



SUMMARY OF THE FOURTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 11-22 DECEMBER 2000

The Fourth Conference of the Parties (COP-4) to the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) met from 11-22 December in Bonn, Germany. Approximately 1000 participants attended the conference, including 111 NGOs, 90 IGOs and 40 UN bodies and specialized organizations. As was the case at COP-3 in Recife last year, many left the conference contemplating the missed opportunities, laying blame on time lost to procedural obstacles that hindered progress on substantial issues relating to the review of CCD implementation. They felt that little had changed since COP-3 with many of the same problems relating to procedural issues, loss of institutional memory, a void in leadership, and apparent disinterest in the CCD among some developed countries, appearing again.

However, COP-4 did have some notable achievements. It adopted the fifth regional annex for Central and Eastern European countries, commenced work on the *ad hoc* working group to review implementation (AHWG), decided to consider modalities for the establishment of a committee to review implementation of the Convention (CRIC), and adopted a decision relating to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and how to enhance access to that body to assist countries with CCD implementation.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CCD

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. 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 and regional action programmes by national governments, in cooperation with donors, local populations and NGOs. Since COP-3 the number of ratifications has increased from 159 to 172. The newest Party is Papua New Guinea, which acceded to the Convention on 6 December 2000.

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 an 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 preparations included discussion of the Secretariat's programme and budget, the functions of and administrative arrangements for the financial mechanism under the Convention, the Global Mechanism, and the establishment of the Commission on Science and Technology (CST). Considerable progress was made, especially on scientific and technological cooperation, but some important issues, such as the size and membership of the COP Bureau, the host institutions and some functions of the Global Mechanism were 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

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the CCD	1
COP-4 Report	2
Plenary Deliberations	3
Committee of the Whole	4
Committee on Science and Technology	9
<i>Ad hoc</i> Working Group on the Review of CCD Implementation	11
Inter-Parliamentary Round Table	13
Closing Plenary	13
A Brief Analysis of COP-4	14
Things to Look For	16

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selected Bonn, Germany, as the location for the Convention's 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 should consider linkages between traditional and modern knowledge. 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: Parties met in Dakar, Senegal, from 30 November to 11 December 1998. The CST met in parallel to the COP on 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. The Secretariat moved to Bonn 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. Eastern 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 linkages 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: The Parties met at COP-3 in Recife, Brazil, from 15-26 November 1999. The CST met in parallel to the COP from 16-19 November. The COP approved the long-negotiated Memorandum of Understanding between the COP and IFAD regarding the Convention's Global Mechanism. It decided to establish an *ad hoc* working group (AHWG) to review and analyze in depth the reports on national, subregional and regional action programmes (NAPs, SRAPs, and RAPs) in order to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention. Delegates also agreed to continue consultations on the draft additional regional implementation annex for Eastern and Central Europe, with a view to adopting it at COP-4. They noted the need for a declaration on the commitments to enhance implementation of the Convention and decided to invite proposals for the formulation of such a declaration for consideration and adoption at COP-4. The COP also appointed an *ad hoc* panel on traditional knowledge and an *ad hoc* panel on early warning systems. It decided to consider the operational strategy of the Global Mechanism at COP-4.

COP-4 REPORT

The Fourth Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification opened with a welcoming ceremony on Monday afternoon, 11 December. In his welcoming statement, CCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo said that COP-4 should constitute a defining step to move the implementation of the Convention from reporting to assessment to bring actions about to address the concerns of the millions of people threatened by poverty and land degradation.

COP-3 President and Brazilian Minister of the Environment, Jose Sarney Filho, urged Parties to revive the spirit of the 1992 Rio Conference, noting that it was fundamental to make progress at COP-4, to at least prepare the populations living in fragile environments to cope with more adverse conditions. He recalled the Recife initiative, which proposes that COP-4 adopt a declaration of commitments, and urged the various governmental institutions, NGOs and multilateral agencies

to participate actively in formulating the declaration and making it one of the main goals of the Conference. On financial mechanisms to support national plans to combat desertification, he called on the GEF to seriously examine opening a window to give financial support to projects specifically linked to the CCD.

Harri Holkeri (Finland), President of the 55th session of the UN General Assembly, assured delegates of the Assembly's support for the CCD. He recalled that the UN Millennium Summit resolved to prioritize the eradication of poverty, which affects 1.2 billion people. He also noted the efforts to seek synergies between the Rio conventions and applauded the recent review of cooperation between the GEF and the conventions. He noted with satisfaction that more than thirty NAPs have been prepared by affected countries and stressed that inter-ministerial cooperation is important in such processes. He finally noted that developing countries' commitment to fulfilling their obligations under the CCD should galvanize the interest of the international community.

Bonn Mayor Bärbel Dieckman welcomed COP-4 participants to the city and said the presence of the German President clearly indicated the importance Germany attaches to this Convention.

German President Johannes Rau officially opened COP-4 at 4:00 p.m. Noting that some developed countries were practicing "eco-colonialism," he urged them not to shirk their responsibility for short-term gains and to be sufficiently self-critical to admit their failure to combat poverty and realize development in developing countries. He said developed countries must stick to the 0.7% GNP target for development assistance despite short-term difficulties in realizing it and take their responsibility to provide the best technology, financial assistance, transfer of know-how and rules to assure competition.

Following the welcoming ceremony, COP-3 President Sarney Filho opened the Plenary session and underscored four areas needing attention at COP-4: strengthening the Global Mechanism to enable more decisive support to the CCD; consideration of the best procedures for the regular review of CCD implementation; strengthening the CST to effectively support the COP and assist affected countries; and including in its outcomes the need for special emphasis on drought and desertification in the Rio+10 process.

Delegates then elected by acclamation Zambin Batjargal (Mongolia) to serve as COP-4 President. In his opening remarks, Batjargal noted that desertification remains a significant issue to many people, especially in terms of its impact on peoples' livelihoods in the affected areas. He hoped for cooperation and support in efforts to combat desertification.

President Batjargal thereafter suspended the meeting for two hours to allow for a meeting with the regional Chairs to discuss the nominations to the COP Bureau. This issue was not resolved, and the Plenary was adjourned for the day at 6:50 p.m.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: On Tuesday, 12 December, the COP adopted its provisional agenda (ICCD/COP(4)/1), which also contained the provisional agenda of the CST and Committee of the Whole (COW). They decided to accredit as observers two intergovernmental organizations and 30 NGOs (ICCD/COP(4)/9).

The COP then elected the following Vice Presidents on the Bureau: Abdallah Ghebalou (Algeria), Jiri Hlavacek (Czech Republic), Carlos Humberto Salazar (El Salvador), Ketevan Tsereteli (Georgia), Philbert Brown (Jamaica), Maïga Hamadou (Mali), Lennart Bondesson (Sweden), Theresia Adam (Switzerland), and Farouk Adli (Syria). They elected Olanrewaju Smith (Canada) to serve as Chair of the CST. Kabelo Mafura (Lesotho) was elected Chair of the COW.

The COP also adopted Syria's proposal to suspend the meetings for half an hour daily at 4:30 p.m. to allow Muslim delegates to break the Ramadan fast.



PLENARY DELIBERATIONS

STATEMENTS BY PARTIES AND OBSERVERS: Parties, observers, UN agencies, international organizations and NGOs offered opening statements on Tuesday, 12 December. CCD Executive Secretary Diallo summarized activities undertaken at the national, subregional and regional levels.

The WMO invited the COP to give special attention to, *inter alia*: developing and enhancing proactive drought early warning systems; determining vulnerability profiles; conducting comprehensive assessment of social, economic and environmental impacts based on indicators that can be monitored as drought develops; and providing technical and financial resources to the most vulnerable countries.

Noting a steep increase in the number of requests for the Global Mechanism's services, IFAD said bilateral support to the Global Mechanism had been sporadic and insufficient. He urged the COP to reaffirm its commitments to support the Global Mechanism and assure that it is allocated the necessary resources to perform its duties most effectively. The Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) called for synergies at all levels, including at national levels, between the CCD and the CMS.

The FAO highlighted the need to strengthen efforts to identify and disseminate simple and effective agricultural practices that simultaneously enhance resource and biodiversity conservation, food security, social stability and incomes, and undertake and implement institutional reforms aimed at strengthening local populations' access to micro-credit, agricultural markets, land and basic infrastructure to attain food security. UNESCO outlined its initiatives to produce educational materials on combating desertification and its planned scientific studies, including on traditional knowledge.

Nigeria, on behalf of the G-77/China, called for the: enhancement of the Global Mechanism to enable it to fulfill its mandate; establishment of an institutional structure to monitor CCD implementation; and formulation of a declaration of renewed and strengthened commitments, with a timeframe and measurable results. France, on behalf of the EU, noted some shortcomings in the function of the CST, which results in delays in effective CCD implementation, and called on it to reorganize its procedures to be consistent with its mandate.

Chile, on behalf of the Latin American and the Caribbean Group (GRULAC), underscored the need for: financial and technical support to prepare the NAPs; a COP-4 decision to support the regional coordination units from the Secretariat's budget; and specific initiatives undertaken in collaboration with other UN agencies, the GEF and donor countries to finance regional and subregional action programmes.

Benin, on behalf of the African Group, called on COP-4 to ensure that: the AHWG established by COP-3 remains open-ended; its existence is not a hindrance to negotiations in the committee to review CCD implementation; work can be undertaken in the intersessional period; and the conclusions and recommendations from the various Parties, and the AHWG are part of a COP-5 decision. He supported the G-77/China call to assign the GEF as the temporary financial mechanism for the Convention.

Syria, on behalf of the Asian Group, underscored the need to combat desertification at the international level to foster development.

The German Working Group on Desertification, speaking for the NGOs, expressed concern over: the lack of civil society participation in the NAP process and called for indicators on such participation; the outstanding issues relating to the budget and institutional mechanisms; the increasing problems among affected populations; and the fact that desertification is still not accorded priority by some affected and partner nations.

SPECIAL SEGMENT: From Monday, 18 December, to Wednesday, 20 December, delegates heard statements from three Prime Ministers, 96 ministers and other high-level officials and representatives of UN organizations, bodies and specialized agencies.

In his welcoming remarks, COP-4 President Batjargal said the CCD could considerably improve conditions in affected countries. CCD Executive Secretary Diallo called for an extensive review of national implementation reports. He presented a message from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who appealed to donors to mobilize adequate resources for affected developing country use and called for the designation of a GEF window to finance CCD implementation.

UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer said the CCD is a chance for the North and South to enter into a global compact to secure our common future.

