



HIGHLIGHTS FROM CCD COP-3 THURSDAY, 25 NOVEMBER 1999

COP-3 delegates met in Plenary during the morning to adopt the CST's six draft decisions. They also heard statements from two observers. Informal consultations continued throughout the day on outstanding draft decisions on the programme and budget, the Global Mechanism (GM), the Recife Initiative, the inclusion of NGO's activities in the official programme of work of the COP, procedures for review of implementation and the review of national reports. Delegates left the Pernambuco Conference Center at 10:15 pm with several issues still outstanding.

PLENARY

CST Chair Munemo (Zimbabwe) introduced the CST's six draft decisions for Plenary consideration.

The decision on the Roster of Independent Experts (ICCD/COP(3)/L.1) was adopted without comment. This decision invites Parties to supplement their submissions to the Secretariat for inclusion in the roster with the aim of making it more balanced in terms of gender and ensuring better representation of all relevant disciplines. It includes an amended list of the disciplines, as contained in an annex to the decision. Parties are invited to report to the Secretariat before 30 June 2000 on their use of the roster. The Secretariat is requested to ensure that an updated roster is made available in electronic format, to distribute a paper copy of the roster to Parties on an annual basis and to inform CST-4 on how the roster has been used.

The decision on Benchmarks and Indicators (ICCD/COP(3)/L.2) was adopted with a technical correction. This decision urges Parties to initiate testing of the impact indicators that the panel that acted as a steering committee to the open-ended informal consultative process on benchmarks and indicators proposed. It also encourages the use of these indicators as well as the use of numerical indicators that enable comparison in national reports to COP-4. Parties and other countries and international organizations in a position to do so are urged to mobilize technical, scientific and financial support for the affected country Parties and to initiate the testing of impact indicators.

The decision on Traditional Knowledge (ICCD/COP(3)/L.3) was adopted by consensus. Six of the ten nominations for the *ad hoc* panel were presented for adoption: Mohammad Jafari (Iran); Falah Abounukta (Syria); Ashot Vardevanian (Armenia); Dumitru Mihail (Romania); Amadou Maiga (Mali); and Etumesaku Diunga-

numbe (Democratic Republic of Congo). The Western Europe and Others and Latin America and the Caribbean Groups are expected to present their nominations on Friday. This decision requests the Secretariat to develop a closer working relationship with related institutions and to generate synergies through collaboration, including fostering linkages between the national focal points of the different environment conventions and facilitating the dissemination of information about actions to implement the conventions. Parties are invited to include in their national reports the use made of traditional knowledge in NAP implementation. The decision also appoints an *ad hoc* panel to develop further appropriate criteria in line with future work on benchmarks and indicators, to be used by national focal points so as to: measure the reciprocity between traditional and modern knowledge; assess how networks and mechanisms created by the Secretariat are incorporating traditional and local knowledge in their work programmes; and assess the socio-economic and ecological benefits of traditional knowledge in light of environmental changes.

Concerning the decision on Early Warning Systems (EWS) (ICCD/COP(3)/L.6), the EU proposed removing from the terms of reference the call for the *ad hoc* panel on EWS "to suggest a medium-term strategy for convention implementation." He suggested that the call for the *ad hoc* panel to take into account the results of the UN Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (UNDNDR) be replaced with a call to cooperate with the follow-up to the UNDNDR. The decision was adopted with these amendments. The Chair noted that six of the ten nominations for the *ad hoc* panel were ready for adoption: Kazuhiko Takeuchi (Japan), Zengyuan Li (China), Richard Muyungi (Tanzania), Abdelah Ghebalou (Algeria), Valentin Sofroni (Moldova) and Giorgi Gotsiridze (Georgia). The Western Europe and Others and Latin America and Caribbean Groups had not yet submitted nominations. The final decision establishes an *ad hoc* panel comprised of ten experts to review and elaborate on technical topics emerging from national reports and regional forums, specifically concerning data collection, accessibility and integration, as well as evaluating and prediction drought and desertification by offering measures for preparedness in cooperation with UNDNDR. The text also invites relevant institutions from each thematic programme network to provide experts and/or reference materials to support the panel and requests the Secretariat to facilitate its functioning.

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In the preamble of the decision regarding the survey and evaluation of existing networks (ICCD/COP(3)/L.7), the EU said the text noting the contractual arrangements between the Secretariat and UNEP should indicate that they pertain to Phase 1. The US proposed specifying that "Phase 2" will require a pilot approach. The LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES suggested recognizing the efforts of bodies in addition to UNEP on Phase 1. Delegates agreed to note the efforts of UNEP and its consortium for their work to date. They adopted the decision with this and the EU and US proposals, whereby they: support a Phase 2 focusing on the Southern African region; request the Secretariat to draft the terms of reference for Phase 2, which are to be approved by the CST Bureau at its intersessional meeting; request UNEP to submit an update of its report on Phase 1; and authorize the Secretariat to open the tendering process for contractors to implement Phase 2.

