin said the draft programme of work and budget meets the concerns expressed by developing countries in January. Bolivia said the programme and budget is realistic and noted that it assigns only one civil servant to attend to 35 countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region. He asked the Secretariat to see if his region could receive due attention.

Israel said that since INCD-10, there had been a deliberate attempt to deprive Israel of being an equal party in the Asian Annex. During the resumed session, an Asian Group meeting had discussed substantive measures of concern to all members of the Asian Annex without Israel's participation. Syria, on behalf of the Arab Group, expressed regret that no country in his Group had been invited to the Second Asia-Africa meeting in Niger, but Israel had. He said Israel is not a member of the Asian Group and the Secretariat should stop attempts to include it. Iran supported Syria and, as Asian Group coordinator, thanked the Chair and Executive Secretary for their leadership.

India indicated his country's appreciation for the work of the Secretariat and Ambassadors Diallo and Kjellén. Panama, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, thanked the Chair, Executive Secretary and the Secretariat. Belgium, on behalf of the OECD countries, said the Chair's personal role had been crucial in the work of the INCD and thanked the Executive Secretary and Interim Secretariat for their support. Armenia thanked the Chair for keeping a focus on the CIS countries.

Canada highlighted the various forms of support his country has provided for desertification. The G-77 and China noted that the INCD had come a long way, although there are pending issues. In the decision reached on the hosting of the Global Mechanism there are still disagreements on the functions, but there is now a better understanding on how to move forward at COP-1. The EU said the Global Mechanism cannot be given control over the operational means of implementation. He said excellent progress had been made and his group looks forward to a fruitful Convention. He made a strong appeal to those who had not yet ratified the Convention to do so in the near future.

In response to delegates' comments, Diallo said the States decide how many people the Secretariat hires. He apologized if anyone thought the Secretariat was going too far or in the wrong direction. The Asia-Africa meeting is organized by Niger and Japan and they have invited a limited number of States. He assured delegates that the Secretariat is ready to work with them.

Prior to the departure of the translators at 6:30 pm, delegates adopted the report of the Committee for the resumed tenth session as contained in A/AC.241/L.39 and authorized Rapporteur Anatoli Ovchinnikov (Uzbekistan) to finalize it according to the decisions made during the closing Plenary.

UNEP reminded delegates of the United Nations Conference on Desertification held twenty years ago in Nairobi and UNEP's subsequent work on these issues. He said the support from the INCD Secretariat had been exceptional.

Sina Damba Maija (Association Formation Appui au Développement, AFAD), speaking on behalf of the NGO network RIOD, informed the INCD of the multiple activities carried out in all regions of the world since the Convention was adopted. Never before have environmental programmes had such large participation. There will be a meeting regarding women's participation in implementation in Dakar, Senegal, from 8 to 12 September 1997.

Chair Kjellén concluded that the INCD process had been a fantastic adventure and thanked everyone involved over the last five years, from his Secretariat colleagues to the UN plumbers, without whom the Convention would never have happened. He said the CCD is an expression of the development dimension of the Rio conference and of the faith that we can have in the future of Africa.

## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE RESUMED TENTH SESSION OF THE INCD

When INCD Chair Bo Kjellén gavelled the resumed INCD-10 session to a close, he concluded the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Desertification, five years after the UN General Assembly created it. Now the real work of the international community begins: facilitating and monitoring implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification. Complete consensus on how this must be done, however, has yet to be reached, as discussions at the resumed tenth INCD session demonstrated. While this session reached agreement on issues such as the selection procedure for the physical location of the permanent secretariat, other outstanding issues, such as the administrative host and functions for the Global Mechanism, still generated a great deal of debate. While delegates moved closer to text they could adopt at COP-1, their preferred priority issues for discussion at COP-1 remain to be reconciled.

**IMPRESSIONS OF THE RESUMED INCD-10:** "Are you here on vacation?" quipped one delegate to another as they waited for INCD Chair Kjellén to call to order the first Plenary, symbolizing the feeling of delegates who reluctantly agreed to attend this session in the middle of their summer vacations. The decision to have a resumed INCD-10, as opposed to an eleventh session, was a compromise. Developing countries felt that without 11 INC sessions, as the sister Framework Convention on Climate Change had, the CCD would be considered a second-class convention. Developed countries had felt the session would be a waste of funds.

The statements made during the opening Plenary demonstrated a divergence in expectations as delegates laid out their goals for the resumed session. Some expected more closure than others. Chair Kjellén called for the "pre-conference consultations" to accelerate agreement on the outstanding procedural issues and emphasized that no substantive issues that were transmitted to COP at the January INCD session could be re-opened for discussion. The EU noted the need to reach decisions on the programme and budget and administrative host for the Global Mechanism. The G-77 and China offered to negotiate all outstanding issues, specifically noting closure of matters related to the Global Mechanism and Bureau composition and size. Ironically, no procedural discussions were held as discussions gravitated to the substantive issues.

