



SUMMARY OF THE THIRD CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 15-26 NOVEMBER 1999

Delegates to the Third Conference of the Parties (COP-3) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) met in Recife, Brazil, from 15-26 November 1999. The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) met in parallel to the COP from 16-19 November. Delegates approved the long-negotiated Memorandum of Understanding between the COP and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) regarding the Convention's Global Mechanism, welcomed progress made on a draft implementation annex for Central and East European countries, and created *ad hoc* panels to undertake intersessional work to facilitate the CST's consideration of traditional knowledge and early warning systems, among other decisions.

The general mood of those participants still at the Pernambuco Conference Center when the meeting adjourned at 2:10 am on Saturday, 27 November, however, was one of disappointment due to the missed opportunities and tensions that pervaded the meeting. Many participants came to Recife expecting to discuss and review CCD implementation, based on the impressive number of national reports submitted to COP-3 by African country Parties. Instead, delegates found themselves focused on questions related to the structure of the Convention, primarily the role of the Secretariat and the procedures and mechanisms to review implementation in the future. The discussions on the Secretariat's role took place in the context of decisions on the medium-term strategy of the Secretariat and the programme and budget. On the review of implementation in the future, delegates considered a proposal to create a new committee to that end and another on issues to be addressed in the national reports.

Some believed that the tensions and mistrust generated during the meeting may have set back the Convention and its tradition of a strong spirit of partnership. COP-4 is scheduled to receive reports on implementation in the Latin American and the Caribbean, Asian and the Northern Mediterranean regions, so a full review and true turning point in the life of the Convention, from establishing structures to implementing the Convention, may have to wait until COP-5. Yet some believe that the implementation of the Recife Initiative, which calls on COP-4 to adopt a declaration on commitments, may provide an opportunity to revitalize the CCD processes.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONVENTION

The Convention to Combat Desertification was adopted on 17 June 1994 and was opened for signature in October 1994 in Paris. It entered into force on 26 December 1996. To date, 159 countries have ratified or acceded to the CCD. The Convention recognizes: the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of desertification; the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand-driven; and the involvement of local populations. The core of the CCD is the development of national and subregional/regional action programmes by national governments in cooperation with donors, local populations and NGOs.

NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION: 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 Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the elaboration of a convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa (INCD). The INCD met five times between May 1993 and June 1994, during which delegates drafted the Convention and four regional annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean.

THE INTERIM PERIOD: Pending the CCD's entry into force, the INCD met six times between January 1995 and August 1997 to hear progress reports on urgent action taking place in Africa and interim measures in other regions and to prepare for COP-1. The prep-

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the Convention	1
COP-3 Report	2
Plenary Deliberations	2
Committee of the Whole	4
Committee on Science and Technology	9
Recife Initiative	11
Inter-Parliamentary Round Table	11
Closing Plenary	11
A Brief Analysis of COP-3	12
Things to Look For Before COP-4	13

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arations included discussion of the Secretariat's programme and budget, the functions of and administrative arrangements for the Global Mechanism and the establishment of the CST. Although considerable progress was made, especially on scientific and technological cooperation, some important issues, such as the size and membership of the COP Bureau, questions about the host institutions and some functions of the Global Mechanism, remained unresolved.

COP-1: The First Conference of the Parties (COP-1) met in Rome, Italy, from 29 September to 10 October 1997. The CST held its first session simultaneously on 2-3 October. The COP-1 and CST-1 agendas contained primarily organizational matters. Delegates selected Bonn, Germany, as the location for the Permanent Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as the organization to administer the Global Mechanism. At the CST's recommendation, the COP established an *ad hoc* panel to oversee the continuation of the process of surveying benchmarks and indicators and decided that CST-2 would consider linkages between traditional knowledge and modern technology. One Plenary meeting was devoted to a dialogue between NGOs and delegates. Delegates subsequently adopted a proposal that Plenary meetings at future COPs be devoted to similar NGO dialogues.

COP-2: The Second Conference of the Parties (COP-2) met in Dakar, Senegal, from 30 November to 11 December 1998. The CST met in parallel to the COP from 1-4 December. Delegates approved arrangements for the institutional linkage between the Convention and the UN Secretariat and the headquarters agreement with the German Government, where the CCD Secretariat moved in early 1999. The COP approved adjustments to its budget and adopted the outstanding rules of procedure concerning bureau members, but retained bracketed language regarding majority voting absent consensus. East and Central European countries were invited to submit to COP-3 a draft regional implementation annex. The CST established an *ad hoc* panel to follow-up its discussion on links between traditional and modern knowledge. Delegates considered, but deferred to COP-3, decisions on the Secretariat's medium-term strategy, adoption of the Memorandum of Understanding between the COP and IFAD regarding the Global Mechanism, and the G-77/China proposal to establish a Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

COP-3 REPORT

The Third Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification opened with a welcoming ceremony on Monday afternoon, 15 November 1999. Marco Antonio de Oliveira Maciel, Acting President of Brazil, and several other Brazilian and UN officials welcomed participants to the meeting. Maciel highlighted his country's commitment to the environment and promotion of sustainable development. Roberto Magalhães Melo, Mayor of the City of Recife, noted the relevance of holding COP-3 in a region affected by drought and desertification. José Sarney Filho, Brazilian Minister for the Environment, expressed hope that this Convention would be an instrument through which desertification could be combatted and the affected regions assisted in economic development. Jarbas de Andrade Vasconcelos, Governor of Pernambuco, emphasized the importance of all countries coming together in the common struggle to improve the quality of life for people living in some of the driest parts of the Earth.

Theo-Ben Gurirab, President of the UN General Assembly, welcomed the 159 ratifications, highlighted the proactive role of African countries in implementing the Convention, and called on other countries to emulate Africa's initiative. CCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo emphasized that the CCD is not only about rehabilitating natural resources, but is also a multilateral instrument for

reducing poverty and fostering sustainable development. Following the welcoming ceremony, COP-2 President Souty Touré (Senegal) opened the Plenary session and noted the commitment of the implementing bodies of the Convention and said the number of accessions indicate that Parties are on the right track to reverse the effects of desertification. Delegates then elected by acclamation José Sarney Filho as President of COP-3.

Sarney Filho then introduced agenda item 3, the adoption of the agenda and organization of work (ICCD/COP(3)/1 and Corr.1). Canada proposed that the inclusion of NGOs in the official programme occur during the first week to ensure that their inputs provide a more meaningful contribution to the COP's deliberations. An NGO session was subsequently moved from the second week to the first Friday. With this change, delegates adopted the agenda and programme of work.

Sarney Filho then announced the nominations for other officers to the Bureau, including the CST Chair, and reminded delegates that the Rules of Procedure call for nine Vice-Presidents and a Chair of the CST along with the President, and that every geographical region should be represented by at least two members. The nominations were as follows: Pascal Yoadimnadj (Chad); Koffi Santy Sany Adade (Togo); Abdul Hamid Al-Munajed (Syria); Ali Bin Saad Altokhais (Saudi Arabia); Lazea Gheorghe (Romania); Jafarov Ogtay (Azerbaijan); Maria Antónia Masana (Peru); Sange de Silva (Canada); and Victor Louro (Portugal). Louro also served as Rapporteur. The nomination for CST Chair was Moses Munemo (Zimbabwe). Delegates agreed to establish a Committee of the Whole (COW) to consider the proposal for an additional annex, outstanding Rules of Procedure, and annexes on arbitration and conciliation procedures, among other issues. John Ashe (Antigua and Barbuda) was designated as its Chair and was invited to attend meetings of the Bureau.

Delegates then considered the documentation regarding accreditation of non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations (ICCD/COP(3)/15 and Add.1) and accredited one new international organization (ECOWAS/CEDEAO, Economic Community of West African States/Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest) as well as 59 NGOs.

PLENARY DELIBERATIONS

STATEMENTS BY PARTIES, OBSERVERS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: Parties, observers, UN agencies, international organizations and NGOs offered opening statements on Tuesday, 16 November. CCD Executive Secretary Diallo drew attention to the National Action Programmes (NAPs), as well as Regional and Subregional Action Programmes (RAPs and SRAPs), that many Parties had formulated.

Guyana, on behalf of the G-77/China, emphasized the important role the Global Mechanism should play, especially in the area of partnership-building and mobilizing financial resources at country, regional and subregional levels. She also underlined the need to integrate the regional coordinating units in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean into the budget. She noted the need to strengthen relationships with other relevant conventions, international organizations, institutions and agencies and said CCD implementation will depend largely on the CST's ability to provide the COP with relevant information and advice.

Finland, on behalf of the EU, welcomed the African national reports as valuable sources of gained experience and lessons learned in combatting desertification. He stressed the need to work constructively without losing sight of the overriding theme of reviewing CCD



implementation. He also stressed the need to mainstream development strategies in affected countries and to ensure synergies with other conventions.

Benin, on behalf of the African Group, called for a COP-3 decision to establish a committee to review the implementation of the convention and highlighted the need for a medium-term strategy for the Secretariat. Lesotho, Colombia and several other countries underlined the need for financial assistance in developing countries and that the Global Mechanism should support the elaboration of national reports and action programmes. The Republic of Korea and others added the need for capacity building, technical assistance and partnerships in combatting desertification and stressed the important role local and international NGOs play in NAP implementation.

A number of representatives from international organizations also addressed the COP. The League of Arab States, the Organization of French Speaking Countries and the FAO outlined their activities to combat drought and desertification. The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands highlighted existing synergies with the CCD. UNDP stressed the important role of civil society and the need to promote local governance and grassroots support. UNESCO announced the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the CCD to collaborate in the areas of science, education and culture.