Recalling his experience at the recent climate change negotiations, Jan Pronk, Framework Convention on Climate Change (FCCC) COP-6 President, highlighted seven important lessons in environmental negotiations including the need to: define the issue at stake in global terms, and in terms of both environment and development; make it a political issue; use the latest scientific findings and apply the precautionary principle if science cannot give definite answers; minimize the focus on procedural issues; not to shy away from financial issues; and prepare to make decisions instead of looking for other common positions. The Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) described extensive joint activities under the biodiversity and desertification conventions.

The affected developing countries, in their statements, described national efforts to combat desertification, including the development of NAPs and the support they need, while developed countries made pledges of support. Luxembourg said it intends to meet its 0.7% of GNP ODA target; the UK will increase its ODA from 0.26% to 0.33% in 2003-2004; and Denmark pledged 3 million Danish Kroner to the Global Mechanism. Canada said it would support the 10-member Nile River Basin Consortium and anti-desertification programmes in Ghana and Nigeria. On the issue of financing, Benin and Iran urged developed countries to live up to their CCD commitments by channeling resources through the Global Mechanism and providing financial and technological resources.

Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the G-77/China, supported by several of its members, emphasized the need to designate the GEF as the financial mechanism of the CCD. Benin concurred, adding that the GEF should be opened to support combating desertification, as happened with the recently concluded Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). Presenting its declaration drawn from a two-day meeting held on 12 and 13 December, a representative of the Inter-Parliamentary Roundtable called for a new GEF window to finance CCD implementation.

The GEF outlined five proposals responding to the November 2000 GEF Council request for a paper for its 2001 meeting on the best options to strengthen GEF support for CCD implementation.

France, on behalf of the EU, said it is possible to mobilize resources for the CCD without a financial instrument. Sweden and Pakistan welcomed the GEF Council decision and Germany said he would call for the enhancement of GEF support for CCD implementation at the GEF's next replenishment negotiations. Italy noted promising opportunities for GEF to fund land degradation programmes, and stressed the need for a new phase that utilizes different approaches such as debt-swap schemes.

Laos urged donors to support the Global Mechanism. The European Commission also urged for its strengthening, as additional bodies would only stretch resources further.



Swaziland said the CCD is the most financially marginalized of the Rio conventions. Saudi Arabia said he saw no justification to exclude the CCD from GEF benefits. Denmark and Japan said donor assistance could never substitute for affected country efforts, and Finland added that it cannot replace private financial resources.

With regard to the COP's input into Rio+10, the Arab-Maghreb Union proposed preparing a report on African CCD implementation and India suggested a report on Parties' fulfillment of their CCD commitments. South Africa hoped that Rio+10 would reaffirm commitments to Agenda 21 and contribute to African Renaissance.

The G-77/China, supported by Burkina Faso, Chad, Niger and Senegal, also called for the establishment of a committee to review implementation of the Convention.

Israel said its research demonstrated limits in science and technology, and thus, the need to act prudently in fragile ecosystems. Algeria said developed countries must reallocate resources currently diverted to activities no longer warranted in peace time. Norway and Jordan noted the important role of women in anti-desertification activities. Ghana stated that trade perpetuates land degradation, and called on the World Trade Organization to address concerns affecting Africa. Togo noted additional burdens to developing countries that constrain their ability to combat desertification, in particular economic inequality, the debt burden, wars and the HIV/AIDS scourge. Mauritania underscored the need to strengthen NGO participation at COPs.

On regional concerns, Georgia, Romania, the Czech Republic and Turkey appealed to all Parties to adopt the fifth CCD annex for Eastern and Central Europe. Noting the low participation of small island developing States, the Cook Islands, supported by Palau, the Marshall Islands and Papua New Guinea, urged the Secretariat to arrange a workshop for the region and prepare a long-term regional strategy.

In his concluding remarks, the COP President noted the strong support for the CCD from both developed and developing Parties, as well as from international institutions.

NGO DIALOGUE: Two plenary sessions devoted to dialogue with NGOs were held on Friday, 15 December, and on Wednesday, 20 December. During the first meeting, delegates heard panel presentations on synergies between the FCCC, CBD and the CCD and on how stakeholders can assist governments and communities in CCD implementation.

Executive Secretary Diallo thanked Canada and Switzerland, the countries that supported NGO participation at COP-4. Despite the small presence of NGOs at COP-4, compared to the 4000 at the FCCC COP-6, he expressed his belief that they could be effective.

The International NGO Network on Desertification (RIOD) highlighted: the need for political will; achievements resulting from the memoranda of understanding between the conventions and other partners; and harmonization of the three Rio conventions at the national level to enhance implementation.

The CCD Secretariat outlined its cooperation initiatives with other partners. The FCCC Secretariat underscored attaining synergy at the national level, including through organizing multi-stakeholder forums and increasing interactions among the conventions. The Desert Research Foundation - Namibia stressed the importance of harmonizing synergies at the national level with those at the local level.

Rogatien Biao (Benin) gave examples of crosscutting activities relating to the Rio conventions, which cover integrated water resource management, reforestation, revegetation and tree cultivation, and the promotion of renewable energy resources. He said synergies should be complementary and additional to the provisions of the conventions.

The Germany NGO Forum on Environment and Development underscored the need for coherent national policies. The Global Mechanism outlined its activities relating to the promotion of enabling environments to enhance civil society involvement in NAPs, and exchanges between resource users, noting that these will be upscaled in the future.

UNEP identified potential areas for collaboration with NGOs, including gender, natural resource management and alternative energy technologies. She noted the need for NGO capacity building regarding development of fundable projects.

The GEF highlighted mechanisms it has developed to support synergies through the land degradation programme, including resource mobilization, the integrated land and water management programme in Africa and a capacity-building initiative.

Issues raised in the ensuing discussions included: the important role NGOs play in CCD implementation; the need to support NGO involvement in the COP's work; and a request for a COP resolution calling for progress on synergies between the different conventions.

The second meeting on Wednesday, 20 December, focused on the gender aspects of combating desertification. CCD Deputy Executive Secretary Aira 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 Confédération d'ONG's en Afrique Centrale (Cameroon) noted the top-down, semi-directed and bottom-up approaches dominant in the development of NAPs and said most national reports lacked 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 Développement (Mali) focused on girl-child education and women's literacy programmes, and their impact on national resource conservation.

Delegates discussed the importance of local government in attaining sustainable development; the need to focus on women's rights and empowerment in dryland management; and the need for cooperation that goes beyond technical and policy implementation aspects. Sierra Leone called for a format to include NGO activities in the CCD national reports. Several delegates 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 succeed.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Committee of the Whole (COW) started its work on Tuesday, 12 December, chaired by Kabelo Mafura (Lesotho), and completed its work on Friday, 22 December. The items on its agenda (ICCD/COP(4)/1) were: programme and budget; aspects on the implementation of the Convention, including initial consideration of reports on implementation, procedures and institutional mechanisms for regular reviews of the CCD, an additional regional implementation annex, and cooperation with other organizations; the Global Mechanism; and the review of activities to promote and strengthen relationships with other relevant conventions and organizations.

After an initial discussion of the agenda items, the COW established a five-member Bureau to facilitate the work of the *ad hoc* working group on the review of CCD implementation (AHWG) and



established two informal open-ended working groups on the draft declaration on the commitments to enhance implementation (Recife Initiative) and on regional coordination units (RCUs) and programme and budget. While the former convened within a day, the working groups on RCUs and programme and budget were merged and convened starting Monday, 18 December.

During the first week, the COW reviewed its work programme and considered issues scheduled for the second week due to a failure of the AHWG to start its work as scheduled on Wednesday, 13 December, because regional groups had to resolve questions relating to the bureau and terms of reference of the AHWG. A contact group was convened to negotiate the review procedure and resolve organizational matters, including the composition of the Bureau.

PROGRAMME AND BUDGET: On Wednesday, 13 December, CCD Deputy Executive Secretary Kalela presented the Secretariat's Programme and Budget contained in nine documents. Document ICCD/COP(4)/2 contains an executive summary of Addenda 1-8. Addenda 1 and 2 deal with the feasibility of regional coordination units (RCUs) and proposals on ways to improve the Secretariat's budgeting and reporting. Addenda 3-8 deal with various aspects of the Convention's trust funds: its performance in 1999; its supplementary activities in 1999; its audit in 1999; its performance in the 2000-1 biennium as of June 2000 and current administrative arrangements and its supplementary activities for the same period; and a report on the status of contributions for the 2000-1 biennium, as of 30 November 2000.

In the discussion on the feasibility of the RCUs, Mauritania, speaking for the G-77/ China, urged the COP to allocate, on a predictable basis, US\$420,000 to finance the core aspects of the three RCUs that are based in Mexico City, Abidjan and Bangkok. He also suggested establishing an informal group to consider the issue. He supported a suggestion by Switzerland to consider drawing the funds from the Secretariat and GM operational budgets. China offered partial support to the Asian RCU. Noting the RCUs' importance in South-South cooperation, the EU preferred mobilizing resources from Parties and existing institutions such as the Permanent Interstate Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and Sahara-Sahel Observatory (OSS). In response to Japan's inquiry on the relationship between the RCUs and the CCD, Argentina pointed to the regional coordination activities mentioned in the CCD's four regional implementation annexes. Canada said the effort duplicated existing regional initiatives.

The discussion on ways to improve the budgeting and reporting processes centered on three alternatives presented by the Secretariat, namely, processes that are programme-based, result-based or programme-based with an indication of the results. Delegates acknowledged the need for transparency, but differed over the process. The G-77/China and several developing countries preferred programme-based budgeting, which is also used by the sister conventions on biodiversity and climate change. The EU opted for a result-based system, as used by UNDP and the UN Population Fund, based on the work programmes of the Secretariat, GM and CST. He requested that an audit of the base budget for the 2000-2001 biennium be submitted to COP-5. Egypt said the proposed approaches are techniques, not systems to assure transparency, and are under consideration in the UN. She referred to several UN resolutions that demonstrated that the EU's proposal would flout current UN budgeting rules. Canada sought information on the latest General Assembly decisions on the matter.

In the discussion on the Trust Funds, the G-77/ China: proposed that new resources be allocated to the *ad hoc* panel on early warning systems; noted the clean audit report; disagreed with a recommendation to do away with the small assessed contributions from UN

member States as it would flout UN regulations; sought clarification from the GM about a carry-over in the 1999 budget without COP approval and on the non-reflection in the report of a US\$2.5 million donation to the GM from IFAD. The EU noted the large number of workshops, but low level of CST activities. He requested, for the next biennium, the elaboration of a work programme with performance indicators, a distinction between the basic and extraordinary budgets and a reflection of the synergies with the sister conventions.

