



# Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF CCD COP-1 WEDNESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 1997

Delegates to COP-1 heard statements in the High-Level Segment all day and considered draft decisions in the COW during the morning. They consulted informally on outstanding issues throughout the day. Consultations on the programme and budget continued into the night.

### PLENARY

Thirty-six speakers addressed the High-Level Segment, of which seventeen were ministers, five were deputy ministers and the remainder were other officials. SENEGAL offered to host COP-2 in Dakar during the second half of 1998.

**CCD AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** The importance of interdisciplinary approaches and coordination at all levels was emphasized by many speakers. Food security and poverty alleviation were stressed by many. CAPE VERDE said radical changes in the environment, such as desertification, have to be addressed with an operational and flexible system. ZIMBABWE noted the acceptance of desertification, viewed in the 1980s as an African problem, as an international problem requiring a global solution. He stressed the need to consider the social and economic ramifications of desertification. FINLAND noted the need for cooperation with other fora including the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, which officially started its work in New York last week. BANGLADESH said the correlation between desertification, food security, migration and the exodus to cities should be explored. PANAMA said its CCD-related efforts strengthen its other environmental commitments.

BURUNDI said that despite its efforts to combat desertification, its situation remains dire due to the country's social crisis. ANGOLA said the struggle to survive often means that environmental protection is overlooked. He asked participants to help end the war in his country.

**INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE:** DENMARK said that many CCD principles are in line with Danish development policy. Its activities include a recently approved project in Burkina Faso on the sustainable use of forest resources. SAUDI ARABIA's international assistance in recent decades included US\$367 million to IFAD and US\$70.6 million for development loans to 72 beneficiaries. MALAWI noted the importance of funding from the interim Secretariat to facilitate its participation in the INCD and COP-1 negotiations. MALAYSIA has extended assistance and training to developing countries, including those affected by desertification. The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY said it has consistently demon-

strated its commitment to fight desertification. An EC report for COP-1 reviews its policies and financial instruments, including the European Development Fund and funds for other regions.

**RESOURCE AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER:** ZIMBABWE called for new and additional resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies, particularly to Africa. MALAYSIA said there are sufficient resources available; the need is for political will to reallocate them to priorities recognized by the international community. TOGO stressed the need to speak of technology acquisition rather than transfer. ARMENIA said financial resources are needed to combat desertification. EQUATORIAL GUINEA said CCD Article 4, paragraph 2(b) needs to be properly implemented with regard to debt and supported the establishment of a national trust fund for the environment.

**GLOBAL MECHANISM:** INDONESIA said the establishment of the GM was paramount for the mobilization of financial resources and to ensure the transfer of environmentally sound technologies. BOTSWANA appealed for a GM that not only raises substantial funds but is also accessible and responsive to the needs of affected countries. ZAMBIA said that, while a proposal on implementing its NAP has been prepared, financial resources are required and called for the GM to become operational as soon as possible. BANGLADESH said the GM should have the power and mandate to mobilize funds on its own, instead of depending on multilateral or bilateral sources.

**CCD RATIFICATION:** POLAND said a new annex for Central and East European countries would accelerate the accession process of many countries in that region. The ARAB ORGANIZATION FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT is in a position to become a full party to the Convention.

**IMPLEMENTATION:** Most speakers described the environmental challenges their countries face and their governments' responses. KENYA described an extensive national programme, including activities at all levels and the establishment of institutions to implement the CCD, and said that this was impossible without international financial support. In addition to administrative and operational measures, LEBANON has enacted a law on forests that is the most stringent law of its type in an Arab country and organized courses on protecting the environment. KUWAIT's activities include the establishment of a network of observation and monitoring points to track shifting sand dunes and a desert studies programme at the University of Kuwait. MYANMAR discussed efforts to formulate its NAP. SENEGAL has established an Environment and Monitoring Center in Dakar, public forums, and

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actively pursues input from local communities. EGYPT has established an early warning system. GUINEA-BISSAU held its first national conference on the environment in 1996. It has established new institutions to address desertification issues and prepared a simplified text of the CCD. UZBEKISTAN is implementing a national programme to provide safe drinking water, increase the productivity of pastoral lands and develop alternative energies. BOLIVIA will hold a round table next month to present bilateral and multilateral donors with 26 projects. ERITREA's activities include a tree-planting project that involved high school students. MEXICO has established its Secretariat for Natural Resources, Environment and Fish to coordinate environmental policies in those fields as well as a public forum in the form of an *ad hoc* council. TURKMENISTAN discussed its efforts to elaborate a NAP, the authors of which investigated wise local uses and methods. The SUDAN has addressed its desertification problems for decades. Activities have included workshops for local technicians and workers and to increase public awareness. SWAZILAND stressed the importance of education over the development of sophisticated structures.