SPECIAL SEGMENT: The Special Segment convened from Monday to Wednesday, 22-24 November, during which 96 officials spoke, including 27 Ministers and Deputy Ministers, three heads of UN agencies and three heads of international organizations. On Tuesday, 23 November, delegates received a report by Senator Grant Chapman (Australia) on the Inter-Parliamentary Round Table and took note of its declaration.

In his welcoming statement, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo noted that, while previous COPs addressed mechanisms for implementation, COP-3 is the first to consider national reports on CCD implementation. COP-3 President Sarney Filho expressed Brazil's hope for a Recife 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.

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer, on behalf of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, 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. On behalf of 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.

IFAD President Fawzi Al-Sultan noted that had IFAD been aware that the Global Mechanism would be inadequately funded, it would have withdrawn its bid to house the mechanism. Global Environment Facility (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.

In their presentations, speakers addressed numerous issues including: the Global Mechanism and financing for convention implementation, the role of civil society, links between desertification and poverty, synergies between the Rio conventions and the globalization of the Convention.

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. 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. Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de Lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel (CILSS) regretted the low level of participation at the COP by many countries.

Many countries stressed that more resources need to be made available through the Global Mechanism. Switzerland said the implementation of NAPs depends on the Global Mechanism's role as an intermediary and cautioned the COP against micro-managing it and adopting bureaucratic decisions that will incur high administrative costs. Mauritania suggested that the Global Mechanism should have three units, one for each affected region, and should organize regular meetings in each African subregion to elaborate on the operational modalities and facilitate access to funds. Botswana said that the Global Mechanism had not lived up to expectations and asked developed countries to "refrain from moving the goal-posts whenever the ball is in our control."

Concerning finances for implementation, the EU and Denmark stressed using existing institutions and mechanisms, including the GEF. Benin, Tunisia and others suggested that the GEF should operate as the financing mechanism for all Rio conventions. Germany noted that one of the CCD's greatest challenges was to integrate into established fora of bilateral and multilateral development cooperation and emphasized the role of *chef de file* as an important means to coordinate and raise funds. Norway noted that OECD countries are further from the goal of 0.7% of GNP for official development assistance (ODA) than they were in 1992 and said that, while some point to the increasing role of private investment, these funds tend not to reach the poorest and most fragile environments. Pakistan noted that developed countries have an important responsibility to support CCD implementation in developing countries, and developing countries have an obligation to find financial and technical support from the private and non-governmental sectors. Zimbabwe noted that its efforts to combat desertification had involved finding domestic funding sources, including national and local governmental bodies, NGOs and the private sector.

Benin, Cape Verde, Togo and others underscored the need for effective coordination between the Global Mechanism and the Secretariat. Ghana, Morocco and Burundi recommended strengthening the Secretariat to enable it to fulfill its mandate and called for the approval of its budget. Myanmar said regional coordinating units would play an important role in promoting regional coordination and effective RAP implementation. Tajikistan appealed to the Secretariat for financial support to organize a coordinating meeting in Bangkok for the Asian region. Palau called on the CCD Secretariat to hold a regional meeting for small island States. Malawi, Mali, and Zambia stressed the importance of reviewing and evaluating implementation and supported creating a committee to do so. Sweden expressed concern over proposals for subsidiary bodies and the Secretariat's involvement in work beyond assisting countries in elaborating their NAPs.

Experiences from Convention implementation at the national and regional levels were also addressed by many delegates. Kenya said the African national reports were produced cost effectively and provide useful experiences to other regions. The UK emphasized using national reports to examine lessons learned and plan actions for the future. The Arab Maghreb Union, African Development Bank (ADB), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and other organizations highlighted their contributions to assisting countries in implementing NAPs.



The Gambia and others emphasized the need to identify tools to integrate strategies for poverty eradication. Ghana and Brazil called on the WTO to review trade practices having adverse effects on developing country economies.

CCD implementation was also considered in the context of promoting democratization. Germany highlighted decentralization, participatory frameworks and the right of civil society as playing an important role in the use of natural resources. Norway highlighted the necessity of peace, democracy and respect for human rights for sustainable development. Nigeria noted that his new government had restored freedom of expression and association and moved towards political stability, which are prerequisites for sustainable development. Malawi encouraged governments to strengthen NGOs as a means of promoting democratization.

Several Parties 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. Namibia said such linkages ensure efficient use of resources. The FCCC and CBD noted opportunities for synergies with the CCD.

Many countries welcomed the possible addition of an annex for Central and Eastern Europe and countries from the region noted their desire or expectation to ratify the Convention.

RECIFE INITIATIVE: During the Special Segment, Brazil proposed formulating a Recife Mandate that would call on Parties to revisit and reaffirm their commitments to the CCD process. This draft was considered in informal meetings during the second week of COP-3, whereby delegates debated the appropriateness of a mandate under the CCD. They agreed instead on a Recife Initiative.

On Friday, 26 November, the COP adopted the Recife Initiative towards enhancing CCD implementation (ICCD/COP(3)/L.22). The Initiative calls for formulating a declaration of commitments at COP-4 to focus on a number of specific thematic and sectoral areas over an agreed period of time. It also reiterates the need to adopt measures to eradicate poverty; reaffirms the need to mobilize financial resources and promote the transfer of technology and capacity building for combatting desertification; stresses the need to integrate CCD implementation into mainstream national development strategies of affected countries; and emphasizes the importance of carrying out further work on benchmarks and indicators and providing expertise to support CCD implementation at national, subregional and regional levels. The Secretariat noted Argentina's request to take the adopted resolution into account in the COP-4 programme of work (ICCD/COP(3)/L.11).

DIALOGUE WITH NGOS: The Plenary met on Friday, 19 November, and Wednesday, 24 November, to discuss the inclusion of NGO activities within the COP's programme of work. During the first meeting, NGOs presented case studies on institutional-level partnerships. Evelyne de Mello Figueiredo, MORABI (Cape Verde), highlighted successful partnerships that exist between government, NGOs and civil society, particularly with farmers' associations and women's organizations, in the NAP process, but noted the serious problems NGOs face due to lack of financing and institutional capacity. Florent Oueradougou, the Association Desertification Volontaires pour le Développement (Burkina Faso), emphasized the involvement of all stakeholders in the decision-making and implementation process. Juliana Zeidler, the Desert Research Foundation (Namibia), outlined her organization's experiences in partnership management and stressed the participation of women and the need for long-term partnerships with stakeholders through community-based organizations.

The EU suggested dedicating more time in the COP's work programme to NGOs. Iceland, Brazil, Syria, Mongolia and others encouraged Parties to ensure broad involvement of civil society stakeholders in the NAP process. Chile commended the role NGOs play in training and awareness campaigns. Mauritania said national programmes should find financing to reinforce NGO actions. The African-American Islamic Institute emphasized procedures for NGOs to have access to funding for grassroots desertification projects.

On Wednesday, 24 November, delegates heard presentations on empowering women's role in the NAP process. Ruth Mubiru, RIOD Women's Caucus (Uganda), urged delegates and partners to support programmes for women through capacity building, training, awareness-raising, education and micro-credit loans. Maiga Sina Damba, AFAD (Mali), identified the need for: development projects for women by women, acquiring visibility in the decision-making process, promoting decentralized, gender-oriented processes, and accessing financing mechanisms for gender awareness. Najwaz Essairia, ENDA-Maghreb (Morocco), stressed the importance of participatory processes and equitable gender participation of women in the NAP. Edualda Torres, Fundação Grupo Esquel do Brasil, outlined her organization's activities in disseminating information about the risk of desertification and noted the importance of instituting a permanent and interactive relationship between NGOs and local, state, and national governments. Enoch Okpara, Nigeria Environmental Study/Action Team, noted the need to involve women in the rehabilitation of marginally degraded land, particularly through integrated community projects. Jacqueline Nkoyok, CONGAC (Cameroon), called for involving women in rural areas to combat desertification through strengthening capacities, educational and informational campaigns, access to land resources and decision-making at the local level. She read a Women's Declaration for COP-3, stressing the importance of equitable participation of women in the CCD and NAP.

Delegates showed general support for the declaration and the need to involve women, particularly in rural areas, in the CCD and NAP processes. Sweden was pleased to note that the role of women has maintained a level of priority in the CCD process since the beginning, but asked whether the Convention has seen any difference regarding the status of women. He, along with Mauritania and others, noted that national delegations should include more women.

INCLUSION OF NGO ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE OFFICIAL COP PROGRAMME OF WORK: A draft decision on enhancing the participation of NGOs in the COP work programme (ICCD/COP(3)/L.24) was introduced by the EU in Plenary on Friday, 26 November. He noted that consultations with NGOs and other delegations had been held. The COP adopted the decision, which recognizes the important role NGOs, community-based organizations and other members of civil society play in the implementation of the CCD, and states that they shall be given opportunities to express their coordinated views at CCD sessions and in meetings of its subsidiary bodies. The decision also invites the international community, particularly developed countries, to provide support for ensuring greater NGO participation through bilateral cooperation and through contributions to the supplementary fund administered by the Secretariat.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW began its deliberations on Tuesday, 16 November, and met through Wednesday, 24 November. The COW's agenda included the programme and budget, outstanding rules of procedure, an additional regional implementation annex, elaboration of annexes containing arbitration and conciliation procedures, the Secretariat's medium-term strategy, a review of the Global Mechanism, and procedures for resolution of questions of implementation. The COW



discussed its agenda items briefly and then continued discussion in informal consultations. COW Chair John Ashe facilitated consultations on the programme and budget until Wednesday, 24 November, following which Torben Mailand Christensen (Denmark) facilitated discussions. Franklin Moore (US) facilitated discussions on procedures for review of Convention implementation, cooperation with other relevant conventions and institutions, the draft Memorandum of Understanding between the COP and IFAD and the programme and work for COP-4. Michael Ellis (UK) facilitated discussions on the Medium-Term Strategy, arbitration and conciliation, Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure and the review of the Global Mechanism. Bo Kjellén (Sweden) facilitated discussions on the draft decision regarding an additional regional implementation annex.