Although two informal open-ended working groups were established immediately to prepare draft decisions on RCUs and ways to improve budgeting and reporting, they were unable to start their work due to the reluctance of delegates to chair the working groups. The groups were later merged into one and began work on Monday, 18 December, chaired of Mohammed Reza Jabbari (Iran). The group met several times and based their discussion on the COW Chair's draft decision. The main divergences were on 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 Global Mechanism and a proposed contribution of US\$300,000 to each of the regional coordination units, resources for the AHWG and the rationale for discussing the budget in a non-budget year.

Final Decision: In the final plenary, the COP adopted by acclamation the programme and budget for the biennium 2000-2001, contained in document ICCD/COP(4)/L.14. The decision includes both the core budget, and the supplementary fund and special fund. Under the core budget, the COP:

- approves an increase by US\$335,300 to cover the costs of the intersessional meeting of the AHWG, noting that this will not constitute a precedent for the future;
- notes the establishment of common administrative services with the UNFCCC in Bonn;
- requests the Executive Secretary to consult with relevant UN departments to secure more resources from the overhead; and
- requests the Executive Secretary to include detailed tables and resource requirements for each subsidiary body in the proposed 2002-2003 Programme Budget.

Under the supplementary fund and special funds, the COP:

- reiterates its appreciation to Germany for contributions to Convention events;
- invites Parties and others to contribute to the Supplementary Fund and Special Fund;
- requests more consideration of the implications of regional coordinating units; and
- requests the Executive Secretary to report to COP-5 on the status of the Trust Funds established under the financial rules.

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES OR INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS TO REGULARLY REVIEW THE CCD: On Tuesday, 12 December, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo presented the documents for consideration (ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.7 and Add.7(A)). Addendum 7(A) contains the proposed organization of work for the AHWG established at COP-3. The document: stipulates the objectives, composition and mandate of the AHWG; describes the nature of the review process; describes the methodology and criteria to review implementation; states the duration and scheduling of meetings and the output; and contains three annexes listing the reports submitted to COP-3 and 4. It also contains a summary of the converging views presented in the submissions of two regional groups and eight governments. These submissions are contained in Addendum 7. In his presentation, Executive Secretary Diallo noted two criteria were used to select the reports for presentation during the AHWG at COP-4: reports by countries known to have approved NAPs and the order that coun-



tries had ratified the CCD. He said of the 123 reports submitted, only 33 could be presented at COP-4. He proposed considering the rest at two intersessional meetings and that one consolidated report would be presented to COP-5. Delegates raised issues concerning: the objectives, criteria and approach to the review; the composition of the AHWG Bureau; the sequencing and frequency of the intersessionals; and the mandate of the AHWG.

On the approach, delegates proposed: a section-by-section discussion of Addendum 7(A) and a country-by-country examination of the reports; a flexible review approach, based on pre-determined criteria and indicators; and a focus on synergies with other relevant conventions, the main obstacles and successes and adherence to principle of participation. Morocco suggested updating the reports.

Regarding the AHWG, Tunisia, Mauritania, Uzbekistan and Canada proposed: a preference for a standing committee rather than a short-term, short-lived *ad hoc* committee; an open-ended working group that could hold intersessional meetings, but was not a substitute for the committee to regularly review CCD implementation; an AHWG with decision-making authority to avoid postponing decisions from COP to COP; and a proposal for NGO involvement in the AHWG.

The G-77/China, with Syria, Iran, Egypt, Tunisia and Uzbekistan, supported a five-member bureau for the AHWG; the EU preferred three members, two co-chairs and a rapporteur. Chile, speaking for GRULAC, with Nigeria and Syria, urged for a regional balance.

With regard to the intersessionals, the G-77/China supported the Secretariat's proposal, which the EU said lacked clarity on timing and methodology. The EU suggested establishing a contact group to consider the matter.

Despite the COW's failure to reach consensus on the AHWG Bureau composition and intersessionals at its first meeting on Tuesday, 12 December, it adopted document Add.7(A) *ad referendum*, and registered the EU's objection. CCD Executive Secretary Diallo made a statement suggesting that, as a subsidiary body of the COP, the costs of servicing AHWG meetings are covered under the provisions of the UN General Assembly on servicing of the UN subsidiary bodies.

On Wednesday, 13 December, the COW adopted a proposal by the COP Bureau on the AHWG Bureau composition. According to this proposal, the AHWG would consist of two Co-Chairs and three Vice Chairs, with one serving as rapporteur. The COW nominated Willem van Cotthem (Belgium) and Mahmoud El-Ghaouth (Mauritania) as the AHWG Co-Chairs, and, on an exceptional basis, as *ex officio* members of the COP-4 Bureau. The remaining three officials were elected by the AHWG on Friday, 15 December.

The issue of intersessionals stalled progress in the COW and delayed the start of AHWG deliberations by two days. At the COW meeting on Wednesday, 13 December, Canada supported the EU proposal from the previous day to set up a contact group to resolve the matter. The contact group's discussions dwelt on whether all reports should be reviewed before COP-5, whether there was need for intersessionals, and if so, their duration. The contact group prepared a draft decision on the procedure to review CCD implementation, which was adopted by the COP on Thursday, 14 December. The COP also elected by acclamation the Co-Chairs of the AHWG, nominated by the COW.

Final Decision: In the decision (ICCD/COP(4)/L.1), the COP: establishes a five-member bureau for the AHWG; authorizes a review of all national reports submitted to COP-3 and COP-4 before COP-5; states that an interim report be submitted to COP-4 by the AHWG; and convenes one intersessional meeting for a maximum of 15 working days to complete the review.

Committee for the Review of Implementation of the Convention: On Wednesday, 20 December, Nigeria, for the G-77/China, took the initiative to convene and chair a contact group to discuss how to regularly review CCD implementation. The group discussed the necessity of a committee for the review of implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and prepared a draft decision, which was presented to the COW on Friday, 22 December, and forwarded to the COP on the same day.

The COP adopted the draft decision on the review of implementation of the Convention (ICCD/COP(4)/L.15), which decides that: the AHWG should fulfill its mandate and draw up conclusions and recommendations for further steps in implementation; and further proposals by Parties based on the experience and review of the AHWG on recommendations for review and implementation, including on the establishment of a CRIC, be submitted through the Secretariat for consideration at COP-5.

ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT TO ASSIST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO PREPARE NATIONAL REPORTS:

This agenda item was considered by the COW on Thursday, 14 December. The Secretariat introduced documents ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.1(D), Add.2(D) and Add.3(B) on Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and the Northern Mediterranean regions, respectively. Each contains a synthesis of the national reports submitted, as contained in documents ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.1(A-C), Add.2(A-C) and Add.3(A), (C) and (D), submitted by the Asia, LAC and Northern Mediterranean regions, respectively. The synthesis reports have two parts: the first contains an introduction, overview and emerging trends, a synthesis of the national reports, lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations; the second contains progress reports on the sub-regional and regional action programmes.

The Secretariat noted that: most countries had identified their CCD focal points; NAPs have been adopted in seven Asian, eight LAC and two Northern Mediterranean countries; and some countries have adopted new legislation, while others are reinforcing existing policy instruments linked to poverty alleviation, enhancement of food security and agricultural development. He hoped the AHWG would define the appropriate method to review activities.

Chile, speaking for GRULAC, inquired whether the regional programme reports would be reviewed. The Secretariat said it was too early to start the review, since the reports were in the inception phase. The COW noted the documents.

DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE COMMITMENTS

(RECIFE INITIATIVE): Delegates considered this item on Thursday, 14 December, in the COW and subsequently several informal working group and contact group meetings, chaired by Marion Parry (Canada).

The Secretariat introduced the two documents ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.9(A) and (B). Addendum 9(A) contains the submissions of proposals for the text of a draft declaration made by eight delegations, including the EU, the G-77/China, JUSCANZ and two NGOs, and the Secretariat's synthesis of these proposals. The synthesis elaborates the purpose, character of the declaration, objectives, time frame, thematic and sectoral issues, concrete measures and means, and monitoring and follow-up.

Addendum 9(B) contains the draft declaration, in which Parties: resolve to implement the CCD's action programmes and to develop genuine partnership arrangements by strengthening collaborative efforts; stress the need for efforts to combat desertification during 2001-2010; outline some strategic issues and targets; decide to reverse the spread of desertification by one quarter during 2001-2010 and to develop a comprehensive Overall Assessment of Desertification.



Several delegates, including Mauritania, on behalf of the G-77/China, France, on behalf of the EU, Switzerland, Brazil and Norway, supported Canada's proposal to set up an open-ended working group to further consider the declaration.

On the content of the declaration, Algeria proposed that the debt burden be alleviated for all affected developing countries, not just the heavily indebted. Argentina emphasized technical and financial cooperation and measures to strengthen the GM's fundraising capacity. The EU proposed synergy with the CST and GM and concurred with some developing countries on the need for access to markets by least developed countries, but differed with China's and India's suggestion to delete references to the Clean Development Mechanism of the Kyoto Protocol. Egypt said the declaration should be binding and reflect commitments by all Parties. The EU preferred a political declaration with concrete actions and without new obligations. The Holy See said the declaration should be people-centered.

Some developing countries expressed concern over the 2010 target to double the use of renewable energy sources. The EU and a few developing countries stressed the need for access to markets by least developed countries.

An informal open-ended working group, facilitated by Marion Parry, met several times and prepared a draft decision and the text of a declaration. This was presented to the COW on Friday, 22 December, and to the COP later the same day.

Final Decision: The draft declaration on the commitments to enhance implementation of CCD obligations (ICCD/COP(4)/L.11) was adopted, as amended by China to include "desertification monitoring and assessment" in the section of the declaration on thematic areas. In the decision, the COP decides to include the declaration as an annex to the COP-4 report. The annexed declaration reaffirms commitment to CCD implementation, encourages synergies between the Rio conventions, acknowledges the need to strengthen cooperation and take effective action, stresses the need to enhance efforts during 2001-2010 to address the severe situation in affected countries, and proposes specific thematic and sectoral areas to focus on. It further:

- reaffirms CCD obligations in relation to funding and transfer of appropriate technology and know-how and urges proactive financial measures;
- invites developing country action with regard to NAPs;
- calls upon the international community to support such action; and
- invites Parties to take action to facilitate access to GEF funding.

On monitoring and follow-up, the declaration recognizes that methodologies need to be better implemented and invites Parties to include in their national reports, information on enhanced implementation as a follow-up to this declaration.

