



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

A Reporting Service for Environment and Development Negotiations

Vol. 4 No. 108

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

Wednesday, 1 October 1997

## HIGHLIGHTS OF CCD COP-1 TUESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 1997

Delegates to the first Conference of the Parties (COP-1) to the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) met in Plenary during the morning and afternoon. They addressed procedural and organizational matters and heard statements from several UN agencies and three countries bidding to host the Permanent Secretariat.

### PLENARY

**OPENING STATEMENTS:** Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo opened the Conference and thanked the Italian Government for hosting the meeting. Delegates elected Lamberto Dini, Italy's Minister for Foreign Affairs, as COP-1 President by acclamation. Dini said desertification is both a technical and a political issue. The Convention presents the best effort to effectively re-design North-South relationships and international cooperation. The COP-1 agenda is to define the implementation of the instruments of the CCD. Although a clear picture is emerging, the most relevant and sensitive issues remain. The provisions for the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) should enable the adoption of their programme of work and a North-South analysis of the problems of desertification.

Under-Secretary-General Nitin Desai spoke on behalf of Secretary-General Kofi Annan. He said COP-1 must ensure the Secretariat has the necessary resources to meet delegates' requirements and aspirations and stressed the importance of the decision on administrative arrangements for the the Global Mechanism. Desai noted that the CCD has brought together all parts of the UN system and has been a worthy development of the spirit of Rio. Amb. Bo Kjellén, Chair of the INCED, noted the important basis that the first CST will establish for the exchange of experience and networking. He stressed the need for a decision on the Global Mechanism so that it is operational by COP-2. He said the discussion on the programme and budget must be based on a shared conviction that a well functioning, efficient Secretariat is indispensable.

The Director General of the FAO, Jacques Diouf, noted the relationship between food security and sustainable development, and said the countries particularly vulnerable to desertification are those situated in arid and semi-arid areas. They account for 30 percent of the Earth's surface and have fragile ecosystems and scarce resources. Diouf outlined some CCD-relevant programmes that have been established by the FAO.

The Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), G.O.P. Obasi, said the WMO will take steps to ensure the availability of climatological and hydrological data;

promote the assessment and management of freshwater sources in affected areas; collaborate with other organizations and scientific-related climate programs; promote research on linkages between desertification and climate; and contribute to the development of indicators and benchmarks relevant to the CCD.

The President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Fawzi Al-Sultan, outlined the five challenges facing governments in the implementation of the CCD: ensuring the National Action Programmes respond to the needs of local communities and enhance local area development; disseminating technology and creating the required supportive environment and institutions; collaboration aimed at re-orienting the focus of poor farmers; and financing the operations of the CCD. IFAD offered to host the Global Mechanism, which needs a strong coalition, but for accountability should be housed in one organization. UNDP Assistant Administrator Anders Wijkman said, based on the definition of the Convention, their study shows that drylands are inhabited by 2 billion people, 80 to 85 percent of whom are from developing countries. UNDP offered to host the Global Mechanism and supported a collaborative arrangement to ensure the institutional commitment of other organizations. However, one agency should be selected for the day-to-day management. Whatever the option, the roles of the other collaborating institutions should be clearly defined to enable them to assume active roles.

Franklin Cardy, UNEP Director of Land, on behalf of the Executive Director, stressed the intimate linkage between poverty and desertification. UNEP will actively support CCD implementation, including the CST. He said the availability of adequate financing and total commitment at all levels are key to overcoming the problem. CCD Executive Secretary Diallo reviewed the CCD negotiation process and noted the extraordinary effort to ratify the Convention. He pointed to the recent fires in Southeast Asia and the El Niño effects as evidence of the need to act.

Colombia's Vice-President Carlos Lemos, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, said that, although the private sector is important for the Convention, governments, which negotiated the CCD, are responsible for mobilizing new and additional resources. Important factors contributing to desertification and needing attention include: globalization; the external debt of developing countries; trade in drugs in developed countries, which encourages deforestation; and technology transfer. The Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Calestous Juma, focused on institutional cooperation of the Rio conventions. Institutional cooperation heralds a new era in the links between international legal instruments and international technical agencies, in particular

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>, Tiffany Prather, J.D. <tprather@iisd.org> 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 (through CIDA) 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 with resources from BMZ). 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 Montreal, 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>.



in bringing their expertise and experience to bear on the implementation of sustainable development programmes at the national and local levels.

The Executive-Secretary of CILSS, Mariam Sidibé, stressed three activities essential to the effective implementation of the CCD: the establishment of a Global Mechanism; the establishment of a monitoring committee for the implementation of the CCD, similar to that of the Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); and adequate provision of financial resources for the Permanent Secretariat. Roy Stacy, Director of Club du Sahel, criticized the OECD for its fragmented efforts and duplicative initiatives regarding the CCD. Greater attention must be given to local level projects in order to prevent supply-driven development assistance. Also, given Africa's increased urbanization, artificial dichotomies between urban and rural societies must be abandoned.