PROGRAMME AND BUDGET: The COW considered the programme and budget for the biennium 2000-2001 and the status of the extrabudgetary issues on Tuesday, 16 November, and then deferred discussions to an informal group facilitated by COW Chair Ashe. The informal consultations were conducted from Tuesday, 16 November, to Wednesday, 24 November, when the COW adopted, with the objection of the EU, a Chair's draft decision. Consultations continued until Friday, 26 November, on revisions to the draft decision.

During their initial discussion on Tuesday, 16 November, delegates considering the programme and budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (ICCD/COP(3)/2 and Add.1, ICCD/COP(3)/4 and Add.1 and 2), the Secretariat underlined the main areas of budget growth as the need to provide efficient services to Parties, facilitate the preparation of national reports and strengthen the administrative capacity of the Secretariat. She also noted the proposal to establish additional posts in 2000-2001 and the installation and maintenance in Bonn of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS).

In the ensuing discussions, the EU said there was room to improve transparency in the budget and called for a clear distinction in reporting between activities financed by the core budget and those by the extrabudgetary funds. She sought more information on, *inter alia*, the share of the Secretariat's personnel resources allocated to the CST and the basis for the post requirements proposed by the Secretariat.

The G-77/China suggested maintaining the contingency envisaged for conference costs until the UN General Assembly adopts a resolution to meet those costs. He sought clarification on, *inter alia*: the structure of the budget and its failure to integrate the Global Mechanism's budget into the Convention budget; the absence in the budget of costs associated with the regional coordinating units; and the new and additional functions that require the use of the IMIS. Regarding the annexed proposed Global Mechanism programme and budget, he noted that some of the activities outlined do not conform with the decision adopted by COP-1.

Canada, on behalf of JUSCANNZ, called for informal-informal consultations on the budget. Benin, on behalf of the African Group, said the budget does not take into account the work of a Committee to Review Implementation of the Convention and requested clarification on the Global Mechanism resources for 1999 and the need to increase this budget item in 2000-2001.

The COW also considered briefly the Secretariat's report on the review of the status of extrabudgetary funds (ICCD/COP3/3 and Add.1) on Tuesday, 16 November. The report describes activities and expenditures under the trust funds during the first half of 1999 and indicates the estimated costs of activities to be facilitated during the remainder of 1999 if sufficient contributions are received. The COW deferred further consideration of both budgetary issues to an informal group.

During the consultations, the EU and G-77/China diverged over the increase to the Secretariat's budget. There was also disagreement over whether to apply an equal increase to both the Secretariat's and Global Mechanism's budget, if the Global Mechanism's budget would be separate from the Secretariat's, and the reporting requirements for the Secretariat to the COP.

On Wednesday, 24 November, the COW Chair presented a draft decision for COW adoption. The EU indicated that it preferred to have further consultations on the draft. The COW Chair gavelled the adoption, noting the EU's objection. The draft decision, *inter alia*, confirms the COP's authorization for the Executive Secretary to make transfers between each of the main appropriation lines in the budget, including the Global Mechanism, up to an aggregate limit of 15% of the total expenditure, provided that a further limitation of up to minus 25% of each such appropriation line shall apply. It requests the Executive Secretary to report to COP-4 on the financial performance of the Convention budget and to propose any adjustments that might be needed for the biennium 2000-2001.

Consultations continued under the chairmanship of Mailand Christensen (Denmark) during the final COP Plenary, early Saturday morning, 27 November. Delegates took note of the consensus in the informal group and adopted the revised budget without comment. In the final decision (ICCD/COP(3)/L.18/Rev.1), the COP approves a net budget amounting to US\$12,524,000 for the biennium 2000-2001 and confirms its authorization to the Executive Secretary to make transfers between each of the appropriation lines in the budget with the exception of the budget line on the Global Mechanism. It also requests the Executive Secretary to, *inter alia*, report at COP-4 on:

- the need for, feasibility of, and modalities for regional coordinating units and the costs involved with a view to enabling the COP to take a decision;
- the financial performance of the Convention budget;
- submit proposals on how the budgeting and reporting process could be improved while taking into account the developments and practices in FCCC and CBD and other relevant intergovernmental organizations and propose any adjustments that might be needed for the biennium 2000-2001; and
- the status of the trust funds established under the financial rules, and seek the views of Parties on how the financial reporting to the COP could be improved in order to report on this issue at COP-4.

MEDIUM-TERM STRATEGY: The COW discussed the Medium-Term Strategy of the Secretariat (ICCD/COP(3)/6) on Tuesday and Wednesday, 16-17 November. The main components of the proposed Secretariat's Medium-Term Strategy included: making effective arrangements for the sessions of the COP; ensuring linkages with other sister conventions; strengthening public awareness; ensuring the promotion of cooperation with public and private entities; contributing to efforts to eradicate poverty; and contributing the promotion of the role of women and other major groups, including NGOs.

Canada noted that the Convention does not provide an operational role for the Secretariat, despite some language in the Medium-Term Strategy indicating otherwise. Benin, on behalf of the G-77/China, regretted that there were no specific proposals to reformulate the Strategy. As this agenda item was not scheduled for discussion on Tuesday afternoon, the EU reserved its right to revisit it after consultations within its group. On Wednesday, 17 November, the COW continued consideration of the Strategy. The EU stressed that the Secretariat is not an implementing body and should not overload itself with programme activities. He said it should provide core secretariat activities without duplicating the work of others, cooperate with the



secretariats of other conventions, promote awareness, and facilitate information dissemination and exchange. Benin drew attention to a proposal by the G-77/China for a draft decision and suggested that it form the starting point for informal consultations. Michael Ellis was requested to facilitate informal consultations on this issue. On Monday, 22 November, the COW adopted a proposal for a draft decision prepared by the informal group. The COP adopted this draft decision on Friday, 26 November.

In the final decision, the COP takes note of the Secretariat's revised Medium-Term Strategy and annexes it to the decision for information. It emphasizes that facilitating the effective implementation of the Convention requires a strong and capable secretariat. It requests the Secretariat to: establish priorities in its programme of activities; facilitate effective assessment of implementation by compiling, summarizing and synthesizing all reports on implementation; and undertake a review of its activities and submit a report to COP-6.

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES AND MECHANISMS TO REVIEW THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION:

The COW met on Thursday, 18 November, to consider additional procedures and mechanisms to review the implementation of the convention (ICCD/COP(3)/17). It decided to defer the issue to informal consultations facilitated by Franklin Moore, noting that it was related to other issues being considered informally. The informal group met throughout the second week and reached agreement late on Friday, 26 November. During the consultations, divergence was expressed over the necessity of a committee on implementation under the Convention.

On Friday, 26 November, the Plenary adopted a resolution on additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention (ICCD/COP(3)/L.23). The decision states that an *ad hoc* working group should be established at COP-4 to review and analyze reports submitted at COP-3 and 4. It recalls that reports by Parties, together with advice and information provided by the CST and the Global Mechanism, will be the basis for the review of the implementation of the Convention at COP-4 and invites Parties and other interested institutions and organizations to submit written proposals on the need to establish a committee to review the implementation of the Convention no later than 30 April 2000, to be compiled by the Secretariat to facilitate consideration, and take a decision at its fourth and, if necessary, at its fifth session.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION:

On Friday, 26 November, the Plenary adopted a draft decision on the consideration of reports on implementation of the Convention (ICCD/COP(3)/L.13). In the final decision, the COP encourages affected developing country Parties, *inter alia*, to: strengthen reforms currently in progress towards greater decentralization; pursue efforts in implementing the Convention at the local level; strengthen links between national focal points and the authorities responsible for development cooperation; and enhance integration of Convention implementation into national development strategies. It also recognizes the important role played by African subregional and regional organizations in the implementation of RAPs and SRAPs and recommends that affected developing country Parties ensure that both programmes do not implement similar projects and activities as those deriving from NAPs.

On reports by developed countries, the COP takes note of the support provided by several developed country Parties for activities related to combatting desertification and notes the need to clearly differentiate contributions allocated for combatting desertification from other official development assistance. It also encourages devel-

oped country Parties to strengthen their efforts to integrate CCD implementation into ongoing bilateral and multilateral development cooperation and urges them to support affected developing country Parties in strengthening linkages between the CCD and the other Rio conventions.