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH RELEVANT CONVENTIONS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES: On Thursday, 14 December, the Secretariat presented document ICCD/COP(4)/6 that elaborates ways to further enhance cooperation with the GEF and to implement Memoranda of Understanding signed with other partners. The G-77/China suggested that the COP provide input into the Rio+10 process and should therefore consider what reports to submit. Noting the decreasing presence of developing country delegations in Bonn due to relocation to Berlin, he proposed a modestly resourced CCD liaison branch should be linked to UN Headquarters to benefit from the UN services. Senegal said synergies with other conventions should not disadvantage the CCD. Israel drew attention to a 1997 workshop it organized on synergies with the FCCC. The League of Arab States said

additional financial support to the CCD was needed as its cooperation with the GEF was not at par with that between the GEF and other conventions.

Final Decision: On Friday, 22 December, the COW adopted a draft decision regarding the financing of CCD implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, including information on GEF activities concerning desertification (ICCD/COP(4)/L.18) and recommended it to the COP for consideration. The COP adopted this draft decision. In this decision, it:

- welcomes the collaboration between the CCD and the GEF;
- takes note of the GEF Council decision at its last meeting, requesting the Chief Executive Officer to explore best options for enhancing GEF support to assist affected countries to implement the CCD;
- invites all Parties to support the GEF so as to explore the best options for enhancing GEF support; and
- requests the CCD Executive Secretary to report to COP-5 the follow up to the GEF Council decision in support of CCD implementation.

CONSIDERATION OF AN ADDITIONAL REGIONAL IMPLEMENTATION ANNEX TO THE CONVENTION: Delegates considered the additional regional implementation annex for Central and Eastern Europe on Thursday, 14 December. Informal consultations to prepare a draft decision on the matter were conducted by Michael Ellis (UK). The draft decision was considered by the COW on Friday, 22 December, and submitted to the COP for adoption the same day.

The Secretariat introduced this agenda item, contained in document ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.8, recalling that COP-3 had invited Parties to continue consultations on the draft additional regional implementation annex for countries in Central and Eastern Europe, with a view to adopting it at COP-4. He reported that the COP Bureau had decided that the draft regional annex, as presented at COP-3 (ICCD/COP(3)/16), constituted a proposed amendment to the Convention. He noted that by October 2000, nine Central and Eastern European countries were Parties to the CCD.

Armenia, with Kazakhstan and Ukraine, urged delegates to adopt the annex, as it would make it possible for countries with economies in transition to establish the legal basis necessary for CCD implementation. The Czech Republic said it would be important for initiating and promoting efficient subregional, multilateral and bilateral cooperation. The Russian Federation said the annex's adoption would catalyze Russia's accession to the Convention.

Syria, speaking for the Asian region, with Tunisia and Mauritania, welcomed the draft annex and said its implementation should not affect resources for implementation in other regions. Informal consultations were conducted by Michael Ellis to solicit views and inputs to a draft decision on this matter.

On Friday, 22 December, the COW agreed to forward the draft decision (ICCD/COP(4)/L.16/Rev.1), recommending that the COP adopt the regional annex and requesting the Secretariat to make all necessary arrangements for the annex to be deposited. The annex elaborates on the purpose, particular conditions of the central and eastern European region, national, subregional, regional and joint action programmes, technical, scientific and technological cooperation, financial resources and mechanisms, and institutional framework.

GLOBAL MECHANISM: On Thursday, 21 December, the COW considered in one session, the discussion of the three sub-items related to the Global Mechanism.



Report on Policies, Operational Modalities and Provision of

Guidance to the Global Mechanism: The Managing Director of the Global Mechanism, Per Rydén, introduced the report on policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism and the provision of guidance to it (ICCD/COP(4)/4). He highlighted some of the Global Mechanism's activities in the development of action programmes, the finances it had secured, and innovative mechanisms used to channel resources. In response to the G-77/China's inquiries, he said a report on IFAD's contribution of US\$2.5 million was contained in the audit report, and on the utilization of a carry-over without COP approval, he said the money was utilized in accordance with decision 2/COP.1, the MoU between IFAD and the COP, and IFAD's own rules on budgeting and accounting.

The World Bank's Mohammed Hassan, as Chair of the Facilitating Committee (FC), introduced the report of the FC's activities undertaken, decisions and results obtained in implementing the decisions (ICCD/COP(4)/4/Add.2). He noted progress in the development of a broad business plan between the Mechanism, Facilitating Committee and member institutions, and the importance of collaborating with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research, but said in the short-term, the group will not expand.

The discussion on this agenda item attracted many interventions, including from Haiti, Senegal and Kenya, who thanked the Global Mechanism for support in the development of NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs. Many countries, including Mauritania, Niger, Tunisia and the US, noted with satisfaction, progress since COP-3 in the Global Mechanism's efforts to find innovative methods to mobilize resources, and several countries stressed the need for a GEF window for the CCD.

The G-77/China, supported by GRULAC, also emphasized the indispensability of the Global Mechanism, but also noted its shortcoming, since it is not a fund, and thus, the need to access direct resources. Mali recalled that the Global Mechanism was "born in pain" and is still experiencing difficulties, and stressed the need for multilateral funding.

Although Pakistan supported the appeal for a GEF window, he said it should not undermine the Global Mechanism's work in channeling resources, and Indonesia added that commitments to finance CCD implementation should not be viewed as a substitute to Agenda 21 commitments.

Delegates also proposed that resources be mobilized through debt-cancellation, from foundations, NGOs and the private sector, and other multilateral approaches, including from the Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. The EU urged the Global Mechanism to concentrate on bilateral and multilateral funding. Rwanda summarized the divergent views on funding and said COP-4 should resolve this issue before closing.

The US expressed interest in providing relevant information towards the Global Mechanism's inventory on existing funding and urged the Global Mechanism to utilize resource mobilizers with entrepreneurial skills and, in future COPs, to prepare its report on the basis of its mandate, which is annexed to decision 24/COP.1, instead of using the operational strategy. China inquired what had been done by those who had pledged to assist the GM, and whether COP-5 should ask for reports from institutions that made commitments. Algeria sought clarification on the size of the GM's core budget.

In response to delegates' questions, Rydén said the GM core budget is US\$1.3 million for 2000 and US\$1.35 million for 2001, the US\$2.5 million from IFAD would be forthcoming and the GM was discussing with IFAD North America how to access funding from private entities, and that they would develop better criteria to report, in particular on voluntary contributions. The World Bank added that each

FC member contributes three things: its comparative advantage, innovative fundraising strategies, and aims to mainstream and institutionalize CCD activities into its work.

Report of the Global Mechanism on its Operational Strategy:

Per Rydén also introduced the operational strategy (ICCD/COP(4)/4/Add.1(A)) on the guiding principles governing its implementation and the functions of the GM, and Add.1(B), which contains comments from Parties on the Global Mechanism's operational strategy.

There was no discussion of this agenda item, but Algeria requested that Rydén elaborate on the report. The EU also invited the FAO, GEF, IFAD, UNEP, World Food Programme, and regional and subregional organizations to enhance their dialogue with the Global Mechanism, and for the CCD Secretariat to cooperate with the Global Mechanism in CCD implementation.

Rydén elaborated the three principles of the strategy namely, mainstreaming the CCD on the supply and demand side, partnership building and the multiplier effect. He also said that priority is given to national level activities and, in response to Canada, said further cooperation with the CCD Secretariat will be enhanced in 2001.

Review of the Report on Facilitating Consultative Processes:

On Thursday, 12 December, the Secretariat introduced the report (ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.6) from the Secretariat and the Global Mechanism on their role and results obtained in facilitating consultative processes to negotiate and conclude partnership agreements based on NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs. There was no discussion on this matter.

Final Decision: On Friday, 22 December, the COP adopted a decision on the Global Mechanism (ICCD/COP(4)/L.24), noting the reports on the operational modalities of the Global Mechanism and of the Facilitation Committee of the Global Mechanism.

COP-5 PROGRAMME OF WORK: On Friday, 22 December, COW Chair Mafura invited delegates to consider this draft decision (ICCD/COP(4)/L.13), which outlines agenda items to be considered by the COP at its fifth session. These include consideration of: the AHWG's reports; additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist in regular review of the COP; outstanding items on arbitration and conciliation procedures; and the review of reports from affected African countries.

Bangladesh, supported by China and Pakistan, proposed that COP-5 also review reports of other least developed countries noting the universal nature of the Convention. In response, the Secretariat recalled decision 1/COP.3 concerning the timetable for submission of reports, which states that the review of reports would be alternated between affected African countries and those of other regions. The COW noted the suggestion by Bangladesh and agreed to transmit this decision to the COP. The COP adopted this decision.

ANNEX FOR CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION

PROCEDURES: On Friday, 22 December, the COW considered a draft decision on outstanding items relating to procedures and institutional mechanisms for resolution of questions on implementation and on annexes containing arbitration and conciliation procedures.

Patrick Széll (UK) reported that the open-ended *ad hoc* group of experts on legal matters, established at COP-3, had met once on Thursday, 21 December, and briefly considered the issues of arbitration and conciliation, resolution of questions of implementation and Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure. He noted that due to limited time, the group was unable to consider the issues in detail. The group prepared a draft decision on this matter.

In response to a proposal by Syria, Jordan and Tunisia to delete reference to the documents prepared by the Secretariat, Széll said the documents referred to in the draft decision had been prepared by the Secretariat in response to specific requests for Parties to submit



comments on the matters. He said excluding the reference implies that Parties that have made submissions would have to resubmit them for consideration at COP-5.

The COW adopted the draft decision with the minor amendment and forwarded it to the COP for adoption. The COP adopted the decision on Friday, 22 December.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/COP(4)/L.17) contains two parts: one on resolution of questions of implementation; and one on arbitration and conciliation procedures. In the decision, the COP:

- decides to reconvene the *ad hoc* group of experts at COP-5 to examine and make recommendations on procedures for the resolution of questions on implementation and on annexes on arbitration and conciliation procedures, taking into account the document prepared by the Secretariat and in light of progress of other negotiations on the same matters;
- invites Parties to communicate their views on how the matter can be taken forward; and
- invites the Secretariat to update the information to reflect the progress achieved in this area in other conventions, and to prepare revised documentation for consideration by COP-5.