Hassen Seoud, Director General of the League of Arab States' study center ACSAD, outlined ACSAD's research and findings and highlighted the capacity of the institution to provide research support to the Asian and North African regions. Dealkew Berke of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) outlined the achievements of the sub-region, including: ratification of the CCD by all countries of the region, except Somalia; convening of several awareness raising workshops; and assistance to member countries to implement the CCD.

Thomas Schaaf reviewed activities UNESCO has undertaken in response to the CCD. He called attention to the Education for All programme, and said the strengthening of scientific capacities remains a priority. Douglas Hykle, Deputy Executive Secretary for the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS), provided examples of CMS activities and noted their complementarity with CCD concerns.

Enoch Okpara, on behalf of NGOs attending COP-1, highlighted several important issues, including: a definition of the Global Mechanism acceptable to all Parties; setting up a NGO office in the Permanent Secretariat as part of its structure; and establishing a mechanism whereby NGO representation is ensured in any governing body that is concerned with the channeling of funds and the roster of experts.

**PROCEDURAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS:** COP President Dini stated that nine Vice-Presidents and the Chair of the CST would be elected and that they should be selected on the basis of equitable geographical representation and adequate representation of affected countries. The African Group proposed Mahmoud Ould el Ghaouth (Mauritania) as a Vice-President. Informal consultations continued throughout the day on the remaining Bureau members. Delegates established a Committee of the Whole and selected el Ghaouth as its Chair.

The COP adopted the rules of procedure, ICCD/COP (1)/2, with the exception of bracketed text. They agreed to apply provisionally rules 22 and 31 in relation to the size of the Bureau. The agenda and organization of work, ICCD/COP/(1)/1 and ICCD/COP(1)/1/Corr.1, were also adopted. CANADA, supported by ARGENTINA, SUDAN and NORWAY, noted the importance of information sharing between delegates and NGOs, and the COP agreed to move the dialogue on building partnerships for CCD to the first item for discussion on the afternoon of Thursday, 9 October. The terms of reference for the CST, ICCD/COP(1)/2, were also adopted.

Delegates accredited the IGOs and NGOs listed in ICCD/COP(1)/2/Corr.1 and ICCD/COP(1)/8. The ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT (AOAD), supported by SUDAN and SYRIA, requested permission to accede

to the CCD as an organization from the developing world. The Secretariat said it was awaiting the advice of the UN Office of Legal Affairs.

**PRESENTATIONS BY CANDIDATES TO HOST THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT:** Representatives from Montréal, Murcia and Bonn presented the benefits of location in their cities. Montréal is a bilingual city with a high quality of life. It offers co-location with the Permanent Secretariat for the Convention on Biological Diversity. Montréal's cost-of-living is lower than many European cities, with beneficial budgetary implications for Secretariat staff, overhead and conference costs. Spain is an affected country and has a wealth of knowledge in addressing the issue. Murcia boasts excellent health care, educational and banking facilities and pleasant temperatures year-round. Spain will provide US\$1 million for technical support to the Secretariat and office space for an indefinite period. Bonn offers rent-free co-location in the same building as the Permanent Secretariat for the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Bonn also offered to cover the initial costs for furnishings, setting up information technologies and relocation of staff.

### **IN THE CORRIDORS I**

The bidding for host city of the Permanent Secretariat is moving into full gear as the Parties to the CCD prepare to cast their votes on Friday, 3 October. The exhibition booths set up by each city offered interested delegates practical items. Spain provided a colorful shopping bag for the numerous documents delegates collected. Germany offered disposable cameras to take pictures of fellow participants at the first COP. Canada gave out t-shirts and, to a chosen few, canvas bags.

### **IN THE CORRIDORS II**

Many delegates and observers expressed fear that the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), which is scheduled to meet Wednesday and Thursday, 3 to 4 October, will be dominated by politically oriented members and never get down to "scientific business." Observers note that this has been a problem for the scientific meetings of the biodiversity negotiations. As the Plenary closed on Tuesday evening, the CST Chair had still not been chosen. An election is expected on Wednesday morning, meaning the already postponed CST meeting may not start until after lunch.

### **IN THE CORRIDORS III**

Discussions on which institution(s) should host the Global Mechanism continued as the COP looked to take a decision on the matter. IFAD and UNDP made their presentations in the Plenary Tuesday morning and some delegates expected the decision to be taken by the end of the first week. As requested by the resumed tenth session of the INCD, IFAD, UNDP and the World Bank met last week and developed a proposal on the possible collaborative institutional arrangements for the Global Mechanism. The result of that meeting will appear at COP-1 as a Conference Paper and may be circulated on Wednesday, 1 October.

## **THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY**

**COW:** The Committee of the Whole is expected to meet during the morning and afternoon to consider: recommendations of the INCD; the location of the Permanent Secretariat; Rules of Procedure; and the Global Mechanism. Following completion of informal consultations on the Bureau, a brief Plenary will be held to elect its members, including the Chair of the CST. The CST may then meet.