On reports by UN and intergovernmental organizations, the COP recommends dissemination of the experiences and lessons learned from establishing technical networks between affected countries to all relevant fora. It also stresses the importance of coordination of technical work between the UN specialized agencies and the Secretariat. The COP also recognizes the special role and contributions of civil society in the implementation of measures to combat desertification and encourages Parties to draw upon their capabilities. It further, *inter alia*: encourages Parties to assess and evaluate progress through the use of benchmarks and indicators; requests Parties to take measures to ensure that women's capacity, particularly at the grassroots level, is reinforced through NAPs and encourages their participation in decision-making processes; takes note of the COP-3 decision for the CCD Executive Secretary to report on the need and modalities for the regional coordinating units; and requests the CCD Executive Secretary and the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism to assist affected African country Parties in facilitating consultative processes in order to negotiate partnership agreements.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT TO ASSIST DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTIES IN THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL REPORTS:

On Thursday, 18 November, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo introduced the report of the Secretariat to assist developing country Parties in the preparation of national reports (ICCD/COP(3)/5/Add.4 and Inf.3). He highlighted some of the Secretariat's major activities, including organization of meetings and workshops in each subregion to identify country needs when preparing NAPs and the introduction of a NAP help guide for African countries. No comments were offered from the floor and no decision was taken.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER RELEVANT CONVENTIONS AND INSTITUTIONS:

Discussions to review activities for promoting and strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies (ICCD/COP(3)/9 and Add.1) took place on Thursday, 18 November. The Secretariat noted several Memoranda of Understanding with the conventions on wetlands (Ramsar), climate change (FCCC), and biodiversity (CBD), as well as FAO, UNESCO and the arrangements with the Global Mechanism. The EU underlined the importance of continuing to work closely with other conventions and developing methods to assess work done in these cooperative arrangements. Mauritania, on behalf of the G-77/China, said that no one convention could coordinate the other, but noted that they could benefit from each other through secretariat interactions. He also stressed synergies to mobilize funding for desertification. Norway encouraged integrating the information and reporting mechanisms between the FCCC, CBD and CCD as a means of transparency. The FCCC highlighted opportunities for cooperation with the CCD, which include capacity building and public awareness activities. Further consultations ensued in a group facilitated by Franklin Moore.

The decision on collaboration with other conventions and international bodies (ICCD/COP(3)/L.16) was adopted by the COP on Friday, 26 November. In this decision, the COP requests the Executive Secretary to give special attention to the next CBD COP, which has on its agenda a proposal for a work programme on dryland biodiversity, and to the next FCCC COP, which has on its agenda issues related to land-use, land-use change and forestry; and requests the Executive Secre-



tary to cooperate with UNEP and the executive secretaries of the other conventions to facilitate the exchange of scientific and technical information.

HEADQUARTERS AGREEMENT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF GERMANY: On Wednesday, 17 November, the COW considered arrangements for the functioning of the permanent secretariat headquarters agreement with the German Government (ICCD/COP(3)/8). The Secretariat reported that the headquarters agreement entered into force on 8 July 1999. On Friday, 26 November, the COP adopted a draft decision (ICCD/COP(3)/L.5) renewing its appreciation to the German Government for its commitment to facilitating the establishment of the Convention Secretariat in Bonn.

ANNEX FOR CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION PROCEDURES: On Wednesday, 17 November, the COW considered annexes containing arbitration and conciliation procedures (ICCD/COP(3)/7). The G-77/China supported establishing an open-ended *ad hoc* group to examine and make recommendations on this issue and called for a decision by COP-4. The EU and others added that the Secretariat should analyze progress in other relevant conventions and prepare a new draft proposal on this issue for consideration at COP-4. The informal group facilitated by Michael Ellis considered this issue further. On Friday, 26 November, the COP adopted a decision (ICCD/COP(3)/L.4) recommended to it by the informal group. The COP recalls Convention articles, which state that the COP shall consider and adopt procedures and an institutional mechanism for the resolution of questions with regard to implementation. It decides to convene at COP-4 an open-ended *ad hoc* group of experts to examine and make recommendations on procedures for resolution of questions of implementation, and annexes on arbitration and conciliation procedures. It also requests the Secretariat to compile the views of Parties on how to take the matter forward for consideration at COP-5.

RULE 47 OF RULES OF PROCEDURE: On Wednesday, 17 November, the COP considered Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure (ICCD/COP(3)/13), which addresses voting procedures in the absence of consensus. Mauritania emphasized that the Convention is a political organ and needs to find a solution for a decision-making mechanism as soon as possible. The EU suggested following progress made in other conventions on this issue and proposed deferring any decision until COP-4. The decision on Rule 47 (ICCD/COP(3)/L.20), adopted by the COP on Friday, 26 November, requests the CCD Secretariat to include consideration of this outstanding rule on the COP-4 agenda.

GLOBAL MECHANISM: The COW began considering the Global Mechanism on Friday, 19 November. Per Rydén (Global Mechanism Managing Director) presented the Review of the Report on Policies, Operational Modalities and Activities of the Global Mechanism (ICCD/COP(3)/11) and the Operational Strategy for the Global Mechanism (ICCD/COP(3)/CRP.3). He said the Global Mechanism requires its own resources to fulfill its function of partnership building and to assist countries to launch key activities. He noted that IFAD has provided US\$2.5 of the US\$10 million it promised when bidding to host the Mechanism and added that the balance will be provided when other donors make contributions.

In the subsequent discussion, the G-77/China called for establishing one staff position for each of the three regional units: Africa, Latin American and Caribbean, and Asia. He stressed that the funds IFAD promised should be released and that the Global Mechanism should make available a comprehensive inventory of bilateral and multilateral financial mechanisms. He hoped the operational strategy would be discussed in depth at COP-4. The EU underlined the need for the Global Mechanism to avoid overlap with the CCD Secretariat and questioned the Global Mechanism's involvement in technical-oriented

projects. On the operational strategy, he urged the Global Mechanism to focus on increasing the effectiveness of existing funding mechanisms and resources. Additional comments included: the need for the strategy's principles to be reflected in the form of concrete action plans; the importance of a good communication strategy to inform Parties about activities; the need for reports on Facilitation Committee meetings; and praise for the inclusion of self-evaluations in the Global Mechanism's report.

The COW also heard a report by IFAD (ICCD/COP(3)/12 and Add.1 and CRP.4). Vera Weill-Hallé, on behalf of Takao Shibata (Assistant President of IFAD), highlighted the high priority IFAD places on desertification and participatory approaches to development and noted its strong collaboration with NGOs. She also outlined the work of the Facilitation Committee members on CCD awareness-raising and welcomed the recent membership of UNEP and FAO on the Facilitation Committee.

The G-77/China noted that the report did not indicate what IFAD was doing to make available the US\$100 million it promised for projects linked to the Convention. IFAD confirmed its intention to devote such funds to dryland management. An informal group facilitated by Michael Ellis considered the issue further. Delegates concluded informal consultations on Thursday, 25 November, on a draft decision for the first review of policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism. On Friday, 26 November, the COP Plenary adopted the draft decision without comment.

In the final decision (ICCD/COP(3)/L.12) the COP, *inter alia*, reaffirms that the Global Mechanism will function under the guidance of the COP and be accountable to it, and recognizes that its first priority is to become a demand-driven mechanism to facilitate resource mobilization and channeling for the elaboration and implementation of action programmes. On the operational modality, it includes a recommendation that the Global Mechanism Managing Director complete staff recruitment before COP-4. It also decides to have further consideration of the Global Mechanism's operational strategy at COP-4 and recommends that the Global Mechanism should develop an information and communication strategy aimed at facilitating contact with Parties and others to 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 report to COP-4 on the decision taken on the issue.

REVISED DRAFT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE COP AND IFAD: On Friday, 19 November, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo introduced the revised Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the COP and IFAD (ICCD/COP(3)/10). The EU noted its satisfaction with the revised draft. The G-77/China requested further study of the MOU and sought clarification on the role of IFAD in mobilizing funds. IFAD said it has demonstrated its commitment by releasing US\$2.5 million and encouraging the World Bank to supply funds. She said it is not necessarily envisioned that IFAD would mobilize funds directly, but it will assist, as deemed appropriate by the Global Mechanism. COW Chair Ashe asked the small group chaired by Franklin Moore to consult further on the MOU.

On Friday, 26 November, a draft decision on the MOU between the COP and IFAD (ICCD/CCD(3)/L.17) was approved by the COP. In this decision, the COP notes and approves the annexed revised MOU. The MOU states that the Global Mechanism will function under the authority and guidance of the COP and will have a separate identity within the Fund. It outlines the Global Mechanism's functions, status within IFAD, relationship to the COP, collaborative institutional



arrangements, field office support and administrative infrastructure. It also includes final provisions regarding the entry into operation of the MOU, its implementation, termination, amendment and interpretation.

CONSIDERATION OF AN ADDITIONAL REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION ANNEX TO THE CONVENTION: Delegates discussed efforts since COP-1 to develop a regional implementation annex for Central and Eastern Europe on Monday and Tuesday, 22-23 November. The background documentation on this issue (ICCD/COP(3)/16) outlined these efforts and contained a draft of the annex, which is expected to be adopted at COP-4. On Tuesday, 23 November, the COW adopted a draft decision on an additional regional annex to the COW. Bo Kjellén, who facilitated consultations on this issue, said the proposal for an additional annex highlights the Convention's universality. The EU and G-77/China encouraged countries from this region to accede to the Convention to facilitate adoption of the annex. The Latin American and Caribbean Group stated it would express views regarding Bureau membership once the annex is adopted and supported equitable geographical membership.

The decision adopted on Friday, 26 November (ICCD/COP(3)/L.19), invites the countries of Central and Eastern Europe to continue consultations on the draft additional implementation annex with a view to adopting it at COP-4. It also requests the Secretariat, under the guidance of the Bureau, to arrange the process of consultations on finalizing the text and invites the countries of the region to continue their efforts towards accession to the Convention.