CONSIDERATION OF RULE 47 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE: On Thursday, 21 December, the Secretariat introduced this agenda item, which addresses voting procedures in the absence of consensus. He recalled decision 19/COP.3, requesting the COP-3 President to consult further on outstanding issues relating to Rule 47. Brazil reported that consensus had not been reached on the matter. Delegates agreed to a proposal by COW Chair Mafura to recommend that the COP defer the matter to COP-5. During its final Plenary, the COP adopted a draft decision (ICCD/COP(4)/L.19) deferring consideration of this matter to COP-5.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) met from 12-15 December. Olanrewaju Smith (Canada) served as Chair. The Vice-Chairs were Valentin Sofroni (Republic of Moldova), Md. Nuruz-zaman (Bangladesh), Rafael Vilorio (Mexico) and Mebrahtu Iyassu (Eritrea), who also acted as Rapporteur. The Committee met in seven sessions and, according to its agenda (ICCD/COP(4)/CST/1), produced nine draft decisions for consideration and adoption by the COP, including on benchmarks and indicators, the survey of networks, traditional knowledge, early warning systems, the roster of experts, and the future work of the CST. On Tuesday, 12 December, Chair Smith also presented the report of the CST-3 Bureau meeting, held in October 2000 (ICCD/COP(4)/INF.7).

BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS: On Tuesday, 12 December, delegates considered the Secretariat's synthesis on scientific and technical information on the use of benchmarks and indicators to measure progress (ICCD/COP(4)/CST/5). The Secretariat noted that African countries have practically no information or available data at the national level, let alone benchmarks or indicators for desertification. He said little information is provided on the use of implementation indicators, and that work on indicators has been conducted in the framework of other environmental initiatives and international conventions. He also said there was no information on the testing of impact indicators. Regarding the developed country reports, he said it was difficult to ascertain what scientific activities were being developed in the developing countries and noted that funding is usually targeted at national environmental plans or general natural resource management, and not specifically at desertification.

Delegates discussed: how the CST can contribute to the work of the AHWG; why indicators were not used in the affected countries; whether the indicators should be local, regional or global; and why

cases in which they were used were not highlighted in the synthesis report. On behalf of the EU, France said the issues to be addressed by the AHWG would include what the added value of the CST is compared to other bodies and whether more emphasis should be placed on regional programmes or on institutions.

Senegal and Uganda said the synthesis report did not accurately reflect the situation in Africa and noted that some countries are already testing process indicators. The EU called for completion of a new reporting format on scientific and technical information before the next round of reporting at COP-5. Mauritania said that the use of benchmarks and indicators was a dynamic exercise and cautioned against setting benchmarks and indicators that would constrain CCD implementation.

On the CST inputs to the AHWG's work on CCD implementation, Mexico proposed evaluating the experiences where the greatest number of achievements has been registered. The US suggested identifying difficulties in the use of indicators to identify problems faced by some countries in implementing the Convention. An informal group consisting of Argentina, Egypt, France, Germany, Israel, Japan, CILSS, and OSS convened to discuss how the CST could provide input to the work of the AHWG. In initial discussions during a break in the session, the informal working group raised the need to: modify the national reporting structure to highlight ongoing work; examine why indicators were not being used; and assess whether to follow-up on countries where there is ongoing work; and the mechanisms for such follow-up.

On Thursday, 14 December, France, reporting on the work of the informal group on scientific and technical information, spoke on indicators and the role of technical information in Party reporting. He stressed indicators as tools for follow-up and evaluation that are consistent with national strategies and distinguished between status and impact indicators. He recommended maintaining indicators as a CST priority and highlighted the need for harmony with other processes. On national reports, he called on the Secretariat, with input from Parties, to provide guidance on how to include scientific and technical information in the reports. He noted that this would involve the scientific and research community.

The Gambia and Oman noted that the CST could set the framework for benchmarks and indicators, but Parties must adopt their own indicators. Morocco stressed Convention commitments related to indicators and the utility of building on existing initiatives, and, with Malawi, called for capacity building. CILSS said indicators are national tools for action, not imposed for control purposes. He proposed identifying institutions and bodies to facilitate work on indicators. Chair Smith suggested incorporating scientific and technical information into the current reporting format.

Norway suggested elaborating indicators on the local participation in NAPs. Israel said impact indicators should be indicative, sensitive, and easily measurable. The OSS stressed the need for country-level testing of indicators, noting that they should be tools to enable NAP monitoring.

After hearing the report from the group on input to the work of the AHWG, delegates discussed whether to establish an *ad hoc* panel on benchmarks and indicators. CILSS proposed continuing ongoing work coordinated by CILSS and OSS, in collaboration with the Secretariat instead. Chair Smith, supported by the US, EU and Tunisia, proposed that GRULAC participate in this collaboration. On Friday, 15 December, CILSS, OSS, and GRULAC developed and the CST discussed and adopted a draft decision on benchmarks and indicators, including provision for this collaboration and an annex containing the terms of reference. It also adopted a draft decision on the review and



implementation of scientific and technological aspects of national reports. On Monday, 18 December, CST Chair Smith presented a report on CST's contribution to the AHWG.

Final Decisions: On Friday, 22 December, the COP adopted the two decisions forwarded by the CST. In the first decision, on the review and implementation of scientific and technological aspects of national reports (ICCD/COP(4)/L.7), the COP:

- invites Parties to develop a minimum set of impact indicators for future selection of a set of basic indicators, and mobilize support for affected country Parties;
- encourages Parties to better integrate the scientific and technical community activities in CCD implementation; and
- requests the Secretariat to revise the Help Guide to provide guidance to the Parties to better reflect the activities of the scientific and technical communities in their national reports.

The second decision (ICCD/COP(4)/L.9), encourages CILSS, GRULAC and OSS to continue their initiative on the development of benchmarks and indicators in accordance with the annexed terms of reference and requests CILSS to give a progress report at CST-5.

SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF NETWORKS: On Wednesday, 13 December, the CST considered the progress of the ongoing survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies carried out by UNEP and its consortium members (ICCD/COP(4)/CST/3 and Add.1). The Secretariat noted the work carried out during Phase One and the terms of reference for the continuation of the work under a second phase involving a pilot in-depth survey in the southern African subregional and maintenance and development of the database developed during Phase One.

UNEP presented the work plan. He said the consortium would: identify and work with partners in the subregion; further develop the database/website; establish a web forum hosting thematic discussions; and link up with other relevant networks and databases. He said the database will be operationalized through awareness campaigning, training and capacity building in the subregion.

CILSS called for a quality control system. Kenya, Senegal and Egypt expressed concern at the slow rate of progress. Egypt also called for cost-benefit analysis, noting the high cost of the survey. Mexico highlighted the need to realize synergies with similar efforts in other regions.

Final Decision: On Friday, 15 December, the CST adopted a draft decision on the matter, which was adopted by the COP on Friday, 22 December. The decision (ICCD/COP(4)/L.5) on the survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies, accepts UNEP's and its consortium's proposal (ICCD/COP(4)/CST/3/Add.1) to implement Phase Two of the survey, and requests UNEP to submit a progress report to COP-5.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: On Wednesday 13 December, Italy, on behalf of the *ad hoc* panel on traditional knowledge, reported on its work (ICCD/COP(4)/CST/2). He outlined recommendations by the panel for future activities, including: establishing a web-based network, for which a first node has been set up in Italy; collecting and inventorying data; establishing copyright protection for traditional knowledge; and establishing indicators and benchmarks for the purpose of monitoring and setting protection goals at the national level.

In discussing the panel's work, some participants called for a new approach to reconcile traditional and modern knowledge. Mexico underscored the synergistic benefits of traditional knowledge, noting the links to climate change and biodiversity conservation efforts. On means to protect traditional knowledge, UNESCO noted the risks associated with copyrighting knowledge and stressed a long-term

approach on how to catalogue, validate and examine the interrelationship between the people's rights and ownership of traditional knowledge and diffusion of the knowledge. Morocco questioned how using copyrights would work in practice, noting that individuals do not own such knowledge. He underscored raising awareness on the need to preserve traditional knowledge as key to protecting it.

On further work for the panel on traditional knowledge, Nigeria suggested focusing on regions where particular knowledge systems have been successful in facilitating adoption of traditional knowledge. The WMO recommended research that integrates traditional and modern forecasts. Japan encouraged the use of indicators and benchmarks to measure the effectiveness of traditional knowledge and understand the links with modern knowledge. On Friday, 15 December, the CST discussed a request to the Italian government for a proposal to develop a network on traditional knowledge.

Final Decision: On Friday, 22 December, the COP adopted the decision on traditional knowledge (ICCD/COP(4)/L.3). The decision takes note of the Italian initiative to establish an international research center on traditional knowledge and invites the realization of a traditional knowledge network.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS: On Wednesday, 15 December, Japan, on behalf of the *ad hoc* panel on early warning systems, presented the panel's work (ICCD/COP(4)/CST/4). He discussed the three focal areas addressed: data collection, accessibility and integration; evaluation and prediction of drought and desertification, and measures of preparedness; and dissemination of information to end-users on the applications of early warning systems and desertification monitoring and assessment, and strengthening of appropriate response mechanisms. He noted that maintaining and strengthening existing systems are more important than establishing new ones, and recommended developing methods for analyzing vulnerability, and linking traditional knowledge and to early warning systems.

Several delegates supported the continuation of the *ad hoc* panel on early warning systems. On further issues to be addressed by the panel, the US suggested the panel's terms of reference specify tangible outputs. Kenya suggested addressing mechanisms to facilitate data collection and exchange. Egypt proposed focusing on systems applicable to drylands. The WMO called for comprehensive and proactive drought preparedness, development of vulnerability profiles, assessment of social and economic impacts of drought and establishment of coordinated and multidisciplinary institutions focusing on drought management and preparation of national drought policies. Mexico suggested using a river basin approach as the basis for monitoring. He asked whether there was a plan to assess the costs of the lack of preventive plans by communities. On the composition of the panel, Argentina said it should be expanded to include experts with legal and administrative skills to address sectoral relationships.

Final Decision: The CST adopted a draft decision on 15 December, which was adopted by the COP on 22 December. The decision on early warning systems (ICCD/COP(4)/L.4) reappoints an *ad hoc* panel on early warning systems to further examine the performance of early warning systems, methods for analyzing vulnerability, exchange of information between institutions, and measures for preparedness.

THE ROSTER OF EXPERTS: On Wednesday, 13 December, the Secretariat introduced the documents on the roster of experts (ICCD/COP(4)/5 and Add.1, and Add.1/Corr.1). He highlighted that to date there are 1510 experts, 14% of whom are women, and that some disciplines, including agriculture, anthropology, education and health sciences, are underrepresented. He added that Parties had not reported on their use of the roster.