On the decision regarding the Programme of Work of the CST (ICCD/COP(3)/L.8), the EU stressed following earlier COP decisions and proposed a new paragraph, which he said was based on an issue raised throughout the Committee. His proposed text called for CST-4 to review the country reports regarding implementation in the Asian and Latin American regions to allow the CST to give its scientific and technical input to the review process according to paragraph 18 in Decision 11/COP-1. CANADA suggested bracketing the EU's proposal. ALGERIA suggested that CST-4's consideration of sustainable soil and water management in dryland areas should include "arid and semi-arid" areas. ROMANIA suggested that the consideration include "forest management" as well. The CST Chair noted that the Committee had thoroughly discussed the decision as drafted. Delegates took note of the EU's proposal and adopted the decision without any amendment. In the adopted decision, the priority issue to be addressed in depth by CST-4 shall be applications of traditional knowledge, benchmarks and indicators and EWS to the monitoring and assessment of sustainable soil and water management in dryland areas for effective implementation of NAPs, taking into account complementary work done by other conventions. CST-4 will also discuss the topics on the CST-3 agenda, including benchmarks and indicators, traditional knowledge and EWS. The Secretariat is requested to facilitate the convening of at least one intersessional CST Bureau meeting for the review of COP decisions and planning and organization of the next CST session.

STATEMENTS BY PARTIES AND OBSERVERS:

AUSTRALIA said it is in the last stages of the decision to ratify the CCD and that, subject to this decision, it could be interested in hosting a future COP. She highlighted national efforts to address dryland issues in Australia, including a national land-care programme that is attracting interest as a model for other countries. She also noted overseas development assistance activities, including support for NAP elaboration. YEMEN noted that desertification is a serious problem for most areas of the economy, notably agriculture, and is a cause of social problems and poverty. He also noted the importance of expediting effective action to implementing activities related to combating desertification, which are an integral part of the national development plan of Yemen. He added that this plan and related activities are not only pursued by government agencies, but also involve local communities, NGOS and women's groups. He expressed hope that the Secretariat, multi-lateral and bilateral donors would support his country's efforts.

UPDATE ON INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

Delegates concluded informal consultations on a draft decision for the first review of policies, operational modalities and activities of the GM, which will be recommended to the Plenary for adoption on Friday. This draft decision reaffirms that the GM will function under the guidance of the COP and be accountable to it, and recognizes that the GM's first priority is to develop its operations as a demand-driven mechanism to facilitate resource mobilization and channeling for the elaboration and implementation of action programmes. On the GM's operational modalities, the draft includes a recommendation that the GM Managing Director complete the recruitment of staff before COP-4. It also includes a decision to have further consideration of the GM's operational strategy at COP-4 and a recommendation that the GM develop an information and communication strategy aimed at facilitating contact with Parties and other actors and increase awareness of the CCD. It further invites the Facilitation Committee to explore the possibility of inviting an NGO representative to attend its meetings and to report to COP-4 on the decision taken on the issue.

IN THE CORRIDORS I

Rumblings of concern and continued disappointment rolled through the corridors on Thursday afternoon as delegates continued trying to resolve the impasse on the budget. Some speculated that these discussions could continue until late Friday night and said the problem lay among delegates who constantly shifted "the goal-posts" when consensus appeared within reach. Others criticized the lack of transparency in how the negotiations were proceeding and said the decision to defer most issues to informal consultations before they were adequately dealt with in the COW has contributed to the difficulties now being faced. Whatever the reasons given, many seemed to agree that a main problem lay in the failure to discuss the national reports from affected countries, including those of the donor countries, as a basis to setting the priorities for the budget in the next biennium.

IN THE CORRIDORS II

NGOs circulated a paper voicing their concerns over the budgetary support to the CCD, whereby they expressed deep concern with the delay in the discussions on the issue and regretted the decrease in donor support for their participation at the COP. They called for increased support for NGO participation, as well as for NGO activities in affected countries and the budgetary requirements of the affected developing countries in implementing the NAPs, and also in reaching agreement on efficient reporting mechanisms.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Plenary is scheduled to convene at 10:00 am to consider for adoption decisions on all outstanding issues and the report of CCD COP-3.

Please note: The final ENB summary report of CCD COP-3 will be available on 29 November 1999 at the following website: <http://www.iisd.ca/desert/cop3/index.html>.