



Earth Negotiations Bulletin

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#7

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM CCD COP-3 MONDAY, 22 NOVEMBER 1999

Delegates to COP-3 heard statements during morning and afternoon Plenary sessions and discussed the proposal to add a regional implementation annex, among other issues, during an afternoon session of the COW. An Interparliamentary Round Table also convened to discuss contributions parliamentarians can make to CCD implementation.

PLENARY

Thirty-six officials, including 17 Ministers and Deputy Ministers and three heads of UN agencies, addressed the Special Segment. CCD Executive Secretary Diallo noted that while previous COPs addressed mechanisms for implementation, COP-3 is the first meeting where national reports on CCD implementation have been considered. He called on Parties to intensify support to developing countries. COP-3 President Sarney Filho (Brazil) expressed Brazil's hope for a Mandate that includes a declaration of commitments for the next 10 years focusing on energy, water management, reforestation and afforestation, traditional knowledge, early warning systems and indicators to assess CCD implementation, and involves governments, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, the private sector and all other relevant actors. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, in a statement delivered by UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer, said it would be a mistake to say the CCD concerns only developing countries, given its links to climate change, biodiversity, famine and social and political conflict. He expressed hope that COP-3 would strengthen the commitment to implement the CCD at all levels. For UNEP, Töpfer underlined the close linkages between desertification and poverty, and stressed that strategies to improve the environment should build on the wisdom of women and cooperation with all stakeholders. He highlighted UNEP's activities to combat desertification, including support to regional coordination units in Latin America, Africa and Asia and cooperation with the Global Mechanism (GM).

IFAD President Fawzi Al-Sultan recalled that no official funding was provided to the GM in 1998 and that, without consultation with IFAD, the initial requested budget of US\$3 million for the GM was set at only US\$1 million. He said that, had IFAD been aware the GM would be inadequately funded, it would have withdrawn its offer to house the GM. He urged the COP to ensure that the budget, as proposed by the GM, is met to enable it to carry out its mandated function. GEF CEO Mohamed El-Ashry drew attention to the GEF's new operational programme for integrated ecosystem management and to a new partnership forged with its implementing agencies on land and water degradation with initial emphasis on Africa. Following the GEF and CCD Secretariat's

collaborative efforts, a "linkages" paper that includes an action plan for support and involves a participatory approach was developed and will be presented to the GEF Council in December.

The G-77/CHINA noted that developing country Parties place a high priority on their responsibilities and expressed hope that the developed countries' failure to participate at senior Ministerial levels does not reflect a faltering of political will. KENYA noted that, despite the record number of ratifications, there is a loss of momentum in the process. BURKINA FASO expressed dismay that during the first week of COP-3, many countries seemed to shrug-off commitments made during the negotiation of the Convention.

KENYA said the African national reports were produced cost effectively and efficiently and that they provide useful experiences to other regions. Regarding CCD implementation, the EU said delegates should not miss the opportunity to examine the lessons learned by diverting too much conference time to less important issues. MALAWI and MALI proposed establishing a committee to review implementation.

Several Parties, including MALI, NIGER, LESOTHO, CAPE VERDE and NEPAL, highlighted similarities between the Rio Conventions and recognized the benefits of coordinating their implementation. The EU said the search for synergies should be a major objective of national and community-level implementation.

The EU said the GM should give priority to mobilizing existing resources. MALI, with SENEGAL, MALAWI, BURKINA FASO and EGYPT, urged Parties to increase support to the GM to enable it to fulfill its mandate. MAURITANIA said it should have three working groups for each affected region and should organize regular meetings in each sub-region in Africa to elaborate the modalities of operation and facilitate access to funds. BURUNDI said the GM should establish a communication system to report on the results of its activities. NEPAL said the GM could play a constructive role in NAP articulation and implementation. CAPE VERDE and BENIN underscored effective coordination of the GM and the Secretariat.

GHANA, MOROCCO and BURUNDI recommended strengthening the Secretariat to enable it to fulfill its mandate and called for the approval its budget. MAURITANIA supported adopting a medium-term strategy for the Secretariat giving priority to Africa. CHINA proposed adopting the strategy by COP-4. MYANMAR said regional coordinating units would play an important role in promoting regional coordination and effective RAP implementation, while LESOTHO proposed including their funding in the CCD budget. TAJIKISTAN appealed to the Secretariat for financial support to organize a coordinating meeting in Bangkok for the Asian region. MALAWI encouraged governments to strengthen

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NGOs as a means of promoting democratization. KENYA supported decentralization and, with ERITREA, active participation of local communities, women and youth groups.

Several Parties appealed to developed country partners to make available new resources to assist affected countries in CCD implementation. KENYA called on the GEF to include land degradation as one of its focal areas. BENIN added that the GEF should operate as the finance mechanism for all Rio conventions.

