



## CCD COP-5 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2001

The Committee of the Whole (COW) met in a morning session to consider the review of implementation of the Convention. In the afternoon two open-ended contact groups of the COW met to consider legal matters and the review of CCD implementation, while the contact group on programme and budget met in an evening session. The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) met in morning and afternoon sessions to consider traditional knowledge, proposals on how to revise the national reports' help guide, early warning systems, strategies for the communication of information, dryland degradation assessment and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, and benchmarks and indicators. A contact group on how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST met in the evening.

### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

**REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION:** The Secretariat introduced the issue of additional institutional mechanisms to regularly review Convention implementation (ICCD/COP(5)/3/Add.1).

BENIN, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, with MAURITANIA, IRAN, UZBEKISTAN and others, stressed the need to establish a committee to review the implementation of the Convention (CRIC) as an inter-governmental CCD subsidiary body. BELGIUM, for the EU, said the review of implementation should be done by Parties through national reports and should be regular, structured, flexible and cost-effective.

INDIA stressed following a thematic approach, using RCUs as a focal point for implementation. ARGENTINA stressed the need for instruments and tools that guarantee successful implementation of the CCD. SENEGAL called for a subsidiary body, which Parties could turn to between COPs, and said the body should be empowered to determine the reporting approach. CUBA stressed the need to consider: the frequency of meetings; achievements and shortcomings based on AHWG results; the role of the RCUs; and the decision-making process. KENYA proposed: an open-ended mechanism to ensure experience sharing; a systematic review process that is transparent, efficient and rapid; consideration of the follow-up of recommendations from the reviews; and with SYRIA, proposed consideration of the committee's composition. SWITZERLAND, with NORWAY, said discussion should start with consideration of the committee's function, especially in relation to other CCD bodies, and character, by examining the advantages of an *ad hoc* type mechanism.

Noting a possible divergence between the composite text's suggestions on "implementation of the Convention" and delegates' proposals, the US said delegates should consider what this concept means. He also urged consideration of whether the committee would replace the COW during COP sessions. AUSTRALIA noted that a review of implementation needs to add value and enhance learning from best practices, and that discussions should consider whether a thematic or national reporting approach is preferable.

Chair Jabbari (Iran) announced that Franklin Moore (US) had been nominated to chair the contact group on this issue.

**REPORT OF THE AD HOC WORKING GROUP:** The Secretariat introduced the report of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group (ICCD/COP(4)/AHWG/6) and highlighted the conclusions and recommendations of numerous national reports.

ARGENTINA noted the importance of broad participation and progress made in addressing poverty alleviation in the desertification context. BENIN proposed translating the report's recommendations and conclusions into COP decisions. SYRIA said the report's recommendations could serve as programmes of action for Convention implementation. MALAWI stressed the need to improve awareness of the CCD process at embassies in donor countries. NORWAY underscored capacity building from the bottom up as a key to implementation success.

### COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

**TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE (TK):** CST Chair Philbert Brown (Jamaica) introduced Italy's proposal for the realization of a pilot project of a network of institutions, bodies and experts on traditional knowledge (ICCD/COP(5)/CST/2). ITALY presented the proposal, which focuses on the Mediterranean region and builds on *ad hoc* panel work. It includes cognitive and operational components and involves, *inter alia*, developing structures to increase information on TK and its application, practical ways of drawing on and legally protecting TK and an interactive, internet-based data bank. The two-year, US\$ 1 million project, part of which Italy will finance, includes workshops and training and seeks to enhance dialogue.

Many delegates expressed interest in being associated with the proposed project. Delegates stressed merging TK with contemporary knowledge and techniques. CANADA supported inclusion of holders of oral knowledge. NORWAY, BRAZIL and the COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT underscored principles of access and benefit sharing and rights of TK holders, proposing they be immediately included.

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**REVIEW OF NATIONAL REPORTS HELP GUIDE:** The Secretariat presented its proposed revisions to the guide (ICCD/COP(5)/CST/5). Delegates differed regarding the specificity of the guidelines and concerns were raised over potential inapplicability of certain items. The Secretariat clarified that the Help Guide is a general document to be interpreted by Parties. The SAHARA AND SAHEL OBSERVATORY (OSS), SOUTH AFRICA, the PERMANENT INTER-STATE COMMITTEE FOR DROUGHT CONTROL IN THE SAHEL (CILSS) and FRANCE requested the addition of more specific references. ALGERIA requested better coordination within the document. JAPAN, MOROCCO and others raised concerns that proper consideration could not take place before the discussion on benchmarks and indicators. Chair Brown asked delegates to submit any further comments in writing for inclusion in a later discussion.

**EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS:** The Secretariat outlined the history, mandate and key concerns relating to Early Warning Systems (EWSs) and Chair of the EWS *ad hoc* panel Kazuhiko Takeuchi (Japan) presented the findings of the panel (ICCD/COP(5)/CST/4) at its June 2001 meeting.

MOROCCO, echoed by NORWAY, highlighted the interlinkages between EWSs, benchmarks and indicators, and information assessment. He proposed the formation of an *ad hoc* working group to coordinate these issues. CANADA noted interlinkages with TK. The US highlighted the panel's recommendations to create desertification monitoring systems and to capitalize on remote sensing tools, and urged the use of local volunteers for data collection.

SAINT VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES highlighted the Caribbean as a newcomer to desertification concerns, and expressed interest in pilot program participation to develop benchmarks. The DOMINICAN REPUBLIC underscored the need for South-South cooperation. CILSS expressed interest in expanding its food security systems to combating desertification.

**STRATEGIES FOR THE COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION:** The Secretariat presented the two "different but complementary" submissions (ICCD/COP(5)/CST/6). The OSS submission drew attention to weaknesses in communication mechanisms, including the format of information and lack of infrastructure in developing countries. CANADA's submission highlighted needs to: tailor communications according to audience, synchronize government and NGO strategies, and expand local participation.

CANADA noted the lack of Party reports to CST, linking it to the debate on efficiency and effectiveness. ITALY described relevant initiatives, including an Italian clearinghouse for media coverage of desertification. NIGERIA called for a mechanism for members to share model programs. GERMANY described its efforts to pool information on action programs and noted the need for two-way dialogue.

**DRYLAND DEGRADATION ASSESSMENT AND THE MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT:** The Secretariat introduced the document on the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) and Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) initiatives (ICCD/COP(5)/INF.7).

Anna Tengberg (UNEP) presented on the status of the LADA – which aims to provide basic standardized information and methodological tools for land degradation assessment at different geographic scales, including assessment of hotspots and bright spots at the national level – noting it is now in its second planning phase and has entered the GEF pipeline. She said methodologies are still being developed, and a consultative approach will be taken.

Walt Reid (MA) presented on the MA, a joint scientific assessment serving the needs of the conventions on desertification, biodiversity and wetlands. He welcomed CCD input and encouraged additional subglobal assessments, noting MA seed funding for this purpose. In response to questions from the floor, Reid stressed Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and MA similarities, including that both are policy relevant, but not policy prescriptive, and grounded in Parties. Several speakers stressed the need to develop procedural links between the MA and the CST/COP.

**BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS:** This issue (ICCD/COP(5)/CST/7) was opened with a description of the Secretariat's efforts to date. CILSS presented its report on initiatives to develop benchmarks and indicators, which addresses, *inter alia*: definition and implementation of monitoring-evaluation efforts, lessons available from NAP implementation, and findings on the development of indicators.

### CONTACT GROUPS

The contact group on legal matters met and adjourned early after a preliminary exchange of views on possible areas of convergence and divergence on Articles 27 (measures to resolve questions on implementation) and 28 (dispute settlement), and agreed to meet after regional groups have had more time to consult. Groups were urged to consider discussing each Article separately.

The contact group on the review of implementation started their deliberations on the draft terms of reference for a committee to review the implementation of the Convention (CRIC). The discussion turned to debate over whether the CRIC should become a subsidiary body of the Convention, but there was no agreement. The group will resume discussion on Thursday.

In the contact group on programme and budget, delegates only made enquiries and sought clarification on several specific items, which the Secretariat will respond to during their next contact group meeting.

### IN THE CORRIDORS

At the start of the third day it appeared that the ambitious goal of finishing most of the COP's substantive issues by the end of the week were actually on track, with COW and CST discussions generally running smoothly and on time. However, that plan seems to have hit a snag as little progress was made in the contact groups on implementation review and legal matters. Part of the problem the legal group will have to deal with is the regional groups' varied expectations regarding which post-Rio convention precedents should determine CCD direction. Some participants also insinuated that debate on legal matters is linked to the CRIC, affecting progress on the issue.

### THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

**COW:** The Committee will meet at 10:00 am and at 3:00 pm in Conference Room XVIII to consider information regarding the financing of CCD implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions, review progress made and results obtained by affected country Parties in CCD implementation, and the Global Mechanism's report on constraints faced by affected country Parties in the implementation of action programmes.

**CST:** The CST will meet at 10:00 am and at 3:00 pm in Conference Room XII to conclude its work. Delegates will discuss benchmarks and indicators, establishment of *ad hoc* panel(s) and the CST programme of work. They will also draft the report and adopt recommendations for the COP.

**CONTACT GROUPS:** The groups on legal matters, review of implementation and programme and budget are expected to reconvene on Thursday.