The meeting perplexed some participants. As late as Thursday, some delegates called it a non-meeting, pointing to the empty Plenary room. But by Friday afternoon, many had changed their minds, accepting that, despite the slow pace, important steps were taken. The meeting picked up Wednesday afternoon with most progress coming out of negotiations conducted behind closed doors.

Delegates subtly delved into substantive negotiations that were not initially on the agenda with a preference being demonstrated on the outstanding function of the Global Mechanism, an issue that many



delegates later acknowledged as the area where the greatest progress was made. Still, some felt the steps made could have been realized in January if there had been no prospect for another session.

**FUNCTIONS OF THE GLOBAL MECHANISM:** Compromises on the Convention text regarding the Global Mechanism were struck at the eleventh hour during the INCD's fifth session in Paris in 1994. However, they did not seem to solve certain sensitive issues that continue to surface. Therefore, at the INCD-10 and resumed INCD-10 sessions, consultations on this matter were carried out behind closed doors once again.

Many delegations noted that there was some "movement" in this area, although some were not sure that the agreements would still hold at COP-1. Statements made by delegates during the first few Plenary sessions indicated a high interest in discussing the subject. Consequently, Kjellén requested Pierre-Marc Johnson (Canada) to facilitate informal consultations on the Global Mechanism's fourth function: mobilizing and channeling financial resources. Johnson had co-chaired the difficult informal negotiations on finance during the Convention negotiations. The informal consultations at the resumed session resulted in agreement on one text about the Mechanism's function to guide and direct resources to all levels.

Some delegations noted that the outstanding differences will not be difficult to resolve because they are due to differences in the interpretation of the Mechanism's "own resources." Some interpreted this as resources that the Mechanism mobilizes, but others argued it meant other resources that the Mechanism's host organization may have mobilized for other anti-desertification programmes.

Varied reasons were advanced regarding why consensus was reached on this issue at this session. Some thought it was prudent to reach agreement now because there will be new negotiators at COP-1, mainly diplomats and politicians whose interests in regard to the Mechanism may differ from those of the technicians who negotiated the Convention. Others felt that some developing countries may have reviewed their positions, based on an analysis of what they would gain through decentralized versus centralized funding mechanisms.

**HOSTING OF THE GLOBAL MECHANISM:** Some described the World Bank's statement that it was interested in co-hosting the Global Mechanism as a "bomb." The announcement at the resumed tenth INCD session was a follow-up to World Bank President Wolfensohn's speech at UNGASS in June. At the resumed session, this position was elaborated to indicate interest in a joint hosting arrangement with IFAD and UNDP. Without a concrete indication of what the Bank was offering, delegates were frustrated and confused. To clarify the matter, the Bank's representatives held informal consultations with all interest groups, including NGOs. While some delegations acknowledged the positive contribution the Bank could make to the Mechanism, some described their offer as "too little too late." However, some noted that the involvement of the Bank could strengthen the effectiveness of the Global Mechanism, in particular in mobilizing resources, which is the Bank's comparative advantage over IFAD and UNDP. It appears the main reason the World Bank received positive consideration, despite not having submitted a bid before INCD-9, was that it is a major development player in a majority of the affected developing countries.

Delegates from all regions were divided about which of the two institutions, UNDP or IFAD, should house the Global Mechanism. The bases for selection that were provided by UNDP and IFAD were too dissimilar for effective comparison. IFAD offered financial resources and UNDP demonstrated its institutional and technical capacity in the field.

Although IFAD was very clear about the kind of institution they envision, they made many assumptions regarding the functions of the Global Mechanism, to the ire of some delegates. Others cautioned that IFAD's financial offers could be misleading because these are not new and additional resources and will still be controlled by IFAD's management. Further, the resources from IFAD that are being re-allocated are not grants but loans, raising questions about the position of the lenders.

By not making any assumptions regarding the functions of the Global Mechanism, the UNDP proposal sounded vague, but it also earned kudos from some quarters. A major UNDP advantage is that governments are not as worried about the COP losing control over the Global Mechanism based on UNDP's previous experience with arrangements of this nature.

There seemed to be agreement, even among NGOs, that neither institution would adequately fulfill the role the Global Mechanism is expected to play. The suggestion made by some in August 1995 at INCD-7 for submissions on co-hosting was finally realized with the adoption of a draft decision urging the World Bank, IFAD and UNDP to submit a proposal on possibilities for co-hosting. However, delegates were wary of the possibility of setting up an independent body, however small, because of the overhead costs.