ROMANIA and INDIA emphasized the need to intensify work on geographical data systems and databases for monitoring. TANZANIA called for a well-elaborated process to ensure incorporation of traditional knowledge and EWS into CCD implementation. UZBEKISTAN highlighted the worsening environmental situation in the Aral Sea region and, with MALAWI and ARMENIA, supported elaborating a fifth annex to the Convention for Central and Eastern Europe. He added that this would promote interregional cooperation in CCD implementation and reflect the needs of these countries.

Many Parties highlighted the link between poverty and desertification. GHANA said that poverty was exacerbated by negative impacts of globalization and trade and, with BRAZIL, called on the WTO to review trade practices having adverse effects on developing country economies. MOROCCO noted that affected countries have not adequately mobilized the necessary resources because of their debt repayment burden. EGYPT linked success in combating desertification with concrete improvements in the living standard of affected peoples.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

ADDITIONAL REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION ANNEX TO THE CONVENTION (ICCD/COP(3)/16): The Secretariat reviewed efforts since COP-1 to develop a regional implementation annex for Central and Eastern Europe. Bo Kjellén (Sweden), who facilitated consultations on this issue, said the proposal for an additional annex highlights the Convention's universality. The EU encouraged all countries of the region not yet CCD Parties to accede as soon as possible to facilitate adoption of the annex at COP-4. The G-77/CHINA reiterated support for the annex provided that those countries accede to the Convention. The AFRICAN GROUP indicated it would have small amendments to the draft decision. The LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN GROUP stated it would express views regarding Bureau membership once the annex is adopted and supported equitable geographical membership. SWITZERLAND and CANADA welcomed the draft annex. Kjellén will facilitate consultations on the draft decision.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR COP-4 AND COP-5: COW Chair Ashe said the Secretariat had prepared a draft decision on this issue. The draft includes COP-4 reviews of, *inter alia*: reports on implementation by affected country Parties, SRAPs and RAPs of regions other than Africa; the report of the GM; CCD implementation financing by multilateral agencies and institutions; activities to strengthen relationships with other relevant conventions; and programme and budget. Franklin Moore (US) will facilitate consultations on this draft.

MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY: Michael Ellis (UK) introduced a draft decision, noting that the main operative element takes note of the Secretariat's revised medium-term strategy and annexes it to the decision for information. The text also requests the Secretariat to: establish priorities in its programme of activities; compile, summarize and synthesize all reports on implementation; and report on its activities at COP-6. The draft was adopted with minor amendments.

COOPERATION WITH OTHER CONVENTIONS: Franklin Moore (US) introduced a draft decision and said Iceland had proposed an amendment requesting the Executive Secretary to give attention to the next FCCC COP, which will discuss issues related

to land use, land-use change and forestry. The draft decision requests the Executive Secretary to also give attention to the next CBD COP, which will discuss a work programme on dryland biodiversity, and to work with other conventions to facilitate the exchange of scientific and technical information. Delegates adopted the draft.

REVIEW OF CONVENTION IMPLEMENTATION: Franklin Moore (US) reported that divergent views remain on this issue and asked the G-77/CHINA, EU and JUSCANNZ to actively consult.

INTERPARLIAMENTARY ROUND TABLE

Forty-three Parliamentarians from 23 countries participated in a round-table session to discuss the role Parliamentarians can play in combating desertification at the national level. Building on the round-table session in Dakar at COP-2, they reaffirmed their commitment to designing educational, scientific and cultural policies for CCD implementation. COP-3 President Sarney Filho underlined the responsibility Parliamentarians have, as elected officials, to give particular consideration to the human condition, particularly the high social costs related to desertification problems. Jaime Trobo, Intergovernmental Parliament Union, noted the importance of parliamentary involvement in the CCD process through the strengthening of institutional and legislative frameworks. Michel Temer, President of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies and elected Chair of the round-table session, noted the need for governmental actions to combat desertification and highlighted the importance of public hearings, governmental commissions, and national debate to address desertification problems.

In a session chaired by Senator Grant Chapman (Australia), parliament members highlighted, *inter alia*, the need for: countries that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so as early as possible; further involvement of civil society and local communities, particularly through attention to the role of women; capacity building through education, awareness campaigns and dissemination of best practices; strengthening legislative and institutional frameworks; applying modern technology, such as biotechnology; and further financial and technical assistance.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The arrival of many familiar faces for COP-3's second week buoyed some participants' hopes that the institutional memory and negotiating skills they bring will invigorate COP-3 deliberations. However, some still expect a long week of informal consultations, particularly on the programme and budget and procedures to review of Convention implementation. Delegates report that some programme and budget issues must await final decisions on other issues – such as implementation and the GM – as well as resolution of several contentious debates, including whether funds can be moved between budget item lines and the overall funding level for the GM and Secretariat. Informal discussions on Convention implementation have reportedly focused on whether to create a new committee, with some compromise proposals suggesting alternatives for its composition among other aspects.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Special Segment will convene during morning and afternoon sessions. Forty speakers are scheduled to address the COP.

COW: The COW will meet at 10:00 am with a view to adopting decisions on outstanding issues.

INTERPARLIAMENTARY ROUND TABLE: Parliamentarians will continue their discussion and work on a proposed draft declaration during morning and afternoon sessions.