



## CCD COP-5 HIGHLIGHTS:

### MONDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2001

The Fifth Conference of the Parties to the Convention to Combat Desertification (COP-5) opened Monday at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland. After a brief opening ceremony with statements by CCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo, CCD COP-4 President Zambini Batjargal, and Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs Joseph Deiss, Plenary was suspended. After a short break, Plenary resumed and considered and adopted the agenda and elected the Bureau members.

#### OPENING CEREMONY

In his opening statement, CCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo expressed sympathy to the US Government and people for the 11 September terrorist attacks in New York, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. He also expressed sympathy to the Swiss Government for those killed in the Swiss town of Zug on 27 September. A minute of silence was observed for the victims of these recent tragic events. He then welcomed delegates to the opening of COP-5. Executive Secretary Diallo said that the Convention had come of age with 176 ratifications and that 128 reports regarding the implementation of the Convention had already been examined. He added that the Convention was an important tool for promoting sustainable development, but that ecology, economics and social issues need to be taken into further consideration. Executive Secretary Diallo also stressed the importance of strengthening the implementation of the Convention and the need for better synergies with other conventions, especially leading up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg in September 2002.

COP-4 President Zambini Batjargal, on behalf of the members of the COP Bureau, also expressed condolences and sympathy to the representatives of the US for the tragic events of 11 September, and to the Swiss authorities for the tragic event that occurred in Zug on 27 September. In his opening statement, he said that the Convention had become one of the major international instruments

dealing not only with land degradation, but with the issue of sustainable development as a whole. He said that areas affected by the negative impacts of drought and desertification serve as indicators of poverty and they are the core linkages between environmental issues that include climate change, biodiversity and other multilateral environmental agreements. COP-4 President Batjargal said there is a strong need for enhanced cooperation in supporting the efforts of the affected developing countries that are implementing the Convention and that partnerships are the key for its successful implementation. He also highlighted the possibility of land degradation becoming a new Global Environment Facility (GEF) focal area. Before concluding, COP-4 President Batjargal wished the next COP President the best of luck and urged him to work even more closely with the Secretariat. He stressed the need for delegates to prepare for the WSSD, emphasizing that the CCD Convention is the only convention on sustainable development to stem from the Earth Summit in Rio.

Joseph Deiss, the Swiss Head of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, welcomed delegates to Switzerland, and said that with ratification by 175 countries, the CCD is one of the most important multilateral conventions on sustainable development and is also a powerful instrument for poverty reduction. He stated that extreme climate variations had led to increased floods and droughts globally, and additional mechanisms to prevent catastrophes are required. Noting that poverty, violation of human rights, deterioration of the global environment and similar problems put human survival in danger, Deiss proposed as a solution, the "Global Deal" concept that emerged from the regional European preparatory meetings towards the WSSD. Elaborating on the concept, he said it takes into account the multiple problems faced in the North and South, requires multiple solutions, and urges total commitment by all with each country contributing to solving the global challenges according to its potential. He highlighted some of the diverse approaches and strategies required to combat desertification including bilateral and multilateral cooperation and coherent financing. Deiss underscored the role of research in

This issue of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* © <enb@iisd.org> is written and edited by Jenny Mandel <jenny@iisd.org>, Wagaki Mwangi <wagaki@iisd.org>, Mark Schulman <mark@iisd.org> and Malena Sell <malena@iisd.org>. The Digital Editor is David Fernau <david@iisd.org>. The Operations Manager is Marcela Rojo <marcela@iisd.org> and the On-Line Assistant is Diego Noguera <diego@iisd.org>. The Editor is Pamela S. Chasek, Ph.D. <pam@iisd.org> and the Director of IISD Reporting Services is Langston James "Kimo" Goree VI <kimo@iisd.org>. The Sustaining Donors of the *Bulletin* are the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Canada (through CIDA), the United States (through USAID), the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), the United Kingdom (through the Department for International Development - DfID, and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office), the European Commission (DG-ENV), the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Government of Germany (through German Federal Ministry of Environment - BMU, and the German Federal Ministry of Development Cooperation - BMZ). General Support for the *Bulletin* during 2001 is provided by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Finland, the Government of Australia, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Environment of Norway, Swan International, and the Japan Environment Agency (through the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies - IGES.) The *Bulletin* can be contacted by e-mail at <enb@iisd.org> and at tel: +1-212-644-0204; fax: +1-212-644-0206. IISD can be contacted by e-mail at <info@iisd.ca> and at 161 Portage Avenue East, 6th Floor, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0Y4, Canada. The opinions expressed in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of IISD and other funders. Excerpts from the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* may be used in non-commercial publications only and only with appropriate academic citation. For permission to use this material in commercial publications, contact the Director of IISD Reporting Services. Electronic versions of the *Bulletin* are sent to e-mail distribution lists and can be found on the Linkages WWW server at <http://www.iisd.ca>. The satellite image was taken above Geneva ©2001 The Living Earth, Inc. <http://livingearth.com>. For information on the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* or to arrange coverage of a meeting, conference or workshop, send e-mail to the Director, IISD Reporting Services at <kimo@iisd.org>.



poverty reduction and noted that the interdependence between different dimensions of sustainable development are evermore evident and require consideration.