On the underrepresented disciplines, Egypt said agriculture is well represented through related disciplines. China noted that each country may have its own interpretation of the disciplines and requested the Secretariat to prepare a structure for the disciplines. Regarding the limited use of the roster, several delegates urged the CST to consider how to enhance its use. Italy proposed that the CST start identifying research needs for the experts to work on. RIOD urged governments to include NGO and civil society experts in their submissions.

Final Decision: On Friday, 15 December, the CST forwarded a draft decision to the COP on this matter. This decision (ICCD/COP(4)/L.2), which was adopted by the COP on Friday, 22 December, invites Parties to supplement their submissions to increase gender balance, to ensure representation of all relevant disciplines, and to include grass-roots organizations and NGO expertise.

CST-5 WORK PROGRAMME: On Wednesday, 13 December, delegates discussed future CST actions. Noting the large amount of information available, South Africa, supported by the US, Norway, Sweden, Guyana and Canada, proposed focusing on information management. The US underscored the need for two-way information flow between communities and scientists. Senegal submitted the recommendations for further CST work set out by the African preparatory meeting held in October 2000.

The Chair then established a small working group to consider priority issues for CST-5 that reported to the CST on Thursday, 14 December. South Africa, on behalf of the working group, proposed that the CST address strategies for the communication of information and its use to generate best practices for combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. He said the strategies included traditional and scientific knowledge. Norway proposed that the Secretariat compose a report on best practices, drawing expertise from the roster of experts, the database on traditional knowledge, and NGOs.

Delegates then heard reports from the Dryland Land Degradation Assessment (LADA) and Millennium Ecosystem Assessment initiatives. FAO presented the LADA initiative, a comprehensive project for use by multiple stakeholders. LADA's four main objectives are to: provide basic, standardized information at national, regional and global levels; develop harmonized methods for land degradation assessment; place degradation in its environmental and socio-economic setting through analysis of its causes and impacts; and build capacities for LADA implementation.

The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment is a joint CCD, CBD and Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar) activity (described in ICCD/COP(4)/INF.6). The four-year Assessment is expected to: provide decision-makers with information on conditions and changes in ecosystems; assess their impact on food and water supply and on public health; appraise social and economic consequences; assess future consequences; and present options on how to respond. He called for CCD input to the Assessment.

On the two reports, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines asked the Secretariat for a strategy for Parties to provide input to these processes and the EU requested it to report on these initiatives. The Secretariat noted its collaboration with regard to both initiatives: it helped initiate LADA and will participate in its Steering Committee; and is a member of both the Millennium Assessment Board and the Executive Committee of the Board. Norway, supported by the EU, proposed CST involvement, drawing on the roster of experts.

Final Decisions: On Friday, 22 December, the COP adopted the two decisions on the CST work programme. The first (ICCD/COP(4)/L.6) decides that CST-5 should work on strategies for communication and information and its use to generate best practices for combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

The second (ICCD/COP(4)/L.8) requests the Secretariat to continue following closely LADA and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and to facilitate the involvement of the Parties to ensure that the concerns of the Parties are taken into account.

ENHANCING CST EFFECTIVENESS: On Tuesday, 12 December, delegates agreed to a EU proposal to discuss how to enhance the effectiveness of the CST and to submit concrete proposals to the COP for its consideration. On Thursday, 14 December, the EU presented its proposal that included the establishment of informal thematic working groups focusing on specific issue areas, such as examination of national reports. He said the groups would not imply an additional institutional level of the CST, but the improvement and replacement of *ad hoc* panels.

Issues raised by delegates included: the need to stay within existing rules of procedure; financial issues; the similarity of proposed thematic groups and the existing *ad hoc* panels; and the representation in the thematic groups on the basis of regions versus annexes. In summarizing the views, Chair Smith proposed that interested Parties exchange views and identify and analyze problems and suggest solutions via the Internet over the next few months, and submit their views to the Secretariat by 1 May 2001. The Secretariat compilation would be available by 1 August, for use at pre-COP-5 meetings as well as for CST-5 at COP-5.

Final Decision: On Friday, 22 December, the COP adopted the decision (ICCD/COP(4)/L.10) that invites Parties to transmit to the Secretariat by 1 May 2001, recommendations on how to improve CST effectiveness, for the preparation of a synthesis report for COP-5. The decision also requests the Secretariat to facilitate consultation among the regional groups before COP-5.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE REVIEW OF CCD IMPLEMENTATION

The *ad hoc* working group on the review of CCD implementation (AHWG) met eight times between Friday, 15 December, and Wednesday, 20 December, to review and analyze 23 national reports, four subregional and four regional summary reports. The reports highlighted measures taken to implement the action programmes, constraints faced and suggestions on how to overcome them. Delegates also considered a report from the CST. On Thursday, 21 December, delegates considered the Co-Chairs' interim report on the first session of the AHWG, which was adopted by the COP on Friday, 22 December.

AFRICA REGIONAL REPORT: The Africa Regional Report highlights focal areas including: early warning systems; agroforestry and soil conservation; integrated water management; and creation of enabling environments to combat desertification. It also discusses a recently held workshop identifying actions in each focal area and proposing strategies for resource mobilization.

AFRICA SUBREGIONAL REPORTS: The Arab Maghreb Union (UMA) said the countries in the subregion have adopted a charter for environment and sustainable development, which provides a framework for implementation of relevant programmes.

CILSS outlined its support of: implementation and harmonization of NAPs; partnership agreements between countries; thematic groups; follow-up and evaluation; and information dissemination.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) outlined its regional coordination units, focusing on the Environment and Land Management Sector, and noted efforts to establish a donor hub to facilitate coordination.



The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) highlighted its activities, which include development of a SRAP and resource mobilization strategies.

NATIONAL REPORTS FROM THE AFRICA REGION:

Cape Verde described its decentralized approach in NAP implementation. Senegal said it has developed a priority action programme and strategies for testing its effectiveness. Mali highlighted roundtable discussions held with its cooperation partners after the NAP had been developed, to provide donors with relevant information and facilitate coordination. Burkina Faso said many of its desertification activities began before the adoption of the CCD, although the results failed to meet their expectations at the time. He emphasized the need for continuous awareness raising and dialogue with stakeholders.

Benin underscored cross-border aspects of desertification and stressed the need to move subregional and regional initiatives forward. Tunisia said it had: started work on national indicators; established an institute of arid zones; and made the NAP part of a national development programme. Lesotho said it had identified field level indicators that would be further tested and developed. Swaziland stressed the need to involve community level stakeholders, and underscored the need for technical assistance for development of fundable projects, while Namibia outlined its activities to combat desertification, highlighting active participation as a key success factor and an ongoing priority. Tanzania said its NAP focuses on: streamlining cross-sectoral policies; awareness raising; disseminating technology; and gender mainstreaming.

On problems faced, the presenters highlighted: insufficient funding, capacity, and coordination. They stressed difficulties related to information dissemination and up-scaling of pilot activities, outdated domestic policies and legislation, and inconsistent donor requirements. They also expressed concern over the lack of preventive action where desertification is not yet widespread. Several delegates called for stronger links between the Rio conventions and poverty alleviation activities.

Issues raised in the discussion included how to encourage local level involvement without creating additional levels of bureaucracy, and provided examples of the integration of desertification objectives in water and agricultural sector policies. Delegates noted that the reports: demonstrated positive results of integrated projects as opposed to narrowly focused ones; underscored the utility of building on existing institutions; and stressed the need for transboundary resource management and clear timeframes in planning.

ASIA REGIONAL REPORT: India, presenting the Asia Regional Report, outlined the activities of the thematic programme networks on monitoring and assessment (TPN1) and on agroforestry and soil conservation in arid, semi-arid and sub-humid areas (TPN2), as well as the conclusions of the third regional meeting of CCD focal points. The conclusions included the need for consistent partnership agreements with UN agencies and other partners, and better understanding of CCD benchmarks and indicators.

NATIONAL REPORTS FROM THE ASIAN REGION: Tajikistan said while NAP implementation had been delayed, measures to combat land degradation, manage soil salinization, and address water erosion had been carried out. Turkmenistan outlined its establishment of a state commission on CCD implementation and a company to protect the forest belt around populated centers.

Uzbekistan highlighted community-level pilot projects to assess and develop methodologies for combating desertification. He stressed that although it has adequate domestic scientific and technical capacity, it lacks financial resources.

Mongolia described its 1992 action plan to combat desertification, noting measures to involve stakeholders, advance decentralization and land tenure reform, and realize environmental synergies. Laos discussed its initial national actions aimed at CCD implementation, underscoring they are integrated with development and poverty eradication. China described its institutional set-up for combating desertification and noted coordination between and activities by numerous sectoral agencies.

On constraints faced in the NAP process, presenters noted the lack of financial resources for implementation of pilot projects as opposed to studies.

In ensuing discussions, delegates raised the links to other subregional cooperation programmes such as the Aral Sea Programme, the establishment and strengthening of legal frameworks and structures to involve relevant actors in the planning process, as well as a need to strengthen human resources and institutional capacity. Delegates noted that civil society and land tenure systems are new or still evolving in the former Soviet Union.

On donor participation in the discussions, India expressed disappointment over the few proposals regarding how to address the financial and technical issues raised by the affected country reports.

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL REPORT: 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.

NATIONAL REPORTS FROM THE LAC REGION: Argentina said its NAP enables decentralized coordination of national activities and is a continuous process. Bolivia outlined the institutional structure of its NAP, which focuses on awareness raising, enhancing competencies of authorities, participation and promotion of new economic activities. Cuba stressed maintaining soil productivity, and links to economic and social development and community action. Chile underscored local-level capacity building and the development of an electronic network as successful actions.

On obstacles to NAP implementation, delegates mentioned inadequate awareness of the severity of desertification, lack of integration in planning, and insufficient financial resources. Chile highlighted the lack of awareness of the CCD at the institutional level and institutional inertia as problems.

Delegates commented on the value of broad stakeholder inclusion, and how to make the NAP a win-win opportunity for all sectors. 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 and outlined RAP priorities, including: identifying areas at risk of desertification; establishing common methodology; promoting traditional knowledge; and collaborating with existing regional and subregional activities.

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 impacts, and land restoration.



Portugal noted water erosion, poor agricultural practices, and abandonment of managed lands as causes of land degradation. He said there would be no new funding sources for the NAP, but a reorientation of existing ones. Moldova highlighted its recent NAP that includes provision for economic mechanisms, the integrated management of soils, and anti-erosion and rehabilitation measures.

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.

REPORT BY THE CST: On Monday, 18 December, CST Chair Smith reported on the contribution of the CST to the AHWG. He highlighted a CST draft decision that encourages Parties to include scientific and technical information in national reports and requests the Secretariat to revise the Help Guide to aid Parties to better reflect the activities of their scientific communities in the reports.