**REGIONAL MEETINGS:** Although some delegations resented the slow pace of the resumed tenth INCD session, others appreciated the opportunity for regional groups to meet and develop their positions. Unlike many other UN processes, meetings of the G-77 and China and the OECD in New York cannot always be used to prepare for the Convention work because a majority of the INCD delegates are from their capitals and are not New York-based diplomats. Many of the developing country delegates cannot afford to travel to independent regional meetings. For many, this session was their only opportunity to meet and attempt to consolidate positions prior to COP-1.

The Groups began considering issues they want discussed at the COP. The G-77 and China expected to submit draft decisions regarding the review of implementation of the Convention and collaboration between the three sister conventions. The decisions were not prepared in time for circulation due to intensive last-minute negotiations on the Global Mechanism with other regional groups.

Many of the OECD countries reviewed the proposed programme and budget of the permanent secretariat, but exchanges between the two groups on these matters were limited since this topic was not supposed to be on the agenda. In fact, when the EU and others attempted to identify their concerns regarding the proposed secretariat staffing level and budget during the closing Plenary, the G-77 and China objected, stating that substantive matters were not to be discussed. Nonetheless, the OECD countries' statements and the developing countries' responses during the closing Plenary indicated some of the challenges delegates will face at COP-1.

**BREAKTHROUGH FOR NGO PARTICIPATION:** There is broad agreement that the uniqueness and strength of the Convention to Combat Desertification is the recognition of a "bottom-up" process in an international, legally binding agreement. In this regard, the active involvement of NGOs in all intergovernmental processes has received greater support than in past international negotiations. But some government delegations and NGOs were concerned that the FAO would organize the NGO and COP meetings in the same manner as they did the World Food Summit, held in November 1996, where NGOs had no access to delegates or to the official meetings. Following discussions on the issue in the extended Bureau and an afternoon session Thursday at which some delegates pleaded with the Secretariat to ensure active NGO participation at the COP, NGOs lobbying efforts were rewarded. INCD Chair Kjellén and Executive Secretary Diallo agreed, during a Thursday evening meeting with NGOs, that one afternoon during the High-Level Segment should be devoted to a dialogue between NGOs and delegates. NGOs will also be free to make interventions throughout the meeting, including during the High-Level Segment, and will not have to wait to be the last speakers of a session. NGOs said this would enable them to live up to their commitments and responsibilities as stipulated in the CCD.

**THE CHALLENGES AHEAD:** The outputs from the regional meetings at the resumed INCD-10 session are an indication that COP-1, which many expect to be characterized by declaratory statements, may also delve into substantive issues. The programme and budget especially promises to require substantial debate. Some noted that this element represents a greater dollar figure than the hotly contested Global Mechanism and they expected the debate would be propor-





tionate. The nature of the contributions, whether voluntary or assessed, is also an issue. Some indicated that the programme and budget may not be entirely resolved until COP-2. Additional COP-1 challenges foreshadowed by debate at the resumed session included the selection of the CST Chair, sustained priority for Africa and gender equality.

Many agreed that the first Committee on Science and Technology meeting will set a precedent for its future work. While most believed that the thorough INCD preparation for the CST meeting bodes well for its success, they stressed that the outcome is also contingent on having a Chair with a relevant scientific background.

With the first COP, the resolution on Urgent Action for Africa and the Interim Measures in other regions ceases. Some African delegates felt that COP-1 marks the end to this prioritization, as all affected countries will receive equal priority. Many delegates pointed out that Article 7 of the Convention ensures that the "particularity" attributed to Africa will not be lost. The challenge will be to allocate resources in a manner that emphasizes this priority while ensuring adequate resources for other regions. African Parties have indicated they will monitor implementation closely to be sure the priority is not lost.

Finally, on the threshold of COP-1, several delegates and NGOs raised concerns about the serious lack of gender balance in the four bodies whose activities will largely affect women: the Conference of the Parties, the Committee on Science and Technology, the Global Mechanism and the permanent secretariat. At the moment the INCD Secretariat only has two women in the professional category. Out of 584 nominations to the proposed roster of experts of the CST, only 70 are women. Although the subject has been raised intermittently in previous sessions, some delegates and observers at the resumed tenth INCD session encouraged NGOs to "push the bureaucracies," which never change by themselves. They noted that the ECOSOC policy document released in July 1997 on gender mainstreaming provides useful guidelines on gender equity.

**ENVIRONMENT VERSUS DEVELOPMENT INTO THE FUTURE:** Discussions at the resumed INCD-10 session in Geneva revealed different approaches that countries have taken towards the Convention. Many developed countries treat it as a development convention while developing countries stress its equality with the environmentally-focused biodiversity and climate change conventions. Delegates to the resumed session continued to debate their interpretations of the Convention language, especially as it relates to the Global Mechanism. These differences in interpretation may continue to cause some misunderstandings, like the ones plaguing the post-Convention INCD sessions. Developed countries often suggest a lack of initiative among affected developing countries to formulate the national action programmes, while affected developing countries charge there is a lack of response from donors. There is need to establish a "meeting point" for the development-cooperation planners from developed countries and environmental departments in affected developing countries.