### PLENARY

COP-4 President Batjargal declared COP-5 open and presented the nomination of Charles Basset, Head of the Canadian delegation, as President of COP-5. Delegates elected him by acclamation.

President Basset thanked delegates and his colleagues from the Western European and Others Group (WEOG) for entrusting him as President, and thanked the outgoing COP-4 President for his work. While noting that the world has changed after 11 September, now having to deal with new security issues, he highlighted the fact that desertification continues to affect tens of millions of people around the world. He drew attention to the high-level segment to take place during the second week of the meeting, calling for an exciting and dynamic policy-level discussion. President Basset described this COP as a community representing many interests, capable of finding solutions in the interests of all. He said there are no quick solutions in the area of desertification and that they would require hard work. He said everyone "from politicians to peasants," can do something concrete to make a contribution under the CCD, the "poor cousin of the conventions." Reflecting on a tree planting experience he had in Zimbabwe, President Basset said COP-5 also will require "digging some tough holes and planting some beautiful trees."

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:** President Basset then asked delegates to consider the agenda (ICCD/COP(5)/1). IRAN, on behalf of G-77/CHINA, recalled the historical link between the desertification process and the UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in Rio in 1992. He suggested that with the next CCD COP taking place in 2003, this year's COP should include in its agenda consideration of the preparatory process for the WSSD. BELGIUM, on behalf of the EU, called attention to item 7(g) of the provisional agenda on review of the implementation of the Convention and its institutional arrangements. He said consideration of conclusions or recommendations by the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) in this context had been dropped from the agenda, and suggested it be reinserted. Delegates then adopted the amended agenda.

**ELECTION OF OTHER OFFICERS:** Regional groups nominated, and Plenary elected by acclamation, nine Vice-Presidents and the CST Chair to serve with the President as Bureau Members. The Vice Presidents are: Etienne Kayengeyenge (Burundi) and Aboubaker Douale Wais (Djibouti) for Africa; Zambini Batjargal (Mongolia) and Mohammed Jabbari (Islamic Republic of Iran) for Asia; Dagmar Kubinova (Czech Republic) and Ashof Vardevanyan (Armenia) for Eastern Europe; Guido Soto (Chile) and Carmen Farias (Venezuela) for the Latin America and Caribbean Group; and Markku Aho (Finland) for the WEOG. Phil-

bert Brown (Jamaica) was elected by acclamation as CST Chair. COP-5 President Basset said election of the Rapporteur would take place at a later stage.

**ORGANIZATION OF WORK:** The US proposed that legal issues such as the outstanding items contained in documents ICCD/COP(5)/7 and ICCD/COP(5)/8, which were planned for the second week, should be dealt with during the first week, as many legal experts were likely to leave at the end of the first week. Plenary agreed that the meetings of the legal experts would take place on Wednesday, 3 October in order to ensure translation facilities were available.

Plenary also established a sessional Committee of the Whole (COW), open to the participation of all delegations, to recommend decisions on outstanding issues for adoption by the COP. COP-5 President Basset designated Mohammed Jabbari (Iran) as Chair of the COW.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

As the first session of COP-5 got off to a late afternoon start, there was already concern among delegates that this year's agenda was being rushed in order to complete all the substantive issues during the first week. The second week would therefore only deal with the high-level segment including Ministerial panel discussions, the NGO dialogue session and preparations for the WSSD. Delegates were expressing skepticism at the prospect of finishing the agenda items earlier than expected, especially considering that there were several outstanding issues to resolve such as discussion of the budget, Rule 47 of the rules of procedure, and the development of the committee to review the implementation of the Convention (CRIC). There was also concern that the outstanding legal issues would not be sufficiently addressed since some of the key delegates would be leaving during the second week of the CCD COP to attend the eighth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) for the Preparation of the Conference of Parties of the Rotterdam Convention for the Application of the Prior Informed Consent (PIC).

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**PLENARY:** Plenary will convene at 10:00 am in Conference Room XVIII to conclude the outstanding organizational matters on the accreditation of observers and credentials of delegations.

**COW:** The Committee of the Whole will convene in morning and afternoon sessions in Conference Room XVIII as soon as Plenary adjourns. It will begin consideration of the programme and budget issues.

**CST:** The Committee on Science and Technology will meet in Room XII at 10:00 am and in the afternoon at 3:00 pm to discuss its organization of work, the establishment of a roster of experts, survey and evaluation of networks, ways of improving efficiency and effectiveness, and benchmarks and indicators.