COP-4 PROGRAMME OF WORK AND VENUE: On Monday, 22 November, COW Chair John Ashe introduced a draft decision on the programme of work for COP-4. The draft includes COP-4 reviews of, *inter alia*: reports on implementation of affected country Parties; SRAPs and RAPs of regions other than Africa; the report of the Global Mechanism; CCD implementation financing by multilateral institutions; activities to strengthen relationships with other relevant conventions; and programme and budget. Franklin Moore was asked to facilitate informal consultations on this issue. On Thursday, 25 November, the COW adopted the text of the draft decision by consensus. The EU commented that the text was agreed to in the informal group with the understanding that some issues arising from other decisions would be taken into account in the work programme. During adoption by the Plenary on Friday, 26 November, Argentina proposed COP-4 consideration of the Recife Initiative. The decision on the programme of work (ICCD/COP(3)/L.11) includes, *inter alia*, on the agenda of COP-4 and if necessary COP-5: the review of reports on implementation of affected country Parties in regions other than Africa, and other reports on activities in those regions; consideration of an additional regional implementation annex; review of the report of the Global Mechanism; and review of information regarding the financing of Convention implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions.

On Friday, 26 November, the Plenary adopted a decision on the date and venue of COP-4 (ICCD/COP(3)/L.15). It was agreed that it would be held in Bonn, Germany, from 16-27 October 2000, in the event that no Party makes an offer to host the conference prior to 29 February 2000.

CCD IMPLEMENTATION IN AFRICA: Delegates discussed reports from affected African country Parties (ICCD/COP(3)/5/Add.2 and A-E) in the COW on Wednesday, 17 November, followed by a panel discussion on this issue on Wednesday and Thursday, 17-18 November. A panel discussion on subregional and regional action programmes in Africa (ICCD/COP(3)/5/Add.5) also took place on Thursday.

General Debate: CCD Executive Secretary Diallo opened the session by announcing that 80% of African countries had submitted reports. Many Parties said the national reports provided useful information and that other regions could learn from their experiences when formulating their own reports. Japan added that the reports are important for further analysis when initiating specific actions.

A number of speakers, including Benin and Burkina Faso, expressed difficulties in NAP implementation due to lack of resources. Many countries, including Mali and Cape Verde, called for support from the Global Mechanism and other institutions to help implement activities to combat desertification. The EU stressed the importance of involving all stakeholders in the NAP process and expressed an interest in enhancing longer-term partnerships based on existing mechanisms. Senegal, Morocco and others highlighted the role the public sector, local communities, regional councils, universities, women and other stakeholders played in drafting their national reports. The US noted that NAP implementation needs to integrate aspects of economic growth, poverty alleviation and natural resource management, and that implementation problems need to be better highlighted in the reports.

Panel Discussions of Reports: Delegates continued their consideration of reports from affected African country Parties during a panel discussion chaired by Pierre-Marc Johnson (Canada). Representatives of each African region gave presentations. Mozambique, on behalf of the Southern African region, presented measures being taken in the subregion to ensure NAP implementation, including local-level capacity building through consultative workshops and national forums on desertification. Uganda, on behalf of the East African Region, highlighted the need to mainstream desertification issues with other strategies dealing with sustainable development and poverty eradication and stressed the importance of stakeholder participation in the NAP process, particularly women and youth. Chad, speaking for the Central African region, underlined the difficulties posed by the political instability in the region, the inadequate financial resources and the absence of coordinating bodies. Mali, on behalf of the West African region, said difficulties in implementing the participatory approach, due to varying levels of preparedness, inadequate resources and insufficient data available for planning, had constrained the NAP process. Morocco summarized the report of the Northern African subregion by underlining the importance of coordination among key actors and participation at the local level. He also called for greater cooperation with the donor community and the need for project funding.

In the discussion that followed, several speakers highlighted the problem of inadequate financial resources and called on the Global Mechanism to assist in mobilizing funds. The EU, with Egypt, Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and others, underlined the importance of partnerships.

On Thursday, 18 November, delegates participated in a second panel on CCD implementation in Africa to discuss thematic issues such as: financing NAPs, participatory approaches, institutional arrangements, follow-up assessments and benchmarks and indicators. Mozambique and others emphasized that the Global Mechanism should identify, mobilize and channel adequate financial resources at the local level to ensure CCD implementation. Uganda highlighted the need for public awareness, appropriate institutional structures and enabling environments. Norway, with RIOD-Africa, underscored the role of women in the NAP process. Benin noted a lack of human resources and technical means to implement the active phase of NAPs. Mali stressed the need to coordinate between different national plans, policies and authorities to avoid problems of duplication, insufficient resources and conflicting objectives. The US said NAPs should build on past initiatives and be harmonized within existing projects and



plans. Morocco noted the importance of setting up operational methodologies of assessment systems of benchmarks and indicators to assist decision-makers and international bodies in assessing progress. Tunisia noted the need to achieve reliable indicators to help decision-makers with programme implementation. In conclusion, Benin suggested drafting a resolution to reflect, *inter alia*, the need to: set up a committee to review national reports; mobilize financial resources and technology transfer; disseminate information on how to access available resources and financial mechanisms; adopt better monitoring and evaluation systems; and have effective partnership arrangements.

Panel Discussion on SRAPs and RAPs: On Thursday, 18 November, a panel was convened to discuss the reports of subregional and regional action programmes. CCD Executive Secretary Diallo said activities at the national level could only be meaningful if strengthened by work at the regional and subregional levels. Egypt drew attention to the exclusion of countries, including Egypt, the Central African Republic, Madagascar and Burundi, from the implementation of subregional programmes since they are not associated with any particular subregional organization. SADC and IGAD noted their activities in assisting member States to elaborate NAPs and SRAPs. CILSS outlined its activities in West Africa and said that programmes at the subregional level must meet standards for, *inter alia*: sustainable management of shared water resources, flora and fauna; rational use of resources; technical and scientific cooperation; and coordination of policies for marketing and drought relief. The Arab Maghreb Union and Mauritania underlined that managing shared resources are better handled at the subregional level.

CCD Implementation by Developed Country Parties, UN Organizations, NGOs and IGOs: On Thursday, 18 November, the COW discussed CCD implementation by developed country Parties, UN organizations, NGOs and IGOs (ICCD/COP(3)/5/Add.1 and Add.3). The EU stressed that drought and desertification should be considered as cross-cutting issues in all sectors and highlighted measures such as donor coordination and long-term partnerships as ways to further improve support for desertification activities. The World Bank underscored the role of CCD implementation in poverty alleviation and stressed the need for partnerships, integrated approaches to sustainable resource management, effective participatory structures for planning at all levels and improved use of existing channels and resources. UNDP emphasized mainstreaming the NAP process to ensure that its outputs are taken into account in broader development programmes.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) met from 16-19 November. Moses Munemo (Zimbabwe) served as Chair of the CST and Olanrewaju Smith (Canada), Carlos Valarezo (Ecuador) and Reza Hosseinpour Tavani (Iran) served as Vice-Chairs. Vice-Chair Valarezo also served as Rapporteur and, along with Vice-Chair Smith, chaired a number of small groups during the meeting. The Committee followed its agenda (ICCD/COP(3)/CST/1) and developed draft decisions on the roster of independent experts, benchmarks and indicators, traditional knowledge, early warning systems, the survey and evaluation of existing networks, and the CST-4 programme of work.

ROSTER OF EXPERTS: On Tuesday, 16 November, CST delegates discussed whether to make recommendations related to the further development of the roster of independent experts (ICCD/COP/3/CST/14, Add.1 and Add.1/Corr.1). The Secretariat noted the need for more balance in terms of gender and disciplines represented by experts already named to the roster. Japan asked about the distinction between different disciplines specified in the roster, such as biology, ecology and botany. France, supported by others, suggested that infor-

mation be supplied on the uses of the roster. A small group chaired by Vice-Chair Smith considered these issues and developed a draft decision that the CST adopted.

On Thursday, 25 November, the COP adopted the decision on the Roster of Independent Experts (ICCD/COP(3)/L.1) with no amendments. 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 representation of all relevant disciplines. It also includes an amended list of disciplines, as contained in an annex to the decision, by which experts will be identified according to broad discipline categories as well as a specialization with each category. 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 concerning the use that has been made of the roster.

SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF NETWORKS: The CST discussed this topic throughout the week. UNEP presented progress on Phase 1 (ICCD/COP(3)/CST/4) of the survey and evaluation of existing networks supporting the implementation of the Convention and introduced proposals for Phase 2. He noted that work in Phase 1 had involved a consortium of 15 agencies, which together had distributed 5000 questionnaires to existing networks. To date more than 1500 answers had been received and entered into a database managed by the University of Arizona. He noted that Phase 2 will consider ways of strengthening networks to improve the implementation of the CCD. In the subsequent deliberations, Canada and the US suggested that efforts focus on addressing the problems UNEP identified in its report on Phase 1 before beginning Phase 2. Senegal, with Italy and Mexico, suggested that existing work should be consolidated and lessons learned highlighted before Phase 2 is initiated. The Netherlands commented that no information had been provided on either the links between networks, indigenous knowledge and NAPs, or on how networks contribute to implementation of convention.

Many countries supported the idea that Phase 2 should focus on thematically narrowly focused activities at the subregional level. Mali, Senegal, CILSS and others suggested that Phase 2 focus on Africa as a means of encouraging subregional networks and controlling costs. Belgium, France and the Netherlands stressed the need to limit expenses.

