



CCD COP-4 HIGHLIGHTS

WEDNESDAY, 20 DECEMBER 2000

The Plenary convened all day to hear the last 32 statements in the special segment on the implementation of the Convention from one Prime Minister, and high-level officials and representatives of UN bodies and specialized agencies, and to engage in a dialogue with NGO's. The *ad hoc* working group on the review of CCD implementation (AHWG) met to consider the Latin America and Caribbean and Northern Mediterranean regional reports, and six country reports from Italy, Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Portugal and Moldova.

PLENARY

SPECIAL SEGMENT: The UNFCCC COP-6 President and the CONVENTION ON WETLANDS emphasized the links between their Conventions and the CCD. The INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, the PERMANENT INTERSTATE COMMITTEE FOR DROUGHT CONTROL IN THE SAHEL, the AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, the ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY, the UN INSTITUTE FOR TRAINING AND RESEARCH, the UN CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT, the AFRICAN ORGANIZATION OF CARTOGRAPHY AND REMOTE SENSING and the HOLY SEE described their past and continued support to CCD activities.

On financing for the CCD, BOTSWANA and GUINEA BISSAU called for a Global Environment Facility (GEF) window to fund CCD implementation. RWANDA called for a full-fledged financial mechanism under the CCD. SWEDEN and PAKISTAN welcomed the GEF decision to explore possible support for desertification activities. LAO PDR urged donors to support the Global Mechanism (GM). SUDAN, INDONESIA and MYANMAR called for support to activities in their regions.

GHANA said trade perpetuates land degradation and called on the World Trade Organization to address concerns affecting Africa. CHAD supported the establishment of a committee on CCD implementation. CAMBODIA and SRI LANKA wanted to collaborate with the CCD Secretariat. PALESTINE said its recent environmental law has a chapter on desertification. YEMEN noted that combating desertification improves agriculture and aids poverty alleviation. ISRAEL said its research has demonstrated the limits of science and technology and the need to act prudently in fragile ecosystems.

PALAU, the MARSHALL ISLANDS and PAPUA NEW GUINEA urged the Secretariat to arrange a regional workshop for the Pacific Islands.

ECUADOR said it would participate in CCD activities and the Dryland Land Degradation Assessment and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. TURKEY supported the creation of a fifth annex for Central and Eastern Europe.

The NGOs described their local level activities to support CCD implementation. The Chair concluded the segment noting that the statements indicated strong support for the CCD from both developed and developing Parties as well as from international institutions.

NGO DIALOGUE: The second open dialogue with NGOs considered gender perspectives in combating desertification. Opening the session, CCD Deputy Executive Secretary Kalela noted that although women in desertified areas are the hardest hit by desertification, there is a large and growing presence of women decision-makers, who could make policies to transform the reality of women in drylands.

USC CANADA said the purpose of the session was to highlight, through the presentation of case studies, some of the results, challenges and lessons learned by women in CCD implementation.

The CONFEDERATION D'ONG'S EN AFRIQUE CENTRALE (Cameroon) noted the top-down, semi-directed and bottom-up approaches dominant in the development of National Action Programmes (NAPs) and said most national reports lack information on women's participation.

Despite government efforts to mainstream gender, the UGANDA WOMEN TREE PLANTING MOVEMENT noted persisting constraints, including land insecurity, insufficient credit and conflict. The ASSOCIATION DE FORMATION ET D'APPUI DE DEVELOPMENT (Mali) focused on girl-child education and women's literacy programmes, and their impact on national resource conservation.

In the ensuing discussion, AUSTRALIA emphasized the importance of local government in attaining sustainable development. UGANDA described the policy areas recommended for gender mainstreaming, based on results from a local study. SIERRA LEONE called for a format to include NGO activities in the CCD national reports. Noting that a focus on rights and empowerment assures success in project implementation, NORWAY stressed that these issues should be the focus in drylands and underscored women's involvement.

NATURAMA (Burkina Faso), said cooperation has to go beyond technical and policy implementation aspects, to include institutional aspects and communication. BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL called on CCD Parties to accede to the Convention on Migratory Species and urged the CCD Secretariat to join UNEP's initiative on harmonized reporting. ARGENTINA, on behalf of an NGO network, outlined some of the inputs of women in the NAP processes. The ZAMBIA ALLIANCE OF WOMEN described the



process of achieving an 18-point gender policy and said Zambia's NAP is gender sensitive. The CARIBBEAN NETWORK FOR INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT (Trinidad and Tobago) emphasized the links between poverty, illiteracy and desertification.