INTERIM REPORT OF THE AHWG: On Thursday, 21 December, Co-Chair Cotthem introduced the interim report of the Co-Chairs on the first session of the AHWG on the review of CCD implementation (ICCD/COP(4)/INFORMAL/2). For the resumed session of the AHWG, it recommends: Parties presenting to follow established procedures and use multimedia equipment; developed countries to provide feedback on conclusions and next steps and to incorporate lessons into future assistance measures; and international organizations to present measures in response to issues raised in national reports. It further recommends that presentations and exchanges during the resumed session facilitate the next steps to foster the implementation process, and informal wrap-up sessions consider lessons learned and priority themes after presentations by countries in a given region.

Australia, Canada, the US and Norway stressed that the session had been a learning exercise, and called for further identification of best practices and common challenges. Portugal called for measures to ensure that exchanges transcend subregional blocks. Finland suggested a framework for streamlining the work at the resumed session.

On Friday, 22 December, the COP adopted the Co-Chairs' interim report on the work of the AHWG (ICCD/COP(4)/L.20/Rev.1) and decided to include the interim report as an annex to the COP-4 report.

INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ROUND TABLE

From 12-13 December, 34 parliamentarians from 20 countries participated in a fourth Round Table session to discuss the role they could play in combating desertification at the national level.

Following their deliberations, the parliamentarians issued a Declaration expressing their support for: strengthening CCD implementation; identifying domestic funding sources; and enhancing technical and financial assistance to the countries most affected by desertification.

Noting that preventive actions are more cost effective than remediation, and acknowledging that developing countries are hardest hit, the parliamentarians, *inter alia*, call for measures to provide these countries with financial resources and consider appropriate debt relief. Regarding technology transfer to the most affected and poorest countries, the developed country parliamentarians committed themselves to convening an annual special event, "International Day to Combat Desertification" in their parliaments to raise awareness, as well as advocating for support from national budgets.

In the Declaration, the parliamentarians further urge countries that have not yet ratified the Convention to do so. It also highlights the fundamental role of technical assistance and urges donor agencies and countries to strengthen support to, *inter alia*: raising awareness on production and consumption patterns; water and river basin management; promotion of research on desertification; transfer of environmentally sound technologies; use of state-of-the-art technologies; reforestation, forest conservation and agricultural development; capacity building and training; and collaboration with stakeholders.

The parliamentarians commit themselves to establishing an effective follow-up mechanism, call for support from civil society, academia, and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, and request the CCD Secretariat to provide for the high-level forum of members of parliament, the next round table and follow-up on current decisions.

On Wednesday, 20 December, Plenary adopted the Declaration by acclamation during the Special Segment. During the closing Plenary, on Friday, 22 December, the COP took note of the Declaration (ICCD/COP(4)/L.21) and included it as an annex to the COP-4 report.

CLOSING PLENARY

The closing Plenary convened at 2:30 p.m. on Friday, 22 December. President Batjargal invited COW Chair Mafura to report on the work of the COW. He introduced draft decisions on: programme of work for COP-5 (ICCD/COP(4)/L.13); collaboration with the GEF (ICCD/COP(4)/L.18); and Rule 47 of the rules of procedure (ICCD/COP(4)/L.19). Delegates adopted these decisions without comment.

AHWG Co-Chair Willem van Cotthem then introduced the Co-Chairs' interim report on the group's work, including recommendations for the intersessional meetings. The COP adopted decision ICCD/COP(4)/L.20/Rev.1 containing the report.

CST Co-Chair Mebrahtu Iyassu reported on the work of the CST and introduced nine draft decisions contained in documents ICCD/COP(4)/L.2-L.10, on the roster of experts, traditional knowledge, early warning systems, survey and evaluation of existing networks, the CST work programme, scientific and technological aspects of national reports, LADA and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, benchmarks and indicators and on improving the CST's efficiency and effectiveness. The COP adopted these decisions.

On the decision on review and implementation of scientific and technological aspects of national reports (ICCD/COP(4)/L.7), Bangladesh proposed inserting "ground water pollution" to elaborate on the definition of desertification. Argentina noted that desertification is already defined in the Convention, and referred him to the procedures outlined in the Convention for amendments. He explained that the purpose of the Plenary meeting was to adopt the CST draft decisions. Delegates then proceeded to adopt the CST decisions.

The Plenary adopted draft decisions on the credentials of delegations (ICCD/COP(4)/L.23) and on the Third Round Table of Parliamentarians (ICCD/COP(4)/L.21).

The Plenary adjourned briefly to await completion of informal consultations on the additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the COP in regular review of the Convention, programme and budget and the declaration on commitments to enhance CCD implementation.

When it resumed, the COP proceeded to adopt draft decisions on:

- procedures and institutional mechanisms for the regular review of implementation of the Convention (ICCD/COP(4)/L.15);
- an additional regional implementation annex (ICCD/COP(4)/L.16/Rev.1);
- resolutions of questions on implementation, arbitration and conciliation (ICCD/COP(4)/L.17); and



- the report on policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism (ICCD/COP(4)/24).

Delegates then considered the draft declaration on the commitments to enhance implementation of CCD obligations (ICCD/COP(4)/L.11). They agreed to a proposed amendment by China to include "desertification monitoring and assessment" in the section of the declaration on thematic areas. The draft decision and annexed declaration were adopted, as amended.

On the date and venue of COP-5, President Batjargal introduced the draft decision (ICCD/COP(4)/L.22) and noted that the dates presented for the next COP, 28 September to 5 October, overlapped with another event. He proposed amending the dates to 17-28 September. This draft decision was adopted, as orally amended.

After a short break, delegates considered a draft decision on programme and budget (ICCD/COP(4)/L.14). This decision was adopted by acclamation.

COP-4 Rapporteur Philbert Brown introduced the draft COP-4 report (ICCD/COP(4)/L.12). President Batjargal said a summary of statements delivered during the Special Segment had been prepared. He said this text would be annexed to the report of the session. Delegates adopted the draft report.

Noting that many of the decisions and reports adopted are available in only one or two languages, Egypt reiterated the need to ensure that all documents are available in all six UN languages.

Juan Luis Meregá, Fundación del Sur, made a statement on behalf of the NGOs. He said that although COP-4 was not a failure, its results fell short of expectations. He noted with concern the slow pace of CCD implementation, the number of unresolved issues, including on provision of financial resources and the lack of political mandate to establish concrete goals. He said lack of financial support could render the Convention irrelevant within two years. On the reports presented to the AHWG, he noted with appreciation the involvement of civil society in NAP implementation and the incorporation of gender perspectives by some countries.

CCD Executive Secretary Diallo said COP-4 had succeeded in coming up with conclusions to further the implementation of the CCD. He noted the results of the AHWG stating that these had met Parties' expectations. He highlighted other achievements including, the additional implementation annex, the declaration to enhance CCD implementation, proposals to improve the work of the CST and the decision related to the GEF and how to enhance access to that body to assist countries with CCD implementation.

Nigeria, on behalf of the G-77/China, thanked the COP President, the Bureau, Executive Secretary, Secretariat and fellow delegates. He highlighted actions needed to assist affected countries and the need for new and additional funding, as well as steady and predictable sources of funding. The COP President highlighted positive aspects of the two-week COP meeting and assured his commitment to making the Convention a tool for changing peoples' lives in affected areas. He closed the session at 11:35 p.m.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF COP-4

Four years ago, on 26 December 1996, the Convention to Combat Desertification entered into force with great promise and optimism. Finally, there was an international legal instrument to address an environmental problem that affects over 1 billion people around the globe: desertification. Yet as the fourth meeting of the Convention's Conference of the Parties (COP-4) drew to a close, just days before this anniversary, views about the success of the CCD differed among the 1000 participants.

As was the case at COP-3 in Recife last year, many left the conference contemplating the missed opportunities, laying blame on time lost to procedural obstacles rather than focusing on substantial issues relating to the review of CCD implementation. They felt that little had changed since COP-3 with many of the same problems relating to procedural issues, loss of institutional memory and thus a void in leadership, and apparent disinterest in the CCD among some developed countries, appearing again.

However, for others, COP-4 did have some notable achievements. It finally adopted the fifth annex for Central and Eastern European countries, commenced work on the *ad hoc* working group to review implementation (AHWG) and decided to consider modalities for the establishment of a committee to review implementation of the Convention (CRIC).

SETBACKS

From the outset, it appeared to many that COP-4 was doomed to fall short of delegates' expectations. The delays in starting the work of the COW and the AHWG, the slow progress in the informal working groups leading to last minute decisions, and the loss of institutional memory seemed to seal the session's destiny.

The main delay was due to the inability of the Western Europe and Others Group to agree on its nominations to the Bureau. The group had presented three nominations for two positions in the Bureau. There was also disagreement over who should take which positions within the Bureau. This was seen as an internal problem that the group should have resolved prior to the start of the COP, but instead it held up the identification of the COW and CST Chairs.

Even though the problem appeared to be resolved on the second day, it reappeared when discussing the Bureau of the *ad hoc* working group, when the EU fielded their third candidate. The bureau of the AHWG was supposed to define the terms of reference for the group's work. Therefore in the absence of a bureau, this work could not be done. Thus, it delayed the start of the AHWG until the end of the week. As a result the agenda of the COW had to constantly be reorganized to bring forward consideration of some agenda items in order to make use of the time available. This further delayed progress since the regional groups needed time to prepare. It was apparent from some of the discussions, that a number of the delegates were not fully prepared for these agenda changes, tending more towards superficial and rhetorical discussions without much focus or depth.

In order to make progress, the COW deferred several issues to open-ended informal working groups, but this did not prove to be the most successful approach. First, there was reluctance among delegations to provide candidates to chair these meetings, since many of them had only one or two experts on specific issues. This was most clearly seen in the case of the programme and budget group and in the *ad hoc* working group on legal matters. As a result, the groups were unable to start and complete their work as planned.

Second, when they did eventually start their work, the open-ended informal groups did not function efficiently and the Chairs decided to resort to contact groups with limited participation. This would have proven to be a better solution had there been more experienced negotiators present. It meant that the few seasoned delegates remaining in the process were "over-stretched" as they tried to participate in more than one group. For example, some participants noted that the Declaration on Commitments to enhance implementation (Recife Initiative) could have been stronger and better if the African Group was not constrained in the number of experienced negotiators it had to spread around the five contact groups, especially when they were meeting simultaneously.