On Thursday, 25 November, the COP considered the draft decision (ICCD/COP(3)/L.7). In the preamble of the decision, the EU proposed specifying that the contractual arrangements with UNEP pertained to Phase 1 only. The US proposed specifying that Phase 2 will require a pilot approach. The League of Arab States proposed recognizing the efforts of UNEP and its consortium for their work to date. The decision was adopted with these amendments. The decision specifies that Phase 2 will focus on the Southern African region and requests the Secretariat to draft the terms of reference for Phase 2 for the CST Bureau to approve at its intersessional meeting. It also requests UNEP to submit an update of its report on Phase 1 and authorizes the Secretariat to open the tendering process for contractors to implement Phase 2.

BODIES DOING WORK OF RELEVANCE TO THE CST: Delegates were invited to discuss the Secretariat's updated review of bodies doing work of relevance to the CST (ICCD/COP(3)/CSD/5) on Tuesday, 16 November. The Secretariat noted that the document incorporated the only submission, from Jordan, that it had received since COP-2. Delegates requested the Secretariat to draft a decision calling for continued updates to the document, but no such draft was subsequently discussed or adopted.



BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS: Delegates' discussion of benchmarks and indicators on Tuesday, 16 November, focused on the experiences of affected country Parties and others in using the indicators identified through previous CST work, as reported in the national reports presented to COP-3 (ICCD/COP(3)/5 and Add.1, Add.1(A), Add.2, Add.2(A)-(E), Add.3, Add.3(A), Add.4 and Add.5). Several international organizations highlighted regional efforts they are involved with to test the indicators. The US and Japan highlighted the Gambia's report and its efforts to apply the indicators. Japan suggested discussing the type of numerical indicators that could be used to compare conditions in different countries. Norway stressed that future national reporting should give more attention to gender issues.

The COP adopted the decision on benchmarks and indicators (ICCD/COP(3)/L.2) on Thursday, 25 November. This decision urges Parties to initiate testing of the impact indicators proposed by the panel that acted as a steering committee to the open-ended informal consultative process on benchmarks and indicators. 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 impact indicator testing.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: The CST discussion of traditional knowledge took place on Thursday and Friday, 17-18 November. The deliberations focused on four papers: a synthesis report on traditional knowledge (ICCD/COP(3)/CST/2), ways and means to link the CST's work on traditional knowledge with similar work being undertaken by other conventions (ICCD/COP(3)/CST/3/Add.1), a report on traditional knowledge in dryland ecosystems (ICCD/COP(3)/CST/3/Add.2) and the report of the *Ad Hoc* Panel on Traditional Knowledge (ICCD/COP(3)/CST/3).

On the synthesis report, delegates highlighted the priority of traditional knowledge and the need for initiatives that could revive traditional models. On linkages with similar work, delegates suggested that database linkages could be created between conventions and national focal points could collaborate on this and related conventions. Regarding traditional knowledge in dryland ecosystems, delegates noted the need for gender-sensitive indigenous knowledge networks; the role that community-based groups could play in bringing actors, such as farmers, pastoralists and scientists, together; and the need to develop agricultural extension staff capacity to take into consideration social, gender and economic aspects of traditional systems. On the *Ad Hoc* Panel's report, delegates discussed whether to recommend the reappointment of the Panel. Senegal, Saudi Arabia, Italy and Switzerland supported the reappointment, while Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands and Belgium opposed it. CST-2 Chair Mohammad Reza Jabbari (Iran) noted that the CST-2 Bureau, at its intersessional meeting, had discussed and endorsed the Panel's recommendations. Delegates subsequently adopted text proposed by Japan, Egypt and the Netherlands calling for an *ad hoc* panel and setting out its terms of reference.

The COP adopted the decision on traditional knowledge (ICCD/COP(3)/L.3) on Thursday, 25 November. 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 how traditional knowledge is used 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.

The regional groups nominated the following experts to the *ad hoc* panel: Mohammad Jafari (Iran); Falah Abounukta (Syria); Ashot Vard-evanian (Armenia); Dumitru Mihail (Romania); Amadou Maiga (Mali); and Etumesaku Diunganumbe (Democratic Republic of Congo); Pietro Laureano (Italy); Corinne Wacker (Switzerland); Nery Urquiza (Cuba); and Juan Torres Guevara (Peru).

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS: The CST considered early warning systems from Wednesday to Friday, 17-19 November. The Secretariat introduced the background document on existing experience and institutions working on early warning systems (ICCD/COP(3)/CST/6). Subsequent discussion focused on the meaning of early warning systems and the terms of reference for a proposed *ad hoc* panel of experts. Norway noted that early warning systems in its broadest sense should include drought preparedness as well as soil and water management, with particular reference to women. Israel highlighted the novelty of early warning systems in combining short-term drought preparedness and long-term desertification prevention, and in bringing together social and natural sciences. The US noted the importance of integrating short- and long-term data collections. Nigeria suggested that early warning systems require a climate information system, national food production strategies, environmental management plans and local water cycle management models. The WMO noted the importance of linking the data and observation work of the CBD, FCCC and CCD. Italy stressed that while space-based technologies are useful, most data collection and management requires only simple technologies. Argentina, Switzerland and others noted the importance of identifying the end-users of the proposed system and the purposes it is to serve, and suggested convening a group to exchange experiences.

On proposals to establish an *ad hoc* panel, Egypt suggested that its terms of reference should include data and information collection, management and dissemination and should advise countries on drought preparedness measures. Denmark, the Netherlands, Senegal, Sweden and others stressed the need to link the proposed panel with CCD implementation, the development of NAPs and existing networks. France added that accessibility to data should be considered. Canada said that the technical topics covered by the panel should emerge from reports that were prepared by countries, as found in ICCD/COP(3)/CST/6. Brazil expressed concern that a panel was being created without clear guidelines for its long-term work.

On Friday, 19 November, delegates discussed a draft decision on early warning systems "and desertification monitoring and assessment." China, Japan, Kenya and others supported the specification of "desertification monitoring and assessment." Nigeria proposed early warning systems "for desertification monitoring and assessment. Brazil proposed early warning systems "for drought and desertification." France, Sudan, Switzerland and others supported maintaining specific reference to early warning systems only. The Secretariat proposed retaining the CST-2 reference to early warning systems "in their broadest sense" in the title and referring to "and desertification monitoring and assessment" in the text. During final deliberations on the draft decision, Brazil protested the lack of discussion on the technical topics that the proposed panel would consider.

The COP considered the draft decision on early warning systems (ICCD/COP(3)/L.6) on Thursday, 25 November. The EU proposed removing from the terms of reference the call for the panel "to suggest



a medium-term strategy for convention implementation." He said the call for the panel to "take into account the results" of the UN Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (UNDNDR) should be replaced with a call to "cooperate" with the follow-up to the UNDNDR. The decision was adopted with these amendments. The regional groups nominated the following experts to the *ad hoc* panel: Kazuhiko Takeuchi (Japan), Zengyuan Li (China), Richard Muyungi (Tanzania), Abdelah Ghebalou (Algeria), Valentin Sofroni (Moldova), Giorgi Gotsiridze (Georgia), Anneke Trux (Germany), Ali Umran Komuscu (Turkey), Octavio Perez Pardo (Argentina) and Patricio Aceituno (Chile). The decision states that the *ad hoc* panel is to review and elaborate on technical topics emerging from national reports and regional forums, specifically concerning: data collection, accessibility and integration, evaluation and prediction of drought and desertification in cooperation with the follow-up to UNDNDR; and dissemination of information to end-users on the application of early warning systems. The text also invites relevant institutions to provide experts and/or reference materials to support the panel and requests the Secretariat to facilitate its functioning.

CST-4 PROGRAMME OF WORK: Delegates discussed the CST-4 programme of work on Thursday and Friday, 18-19 November. Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Finland recalled the CST mandate to advise the COP on how to implement the CCD and suggested that CST-4 review the national reports with this objective. CST-2 Chair Jabbari noted that the CST-2 Bureau suggested water and soil management, which several speakers supported. Additional suggestions included linkages between the Rio conventions and economic indicators. Delegates ultimately agreed to Canada's suggestion that the examination of soil and water management focus on the applications of traditional knowledge, indicators and early warning systems monitoring and assessment to the sustainable management of soil and water resources for the effective implementation of NAPs.

During the COP's consideration of the draft decision, the EU proposed that, in addition to this issue, CST-4 should 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. The CST Chair noted that the Committee had discussed the decision as drafted. The EU's proposal was noted but not added to the decision.

In the decision on the CST's programme of work (ICCD/COP(3)/L.8), the COP decides that the priority issue to be addressed in depth by CST-4 shall be applications of traditional knowledge, benchmarks and indicators and early warning systems 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 early warning systems. The Secretariat is requested to facilitate the convening of at least one intersessional CST Bureau meeting for the review of COP decisions and to plan and organize CST-4.

INTERPARLIAMENTARY ROUND TABLE

From 22-23 November, 37 parliamentarians from 23 countries participated in a second round table session to discuss the role they could play in combatting desertification at the national level. Michel Temer, President of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies, was elected Chair of the discussion. Grant Chapman (Australia), Joachim Tappe (Germany), Sharon Hay-Webster (Jamaica), Hugo Araujo de la Torre

(Mexico), Abdoulaye Bathily (Senegal) and Jaime Trobo (Interparliamentary Union) served as Vice-Presidents and Paulo Jorge (Angola) served as Rapporteur.