NIGERIA, for G-77/China, with NORWAY and PAKISTAN expressed support for similar dialogues with NGOs in future. In his concluding remarks, COP-4 President Batjargal said if women's interests were addressed, CCD implementation would be successful.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON IMPLEMENTATION

LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL REPORTS: EL SALVADOR, speaking for the Latin America and Caribbean Region (LAC), stressed the interrelated problems of land degradation, poverty and migration. He said the LAC Regional Action Programme (RAP) includes: work on indicators and benchmarks; an information network; support to harmonize public policy; promotion of traditional knowledge; and strengthening of horizontal cooperation. He highlighted the problem of insufficient financing.

In the discussion that followed, the GM highlighted its role in assisting countries to prepare fundable project/programme proposals. GUATEMALA called for GEF support to regional projects. Delegates stressed the link between economic development and land resource preservation.

NATIONAL REPORTS FROM THE LAC REGION:

ARGENTINA said its NAP was a mechanism that enables decentralized coordination of national activities, without establishing a large focal point. He said it is a continuous process and has been revised to incorporate lessons learned. BOLIVIA outlined the institutional structure of its NAP, which focuses on awareness raising, enhancing competencies of authorities, actor participation and promotion of new economic activities. CUBA stressed maintaining soil productivity, links to economic and social development and community action, as relevant aspects of its efforts to combat desertification. CHILE underscored local-level capacity building and the development of an electronic network as successful actions. On obstacles to NAP implementation, ARGENTINA said its NAP does not have its own funds, but draws on a variety of sources, which makes it more difficult to develop national and regional activities. He added that the EU agricultural subsidies affect the competitiveness and profitability of national export products and thus, impacts on application of new technologies. He urged donors to include desertification concerns in bilateral initiatives. CHILE highlighted the lack of awareness of the CCD at the institutional level and institutional inertia. Further problems raised included inadequate awareness of the severity of desertification, lack of integration in planning and insufficient financial resources.

Delegates commented on the GM's contribution to the NAPs, the value of broad stakeholder inclusion, and how to make the NAP a win-win opportunity for all sectors. They stressed the benefits of information exchange, cooperation and joint projects within the LAC region. In response to a question from the floor, CUBA said results have been achieved through: implementation of synergies with other sectors, such as sustainable forest management; and grassroots level involvement including, women's organizations in rural areas.

NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN REGIONAL

REPORT: ITALY presented this regional report. He underscored the need to recognize socio-economic factors when identifying proper desertification policies. He noted that areas affected by desertification have a GDP that is 75% lower than the EU average, causing delayed economic development. He outlined the RAP priorities, including: identifying areas at risk of desertification; establishing common methodology; collecting, analyzing and exchanging technical and scientific data; promoting traditional

knowledge; and collaborating with existing regional and sub-regional activities. He said the RAP does not duplicate national activities and focuses mainly on networking. He noted a need to assess desertification impacts on the environment and economic activities and promote integration of desertification in all European policies.

NATIONAL REPORTS FROM THE NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION AND OTHERS: ITALY said it is combating desertification both domestically and in cooperation with developing countries. He highlighted NAP priority areas including soil protection, sustainable management of water resources, minimization of production impact, and land restoration.

PORTUGAL noted water erosion, poor agricultural practices, and abandonment of managed lands as causes of land degradation. He highlighted the long NAP development process in his country, and said there would be no new sources of funding, but a reorientation of existing ones. MOLDOVA highlighted its recent NAP that includes provision for economic mechanisms, such as credits and restructuring of the tax system, the integrated management of soils, and anti-erosion and rehabilitation measures. He appealed for support for NAP implementation.

Problems identified included lack of coordination, financing and participation. Delegates discussed how to raise awareness and mobilize civil society, and whether to enhance existing laws or draft new ones to implement the NAP. One delegate supported debt swaps to combat desertification and poverty, and another underscored strengthening existing local level institutions to undertake desertification activities rather than create new ones.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS AND WORKING GROUPS

The informal working group on programme and budget continued its deliberations Wednesday. There was divergence over whether to increase the Secretariat's budget to accommodate the three positions not funded in the last biennium, a proposed contribution of US\$ 400,000 to the GM and a proposed contribution of US\$ 300,000 to each of the regional coordination units.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Consultations on a fifth regional annex for Central and Eastern Europe continued Wednesday. While countries from the region are calling for adoption of the annex at COP-4, diverging views were expressed on the procedures for submission and adoption of what is technically a CCD amendment. These countries say that the adoption of the fifth annex would catalyze their ratification of the Convention, though some representatives of other regions are questioning their commitment to the CCD. Despite some assurances to the contrary from donor countries, countries in other regions also worry that funding could be allocated to fifth annex countries at their expense.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: The COW meets all day to consider agenda items on the GM, and outstanding items relating to consideration of Rule 47 of the rules of procedure. It will also consider progress reports by the Chairs of the informal working groups and is expected to complete its work.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP: The group meets in the Committee Room at 11:00 a.m. to consider the interim report of the Co-Chairs on the review of CCD implementation. This report, which summarizes conclusions from the discussions, will be presented to the COP and will provide guidance on further intersessional work.