When the INCD process started in Nairobi in 1993, UNEP stated that 900 million people were at risk from desertification. It is now estimated that the figure stands at 1 billion people. UNEP also estimated that US\$42 billion would be required over a 20-year period to combat desertification. The ten and a half INCD sessions cost approximately US\$5 billion, equivalent to the sum of money required to combat desertification for two years. Thus, not unlike other international negotiations and conferences, the INCD process has been criticized for being slow, non-substantive and an excuse for privileged people to travel the world. This accusation seems particularly justified in light of the fact that the Convention aims to improve the livelihoods of those affected at the grassroots level, who were largely absent in these negotiations.

In spite of these accusations, many delegates said the INCD's post-Convention negotiations provided the momentum that is needed to keep the issue alive before implementation begins. Furthermore, for the often over-worked and understaffed government delegates, the sessions were the only opportunity they had to jointly reflect on these issues. Kjellén noted the richness of discussions during the sessions,

which he attributed to the availability of funds that enabled developing country delegates from the capitals, with the relevant technical expertise, to participate in the sessions, instead of only diplomats from the missions.

The first Conference of the Parties marks the beginning of the actual implementation phase and with it an obligation to make good the promise of a "bottom-up approach" approach to enable local populations to decide how they should manage their drylands. The challenge for the Parties is to prove wrong the cynics who point to the failure of the 1977 Plan of Action to Combat Desertification and the financial waste conferences generate. This seems possible, for when the process started in 1991 few believed there would ever be a Convention to Combat Desertification.

## THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE AND DURING COP-1

**SECOND ASIA-AFRICA FORUM:** The second Asia-Africa Forum on CCD implementation will meet in Niamey, Niger, from 2 to 5 September, 1997. Contact: Claude Mottier, CCD Secretariat, Geneva Executive Center, 11/13 Chemin des Anémones, CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland; tel: +(41 22) 979-9419; fax: +(41 22) 979-9030/31; e-mail: Secretariat@unccd.ch.

**CILSS SUMMIT AND EXPERT MEETING:** An expert meeting, Council of Ministers and Summit of CILSS member States are scheduled to take place from 2 to 10 September 1997 in Banjul, The Gambia. Contact: Aboupakai or Gisse Meriam Issa, CILSS, BP 7049, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; tel: +(226) 03-62-51; fax: +(226) 31-19-82/31-58-37.

**RIOD WOMEN'S GROUP FOR AFRICA:** The NGO Network on Desertification (RIOD) Women's Group for Africa will meet from 12 to 14 September 1997 in Dakar, Senegal. Contact: Jacqueline Nkoyok, Coordinator of the RIOD Network on Women and Desertification, P.O. Box 6912, Douala, Cameroon; tel/fax: +(237) 40-26-02.

**FIRST CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION:** The first session of the Conference of the Parties of the CCD (COP-1) will meet in Rome, Italy, from 29 September to 10 October 1997. A High-Level Segment will meet from 7 to 10 October to hear statements from Heads of State and Government, ministers and heads of delegation. An exhibit of comic strips related to desertification and a media event are also planned. Contact: CCD Secretariat, Geneva Executive Center, 11/13 Chemin des Anémones, CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland; tel: +(41 22) 979-9419; fax: +(41 22) 979-9030/31; e-mail: Secretariat@unccd.ch.

**CCD COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:** The Committee on Science and Technology will meet in Rome, Italy, on 30 September and 1 October, in conjunction with the Conference of the Parties. Contact the CCD Secretariat (see above).

**NGO FORUM ON EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND INSTITUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE DRYLAND DEVELOPMENT:** The International NGO Network on Desertification (RIOD) will facilitate an NGO Forum in Rome, Italy, from 29 September to 10 October 1997 to bring together NGOs as a parallel event to COP-1 of the CCD. Contact: Baudouine Kamatari, Global Focal Point of RIOD, Environmental Liaison Centre International (ELCI), P.O. Box 72461, Nairobi, Kenya; tel: +(254 2) 56-20-15 / 56-04-76; fax: +(254 2) 56-21-75; e-mail: bkamatari@elci.sasa.unep.no or bkamatari@elci.gn.apc.org.

**INTERNATIONAL FORUM OF MAYORS ON DESERTIFICATION AND URBANIZATION:** The City of Rome and the CCD Secretariat are hosting meetings in Rome, Italy, in October 1997 concurrently with COP-1, to discuss strategies for decentralized cooperation in implementing the CCD in cities. Contact: N. Mattana, CCD Secretariat, Geneva Executive Center, 11/13 Chemin des Anémones, CH-1219 Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland; tel: +(41 22) 979-9419; fax: +(41 22) 979-9030/31; e-mail: nmattana.incd.@unep.ch.