Building on last year's round table session at COP-2, Parliamentarians drafted a Recife Declaration to reaffirm their commitment to the CCD process by, *inter alia*: implementing legislation to combat desertification; strengthening educational, scientific and cultural policies through public awareness campaigns; promoting participation of civil society, local communities, youth and women; and supporting initiatives of international agencies and donor countries to mobilize financial assistance.

The Declaration also notes that parliaments can play an important role through the promotion of interregional, regional and subregional cooperation and the improvement of relations between relevant inter-governmental, non-governmental and community-based organizations, and by adopting multi-stakeholder action programmes that involve international organizations, donor agencies, national institutions, elected representatives, NGOs and the local population.

The parliamentarians agreed to establish an open-ended high-level forum to meet at each CCD COP to share information on national initiatives. The high-level forum will: undertake work on effective national legislation for facilitating the implementation and harmonization of Convention provisions; submit to their executive branches a proposal for the inclusion of environmental disciplines in school curricula; support the formulation of NAPs; and enhance coordination in the implementation of RAPs.

During the closing Plenary delegates took note of the Declaration (ICCD/COP(3)/L.14) and included it as an annex to the COP-3 report.

CLOSING PLENARY

The COP-3 closing Plenary commenced on Friday morning, 26 November. Sudan said the struggle against poverty is aggravated by environmental problems, including desertification. He appealed to donor countries to alleviate the heavy debts of developing countries to enable them to combat desertification more effectively. He expressed hope that the Global Mechanism and Secretariat will be strengthened so they can support developing countries.

Delegates adopted without comment the report on the credentials of delegations (ICCD/COP(3)/19) and the Western Europe and Others Group's and the Latin American and Caribbean Group's nominations to the CST's *ad hoc* panels on traditional knowledge and early warning systems. The meeting was then suspended to allow delegates to complete informal consideration of draft decisions on outstanding issues, including the budget, procedures for the review of implementation, and arbitration and compliance.

At 11:20 pm, the Plenary reconvened and proceeded to adopt by consensus decisions on:

- the Medium-Term Strategy of the Secretariat (ICCD/COP(3)/L.10);
- collaboration with other relevant conventions and international bodies (ICCD/COP(3)/L.16);
- the programme of work of COP-4 (ICCD/COP(3)/L.11);
- the additional regional implementation annex to the Convention (ICCD/COP(3)/L.19);
- procedures for arbitration and conciliation (ICCD/COP(3)/L.4); and
- the Global Mechanism (ICCD/COP(3)/L.12).

The COP also adopted without comment, the report of the Parliamentarian's Round Table (ICCD/COP(3)/L.14) and the Memorandum of Understanding between the COP and IFAD on the Global Mechanism (ICCD/COP(3)/L.17). The Chair of the closing Plenary Session,



Victor Louro (Portugal), drew attention to the draft decision on the programme and budget for 2000–2001 recommended to the COP (ICCD/COP(3)/L.18.Rev.1 and Add. 1), and said it had been revised and accepted by all Parties involved in the informal consultations. The Plenary adopted the decision.

On enhancing the participation of NGOs in the work of the COP (ICCD/COP(3)/L.24), the EU said consultations on the draft decision had been held with NGOs and he recommended that the COP adopt it. It was adopted by consensus.

Delegates adopted the draft decision on the date and venue of COP-4 (ICCD/COP(3)/L.15), following which Germany thanked the COP for the decision and conveyed a message of welcome from the Mayor of Bonn. Mauritania, on behalf of the G-77/China, noted that in the absence of an offer to host the COP, it is to be held at the seat of the Secretariat and asked if Germany's welcome was an offer to host.

The COP also adopted the Recife Initiative towards enhancing the implementation of the CCD (ICCD/COP(3)/L.22). Argentina noted that the initiative highlights the need for a declaration or statement of the commitments and requested including this in the decision on the programme of work for COP-4 (ICCD/COP(3)/L.11).

The Plenary adjourned briefly to await completion of informal consultations on the consideration of reports on CCD implementation and of additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the COP in regular review of the Convention.

Delegates then adopted the draft decision on the review of the implementation of the Convention (ICCD/COP(3)/L.23), following which the EU noted that the decision recalls that reports by Parties, together with advice and information provided by the CST and the Global Mechanism, shall constitute the basis of the review of implementation by the COP. He asked the Secretariat to keep this decision in mind when setting the CST-4 agenda. Benin noted that the advice and information of the CST and Global Mechanism provide just one element of the advice and information for COP consideration.

Delegates then adopted decisions on consideration of reports on implementation of the Convention (ICCD/COP(3)/L.13) and an expression of gratitude to the Government and people of Brazil (ICCD/COP(3)/L.21). Brazil said it was honored to receive so many representatives from the international community and hoped that all who had attended had felt at home. Delegates adopted the report of COP-3 (ICCD/COP(3)/L.9) with the understanding that it would include the meeting's decisions and with a correction noting that, in his capacity as Chair of the COW, John Ashe was invited to attend Bureau meetings, rather than the indication, as drafted, that he was designated an *ex officio* member of the Bureau.

Peru, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group, noted its pride that a country in the region hosted the meeting and said his region looks forward to its sixth regional meeting, which will be in El Salvador. The EU noted that its member States are now more aware that the fight against desertification must be intensified, although it was not yet part of mainstream developments strategies as it should be.

South Africa, on behalf of the Valdivia Group, noted that the group was established to learn from each other's experiences with combating desertification and mitigating drought. Iran, on behalf of the Asian Group, noted that his region attaches great importance to the Convention and its implementation in all regions. He called on donors to support affected regions with technical, technological and financial resources.

The G-77/China reminded delegates that it is the plight and expectations of the billion people affected by drought and desertification that were at the center of this Convention. Benin, on behalf of the African Group, reminded delegates that Africa was behind the initiative

leading to the drafting, adoption and ratification of the Convention and will continue to show political commitment by making the CCD a priority.

Romania noted the Central and East European region's gratitude for the decision regarding the additional regional implementation annex. Executive Secretary Diallo congratulated the representatives of all Parties for the necessary compromises they had achieved. He pledged to make the most out of the options that the COP's decisions provide, said he will remain as long as all are satisfied that there is something to be gained, and promised to strive toward providing more efficient services to the Parties.

A representative of the NGOs welcomed the two dialogues held during the conference, stating that these reflected the goodwill of all Parties. He hoped this would be reflected in the qualitative and quantitative participation of NGOs at future meetings.

Executive Secretary Diallo read a message from COP-3 President Sarney Filho, who welcomed the agreement reached by Parties on crucial issues. He noted the agreement on the Recife Initiative, which he said allows for the adoption of a declaration at COP-4 to strengthen the implementation of the Convention, highlights the need for indicators of the effectiveness of efforts to combat desertification, and helps raise the same interest in desertification as that given to the other Rio conventions. Sarney Filho welcomed the African country reports, which will be very useful to countries submitting reports at the next COP. The Chair declared COP-3 officially closed at 2:10 am, Saturday, 27 November 1999.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF COP-3

Delegates arrived at COP-3 in Recife to address many unresolved issues that the Harmattan winds of COP-2 in Dakar, Senegal, had blown across the Atlantic. A lack of momentum plagued the conference from the outset, in part due to the humidity of the tropics, but more to do with having to tackle several unresolved thorny issues trailing them from COP to COP.

COP-3 will be remembered for its long and difficult negotiations on the budget as well as on procedures to review implementation. Tensions and mistrust between negotiators pervaded these talks and provoked expressions of concern that they might even spell the end of the CCD. COP-3 will also be remembered for missing the opportunity to capitalize on its first chance to identify best practices and shared experiences based on national reports. As the dust begins to settle, it is time to take stock of the meeting, its tension points and missed opportunities and implications for the future of the CCD.

Many delegates expected to focus their attention on the review of CCD implementation at the national level. At the outset, the EU expressed its position that discussions should focus on the national reports on implementation in Africa and that the COP should avoid the "distraction" of issues of "lesser importance," such as establishment of new structures and undertaking additional tasks under the Convention.

For many participants at COP-3, the completion and submission of nearly 80% of the African national reports was a reassuring sign of the importance that affected countries attach to the CCD. In most cases, these reports were prepared with the full participation of stakeholders at both the local and national levels. They demonstrated the forging of fruitful relationships between government and civil society and the multiple benefits that can accrue from implementing the National Action Plans (NAPs); benefits that transcend drylands management and contribute to democratization, gender empowerment and institutional and capacity building. It is clear that there is a wealth of experience and lessons that can be used by other countries in other regions when preparing their NAPs. An overarching concern, noted in many



reports, was the lack of adequate resources to fully implement the NAPs. Many countries reported difficulty in accessing financial resources, the lack of coordination between donor agencies and activities in meeting CCD commitments, and stressed the need to address these difficulties.

Unfortunately, these elements were not fully brought out during the Plenary discussions. Many relevant actors were occupied with informal negotiations and could not fully participate and several reported that the limited consideration even extended to a lack of bilateral exchanges in the corridors regarding affected and donor country reports. Critics said a more thorough analysis of the reports could have provided substantive input upon which to base decisions and ease negotiations on the budgets of the Secretariat and the Global Mechanism as well as on the possibility of establishing a committee to review implementation. This failure to grasp the opportunity as presented in its agenda meant COP-3 missed a turning point from establishing the CCD structure to focusing on its implementation. Some of the reasons given for the failure include the lack of transparency in how the issues were addressed, the absence of institutional memory in the process and the growing uncertainty over the political will and commitment of developed countries to the CCD.