GREECE recently hosted a scientific conference that called for: constructive interaction between the scientific community and policy makers; information dissemination; a bottom-up approach to cooperation; and coordinated pilot projects. FINLAND will host a Ministerial Conference on the Environment for the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership on 28 November. MALAYSIA stressed South-South cooperation and said the Asia-Africa forum should be strengthened. EGYPT suggested the development of pilot projects with countries in the African region. PORTUGAL said the Annex IV countries are willing to share their experiences and noted collaborative activities with the community of Portuguese-speaking countries. EQUATORIAL GUINEA will host a regional workshop from 22 to 24 October 1997 that will address the management of environmental information.

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW met for two hours to review some outstanding issues in the draft decisions adopted *ad referendum* Tuesday, 7 October, and then adjourned to enable regional consultations on outstanding issues. Informal consultations on the budget continued late into the night. Chair El-Ghaouth said two decisions on the roster of experts that were inadvertently not transmitted to COP-1 would be put on COW's agenda on Thursday, 9 October.

**RELATIONS WITH THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACILITY:** The draft decision (ICCD/COP(1)/L.12) was agreed, with a minor amendment, except for a paragraph that was referred to the informal consultations on the budget because it mentions financing activities.

**PHYSICAL LOCATION OF THE PERMANENT SECRETARIAT:** The EU's suggestion to amend paragraph 3 of decision ICCD/COP(1)/L.4 to clarify that the Executive Secretary should act "for and on behalf of the UN Organization," when negotiating an agreement with the hosting government of Germany, generated lengthy debate as to whether the negotiation was a bilateral or tripartite agreement. The paragraph was left pending to enable delegates to consult related text on the climate change and biodiversity conventions.

Regarding relocation to Bonn, it was agreed to amend paragraph 6 "so that" the Permanent Secretariat starts operating on 1 January 1999, even if it has not relocated by that date.

**ADMINISTRATIVE AND HOUSING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE GLOBAL MECHANISM:** John Ashe and Pierre-Marc Johnson, co-chairs of the informal, open-ended group,

reported that agreement was reached on the two draft decisions on the organization to host the GM and collaborative institutional arrangements in support of the GM. However, the specific host organization was still not decided. The COW adopted the revised draft decisions without objections. Chair El-Ghaouth appealed to delegates to decide during COP-1 which institution would host the GM.

**DATE AND VENUE OF COP-2:** The African Group proposed Dakar, Senegal, as the venue for COP-2. The G-77 and CHINA noted that consultations with the UN in New York on the dates were still under way. The COW agreed to Dakar by acclamation, but suspended discussion of the decision (ICCD/COP(1)/L.2) pending the provision of the dates.

**PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COP:** Regarding the programme of work of COP-2 (ICCD/COP(1)/L.5), the EU said: it was satisfied with putting the programme and budget on the COP-2 agenda; suggested deleting the reference to the draft decision on the committee for implementation (A/AC.241/L.42) because it pre-judges on-going discussions on the matter; and said their amendments to subparagraph 3 (b) and (c) made Tuesday should remain. With these amendments, the draft decision was adopted.

**DRAFT DECISION ON BEHALF OF THE LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP:** The EU noted the draft decision (ICCD/COP(1)/L.14) on activities related to implementation of the CCD in Latin American and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) contained very good ideas. To avoid a proliferation of similar draft decisions at COP-1 and 2 from other regions with implementation annexes, the EU amended the text so that it covers the other regional implementation annexes. GRULAC said it had set up a regional committee that could consider these proposals, and discussion of the decision was deferred.

**INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS:** A 60-minute, open-ended informal consultation considered the G-77 and China draft decision (A/AC.241/L.42) on the establishment of a committee to review implementation of the Convention (CRIC). The discussion focused on: the necessity for the Committee and whether it is the most effective mechanism; the timeliness of establishing a review mechanism in light of unfinished work of the CST on benchmarks and indicators and regularity of COP meetings; cost; and whether it goes beyond the mandate of the Convention. The group prepared a draft decision for consideration by their groups. It suggests deferring discussion of the subject until COP-3 and to transmit A/AC.241/L.42 to COP-3.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates have emphasized the sensitivity of the process to select the institution to host the Global Mechanism. Concerted negotiations on the issue continued in the regional groups. Many delegates noted that there is a general consensus to select the institution that the African Group proposes. Some said this was only fair, given the CCD's particularity for Africa. Some think the absence of a consensus decision from Africa could result in an intervention by other regions on the decision. Other delegates stressed the urgent need to reach a decision on this matter, to end the COP on a good note.

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**PLENARY:** 20 speakers are expected during a morning meeting of the High-Level Segment. The afternoon Plenary will meet from 14:30 to 17:30 to discuss building partnerships.

**COW:** The Committee is expected to meet in the morning to adopt its draft decisions.