The absence of key players who represent the institutional memory in the process continued to be an issue of concern at COP-4 as it was at COP-3. It did not only plague the work of the informal groups, but that of the COW as well. The fact that the COW Chair was not fully conversant with the procedural issues meant that time was lost to protracted discussions on what should or should not be done. It also resulted in significant amounts of time being spent on issues that had been discussed and resolved in earlier sessions of the COP or in the Convention itself. For example, during the closing hours of COP-4, one delegate attempted to re-open the definition of desertification.

REVIEWING CCD IMPLEMENTATION

To a number of participants, the highlight of COP-4 was expected to be the initiation of the work of the *ad hoc* working group, established at COP-3, to review the reports on CCD implementation. Frustrations were expressed when at the start it was still not clear how the review would be conducted. The terms of reference were vague and did not seem adequate to guide delegates in charting out a course to further implementation of the Convention. Even at the level of the Co-Chairs, the expectations appeared to be different, with one asking for pledges from developed countries in response to the constraints highlighted and the other preferring a more general discussion.

There was, however, wisdom in the decision to allow the discussions to take their own course. The initial sluggish discussions became livelier as the presentations repeatedly highlighted similarities in the experiences of the different regions. Even though concrete suggestions were not made to address the constraints presented, there was sufficient evidence to indicate that developing countries were fulfilling their commitments under the Convention and were already seeing positive results, but insufficient resources limited their work.

Some participants still felt that the opportunity was not sufficiently grasped and benefits from interregional discussions were missed due to delegates participating only in sessions relating to their regions. Nevertheless, they said that there was time to revisit these issues during the intersessionals and possibly identify lessons of mutual benefits across regions.

GEF...THE PHANTOM THAT WILL NOT GO AWAY

Concerns about the long-term financing of the Convention haunted the conference throughout the two-week session. Developing countries had a well-thought-out strategy in which they demonstrated through their national reports that they had met the obligations of the Convention, but had serious financial limitations to implement their plans. They could no longer depend on the traditional bilateral and multilateral sources of funding, and therefore called for the designation of the GEF as the CCD's financial mechanism or for the designation of desertification as one of the GEF's focal areas. They were particularly fired up by two other recent developments: the GEF Council request to the Facility for a proposal on how it could strengthen support to the CCD; and the decision at the recently concluded Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) – just three days before the start of COP-4 – to designate the GEF as the interim POPs financial mechanism, a proposal that the G-77/China had agreed to on condition that similar consideration was given to the financing of the CCD at the 2002 GEF Assembly.

But as was the case during the negotiations of the Convention in 1994, some donor countries at COP-4 were still reluctant to take such a step. Some argued that GEF financing is directed to global issues with "incremental costs," which, in their view did not apply to desertification whose causes are more local. However, some observers noted that

this position has since changed, and there is increased recognition, including by a few donor countries, that desertification is caused by other global factors.

The discussion on the GEF also drew attention to the present role and fate of the Global Mechanism. Initial discussion seemed polarized with developed countries stressing the benefits of the Mechanism and developing countries emphasizing the need for the GEF of as a funding mechanism. The latter quickly recognized and acknowledged the benefits that would accrue from the mandate of the Mechanism as it would assure continued access to traditional bilateral resources and new sources, such as private sector funding and debt relief. This nipped in the bud any possibility of locking the debate in a Mechanism versus Facility polarity.

Although it was apparent that some developed countries could have nudged this discussion forward, the issue did not peak sufficiently to warrant in-depth consideration, due to the late introduction of discussions on the Global Mechanism. This inhibited a coincidence with the initial build up on the issue of finances and also overlapped with a large number of contact groups in the closing moments of the Convention, over-stretching the capacity of some of the groups.

All the same, the final outcome on the GEF indicates that the first step has been taken towards opening concrete dialogue on the question of a financial mechanism. The onus of responsibility now rests with the developing countries who must coordinate efforts both at the national and international levels to ensure that this issue is carried forward and sufficiently considered at the forthcoming GEF Council meetings and at COP-5 in order to ensure that what some referred to as a "historical mistake" is corrected.

MAINSTREAMING NGO PARTICIPATION

The two NGO-government dialogue sessions, a tradition that has continued since COP-1, were also high points. Besides the benefits from the exchange of views, the event symbolizes the commitment by governments to adhere to the CCD principles of participation and a bottom-up approach. The choice of themes for discussion during COP-4 were timely and relevant, in particular the consideration of the gender component, which was an element that most delegates noted was lacking in the review of the national reports. NGOs were heartened by the turnout at both sessions, given that informal meetings and the *ad hoc* working group (AHWG) were in progress. Although some observers believed the cold weather played some part, they also noted that the interventions by governments indicated there was growing interest in the dialogue sessions.

Still, the impact of the slightly over 100 NGOs attending the session was barely felt by the Conference, which could be attributed to a number of factors. First, was the relatively low turn-out of NGOs, in particular compared to other processes such as the FCCC and the CBD. The primary constraint was financial support with only two governments, Canada and Switzerland, contributing resources for their attendance. This prompted some participants to question the commitment of donors to the spirit and letter of the Convention, a concern that reverberated during the special segment.

The second constraint was the approach to the dialogue. Whereas the use of case studies was strategic, the time allocation, breadth and generality of the presentations failed to provide new ideas on how to better mainstream gender in CCD implementation. In particular, careful thought was not given to the linkages between the presentations and review of the national reports. One positive suggestion was to include a section in the reports that focuses on gender.

The third constraint related to the conduct of the session in parallel with the CST and AHWG and the informal consultations. Some participants noted that the impact of the dialogue will not be fully realized



unless the session is accorded equal status by not organizing events that draw away the key players to attend to other matters, while a few noted that the content of the session is the determinant of the interest delegates show.

Still, delegates conceded that despite the piece-meal changes in the session, there were marked improvements since COP-1, in terms of the substance, attitude of delegates and input by NGOs, which with improved organization by the NGOs, could transform the segment into the climax of future COPs.

SYNERGIES

COP-4 brought the discussion on synergies to the fore. Even though these were specifically addressed in the NGO dialogue, they were brought up in almost all discussions. The synergies between the Rio conventions and other development and poverty alleviation activities have dwelt mainly on the implementation aspects, with much focus being given to financial efficiency and avoiding duplication.

One additional aspect was brought up. The participation of FCCC COP-6 President Jan Pronk lifted the discussion to exploring synergies at the international level through negotiations processes. Some said his presence was mainly to lobby G-77/China support to ensure that the currently stalled climate negotiations would be satisfactorily concluded at the resumed session, while others said it attested to the fact that the inter-linkages between the conventions went beyond actions at the national level and should therefore be acknowledged. The seven lessons he outlined as necessary for successful negotiations drew parallel with some of the difficulties faced in the CCD process. His attendance was a respectful way of acknowledging that what was once known as the poor sister to the Rio conventions, was actually playing in the big league with the FCCC and the CBD.

CONCLUSION

The CCD is at a pivotal point in its development. It is clear from COP-4 that the groundwork has been laid in developing countries and affected communities are waiting expectantly for the Convention to deliver on its promises. Whether it does so or not lies in the ability to mobilize the necessary resources to ensure sustained and effective implementation. It also depends on whether the new generation of officials coming into the process will carry on the spirit that underlies the Convention and continue the legacy established by the experienced lot that worked so arduously to ensure its existence. Nevertheless, the foundation for success has been laid at the national level where partnerships between NGOs, governments, local communities, donors and other interested stakeholders at the national levels are being solidly established.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON THE ROLE OF DROUGHT IN AQUATIC SYSTEMS: This symposium will be held in Albury, Australia, from 12-14 February 2001. For more information, contact: Rhonda Sinclair, Scientific Liaison Officer, tel: +61 2 6058 2300; fax: +61 2 6043 1626; e-mail: sinclair@mdfrc.canberra.edu.au; Internet: <http://enterprise.canberra.edu.au/WWW/www-crcfe.nsf>

CSD-9: The Ninth Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development will be held in New York from 16-27 April 2001. This session will focus on: atmosphere; energy/transport; information for decision making and participation; and international cooperation for an enabling environment. Prior to CSD-9, intersessional meetings will be held from 26 February-2 March 2001 (Energy Expert Group), and from 6-16 March 2001. For more information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev, Division for Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-5949; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: vasilyev@un.org; Internet: http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd9/csd9_2001.htm

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES TO MITIGATE DROUGHT IN THE MEDITERRANEAN - MONITORING, RISK ANALYSIS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING: This course will be held in Rabat, Morocco, from 21-26 May 2001. For more information, contact: Tayeb Ameziane, Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II, Rabat-Instituts, Morocco; tel: +212 37 778645; e-mail: t.ameziane@iav.ac.ma; Internet: <http://www.iav.ac.ma>

WORKSHOP ON AN INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT OF THE ECOLOGICAL, METEOROLOGICAL, AND HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF GLOBAL DESERTIFICATION: This Dahlem Workshop will take place from 10-15 June 2001, in Berlin, Germany, and will address key questions and issues related to land degradation in arid and semi-arid regions. For more information, contact: James Reynolds, e-mail: james.f.reynolds@duke.edu; Internet: <http://www.fu-berlin.de/dahlem/Future%20Meetings.htm>

FIRST SUBSTANTIVE SESSION OF THE UN FORUM ON FORESTS: This meeting is expected to be held from 25 June-6 July 2001 at UN Headquarters in New York. For more information, contact: Secretariat, Intergovernmental Forum on Forests, Division of Sustainable Development; tel: +1-212-963-6208; fax: +1-212-963-3463; e-mail: vahanen@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/forests.htm>

FIFTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN CONFERENCE TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: COP-5 is scheduled to meet from 17-28 September 2001 in Bonn, Germany. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2898/99; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; Internet: <http://www.unccd.int>

ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: This traveling event will be held 8-20 April 2002, in Cape Town, South Africa, various rural communities, and Gobabeb, Namibia. The aim of this combined international symposium, rural community interaction and workshop is to connect community action with science and common sense. For more information, contact: Mary Seely, Desert Research Foundation of Namibia, P.O. Box 20232, Windhoek, Namibia; tel: +264-61-229-855; fax: +264-61-230-172; e-mail: mseely@drfn.org.na

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONALLY SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FOR DRY AREAS FOR THE 2ND MILLENNIUM: This conference will be held on 15-19 September 2002, in Shijiazhuang, China. For more information, contact: Catherine Vachon, Lethbridge Research Centre, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; tel: +1-403-317-2257; fax: +1-403-382-3156; e-mail: vachonc@em.agr.ca; Internet: <http://res2.agr.ca/lethbridge/hebei/confindex.htm>