The last week of COP-3 was punctuated by moments of uncertainty resulting from delegates' inability to reach decisions in the informal groups convened to consider all of the COW agenda items. Many delegates felt that the rush to defer consideration of most COW agenda items to these groups excluded the participation of those who were not only new to the process but also knew little about the procedures of this mode of working. This over-reliance on small groups left many delegates uninformed as to the major debates and progress in the negotiations, and they were left to contemplate the lack of transparency in the corridors. They said the absence of an exchange in the COW Plenary denied delegations an opportunity to present their political viewpoints and made it difficult for them to get a broader sense of the issues.

Three additional examples cited as lacking transparency contributed to sentiments of mistrust and doubt during the two weeks. One critical moment was the hurried gaveling by the COW Chair, over the objections of the EU, of a draft decision on the budget. Many delegates questioned the rationale for this action, considering that the budget presented in the draft decision had not been agreed to in the informal consultations. Some said this "imposition" of a decision contravened standard UN procedure and undermined the spirit of consensus that has prevailed since Rio. The level of mistrust increased with the reported discovery during informal negotiations of discrepancies in the figures presented in the draft budget decision, with the error resulting in a disappearance of US\$225,000 from the Global Mechanism for each year in the biennium, which was not accounted for elsewhere. Additional concerns were expressed over the reported misrepresentation, by some Parties, of their positions during the informal negotiations. Constant changes in some presentations regarding the elements they could accept were viewed by others as an attempt to avoid reaching agreement and frustrated negotiators who were trying to find a constructive middle-way. These factors made many actors feel less willing to compromise and contributed to a sense that commitment to the process was declining.

The absence of high-level participation, especially by OECD countries as well as from regions other than Africa, also sent shivers of concern down the corridors. Some saw this as a sign of the low priority given to the Convention in the North as well as the notion among other affected countries that COP-3 was an African-centered meeting and they were thus waiting for their turn at COP-4 to focus on their experi-

ences. The multitude of new faces to the process also provoked expressions of concern as to how the working partnership that has developed since the early stages of the INCD would be maintained and whether the newcomers would honor ongoing debates in the process. Some participants said that the new expectations and ideals these newcomers brought held back the process, since they failed to reflect details of delicate compromises made at earlier COPs. The loss of institutional memory was most apparent during discussions on the establishment of a committee to review Convention implementation (CRIC). The G-77/China proposed the establishment of the CRIC in Rome and Dakar, but even though the related decisions stated that this would be discussed at COP-3, developed country counterparts were not prepared to discuss this issue.

Much of the delay in reaching agreement was also attributed to the relatively low level of decision-making authority among some delegations and, as a result, their need to constantly consult with their capitals on new proposals. Some saw this as one reason underlying the apparent "shifting of goalposts" whenever consensus appeared within reach. These two factors – the lack of high-level representation and the large number of new negotiators – combined to create a leadership void, and had a critical impact on the negotiations in the informal groups. Optimists noted that change is inevitable and that it takes time for new leaders to emerge. Nonetheless, few in Recife were able to provide sound leadership and some delegates' concerns with the Secretariat's interpretation of its mandate, and its apparent attempts to undertake more operational activities than authorized, precluded their search for direction from that end.

The final outcome of the COP was not remarkable, largely because of the negotiating atmosphere. Even though many decisions were for the most part satisfactory, the COP did not advance the Convention's work on implementation other than to identify limited changes to be made at COP-4 and once again to put off serious decisions on many of the issues.

With time, participants may come to view COP-3 as an awakening to the reality that Parties must evaluate their commitment to the CCD and remain constantly vigilant to the state of the partnership. The main lessons relate to the need for good leadership in directing Parties' deliberations, transparency in the work of the Parties and a need to maintain an open and honest negotiating atmosphere in order to foster constructive progress. While COP-3 lost some important opportunities to learn from the national experiences, it may have acquired more valuable lessons from its shortcomings. It is the hope of many that delegations will arrive at COP-4 charged to work more constructively on the agenda before them and to grasp the myriad of benefits to social, environmental, economic and political development, that are possible through implementation of this Convention.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE COP-4

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN SEMI-ARID REGIONS (WORLD SEMI-ARID '99): This symposium will meet in João Pessoa, Paraíba, Brazil, from 29 November-2 December 1999. For information, contact: Dorival C. Bruni, President of the Brazilian Society for the Environment (BIOSFERA), P.O. Box 2432, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, CEP, 20001-970; tel: +55-21-252-1631; fax: +55 21-221-0155; e-mail: biosfera@biosfera.com.br; Internet: <http://www.biosfera.com.br>.

THIRD CONFERENCE ON DESERTIFICATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES: This conference will convene in Saudi Arabia from 30 November-4 December 1999. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat, P.O. Box 260129, Haus



Carstanjen, D-53153 Bonn, Germany, tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2898/99; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.de; Internet: <http://www.unccd.de>.

THIRD AFRO-ASIAN FORUM ON INTERREGIONAL COOPERATION FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD: This Forum is scheduled to convene in January 2000. For more information, contact the UNCCD Secretariat (see above).

FIRST INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM AND WORKSHOP ON ARID ZONE ENVIRONMENTS: These meetings will be held from 23-25 January 2000 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. For more information contact: Environmental Research and Wildlife Development Agency, Abu Dhabi, UAE; tel: +971-241-441; fax: +971-241-4131; e-mail: alghais@emirates.net.ae.

FIFTH MEETING OF THE SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL ADVICE OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY: SBSTTA-5 will be held from 31 January-4 February 2000 in Montreal, Canada. Issues related to the CCD to be addressed include dryland, Mediterranean, arid, semi-arid, grassland, savannah and agricultural biological diversity. For more information, contact: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, World Trade Centre, 393 St. Jacques Street, Office 300, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H2Y 1N9; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: secretariat@biodiv.org; Internet: <http://www.biodiv.org>.

FOURTH AND FINAL SESSION OF THE INTERGOVERNMENTAL FORUM ON FORESTS (IFF): This meeting will be held from 31 January-11 February 2000 in New York. For more information, contact: IFF Secretariat, 2 UN Plaza, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10017 USA; tel: +1-212-963-3401; fax: +1-212-963-3463; e-mail: hurtubia@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forests.htm>.

SECOND AFRICAN-LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN FORUM ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD: This Forum is scheduled to meet in February 2000 in Bamako, Mali. For more information, contact the UNCCD Secretariat (see above).

INTERSESSIONAL AD HOC WORKING GROUPS OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: These meetings will be held from 28 February-10 March 2000 in New York and will focus on issues including land management, agriculture, forests and the outcomes of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests. For more information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev, Division for Sustainable Development, UN Plaza, Room DC2-2220, New York, NY 10017, USA; tel: +1-212-963-5949; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: vasilyev@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd.htm>.

LAUNCHING OF TPN2 (AGROFORESTRY AND SOIL CONSERVATION): This meeting of Thematic Programme Network 2 is scheduled for February 2000 in New Delhi, India. For more information, contact the UNCCD Secretariat (see above).

LAUNCHING OF TPN3 (RANGELAND MANAGEMENT AND FIXATION OF SAND DUNES): This meeting of Thematic Programme Network 3 is scheduled for March 2000 in Tehran, Iran. For more information, contact the UNCCD Secretariat (see above).

SECOND WORLD WATER FORUM AND MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE: This meeting will be held from 17-22 March 2000 in The Hague, The Netherlands. The conference is co-organized by the World Water Council and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For more information contact: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EB The Hague, The Netherlands, tel: +31-70-348-5402; fax: +31-70-348-6792; e-mail: secretariat@worldwaterforum.org; Internet: <http://www.worldwaterforum.org>.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN ARID REGIONS: This meeting will be convened from 27-29 March 2000 in Kuwait. Contact: Mohammad Al-Sarawi, Chairman, PO Box 24395, Safat, Kuwait 13104; tel: +965-565-0554; fax: +965-565-3328; e-mail: muna@epa.org.kw.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON ARTICLE 8(J): This meeting will be held from 27-31 March 2000 in Seville, Spain, to address traditional knowledge. For more information, contact the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (see above).

EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: CSD-8 will meet from 24 April to 5 May 2000 in New York, to consider integrated planning and management of land resources, agriculture, and financial resources/trade and investment/economic growth. For information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev, Division for Sustainable Development, UN Plaza, Room DC2-2220, New York, NY 10017, USA; tel: +1-212-963-5949; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: vasilyev@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd.htm>.

FOURTH BIENNIAL CONGRESS OF THE AFRICAN DIVISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HYDROLOGIC ENGINEERING AND RESEARCH: Entitled "Conserving and Sharing Water Resources in a Water Scarce Environment" this meeting will be held from 7-9 June 2000 in Windhoek, Namibia. Topics covered include: groundwater supplies, water demand management, desalination, wastewater treatment, rain harvesting, the sea as a source, international cooperation and environmental problems in arid countries. For more information, contact: Kai A.H. Lund, Congress Chairman, Lund Consulting, P.O. Box 3106, Windhoek, Namibia; fax: +264-612-3478; e-mail: lce@lce.com.na; Internet:

FOURTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO UN CONFERENCE TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: COP-4 is tentatively scheduled to meet from 16-27 October 2000 in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact the UNCCD Secretariat (see above).