



CCD COP-5 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2001

The Committee of the Whole (COW) met in the morning to consider agenda items relating to the Global Mechanism (GM), strengthening of relationships with relevant conventions and organizations, and other outstanding issues. The contact groups on the budget and on the committee for the review of implementation (CRIC) convened in the afternoon and evening to continue their negotiations. Informal discussions were also held on three draft decisions relating to the GEF, the WSSD, and relationships with relevant conventions and organizations, which had been submitted to the COW on Thursday morning.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

GLOBAL MECHANISM: COW Chair Mohammed Jabbari (Iran) opened the morning session and asked delegates to resume their discussions from last Friday on the review of the report of the Secretariat and the GM on their role in facilitating consultative processes for negotiating and concluding partnership agreements based on national, sub-regional and regional action programmes (NAPs, SRAPs, and RAPs) (ICCD/COP(5)/3 and 4).

Many countries praised the work of the GM and called for further resources to enable it to fulfill its role. Delegates also strongly endorsed a proposal to open a new GEF funding window for land degradation, while several, including MAURITANIA and BURUNDI, noted that such a proposal should not prevent the GM from continuing with its valuable work. ARGENTINA noted that the GM and the GEF are complementary mechanisms, but emphasized the need to strengthen GM activities, particularly through increased voluntary contributions. TUNISIA stressed the need to enhance the GM's human resources, while ALGERIA supported a budget increase for GM activities. BURKINA FASO noted the important work of the GM in assisting developing countries to combat desertification at the local level.

UZBEKISTAN reported that an agreement had been signed recently between the GM and the German international aid agency, GTZ, concerning future activities in the Aral Basin, and expressed the hope that further arrangements will be secured for Central Asia. UGANDA noted financial constraints on the GM's work in his country and subregion and said the GM is the instrument that should move the CCD from planning to implementation. PARAGUAY underscored the importance of the Grand Chaco initiative in the subregion.

The SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY, MALI, ARMENIA, CUBA, the PHILIPPINES, and others called for the GM to be given the resources to fully carry out its financial mobilization role. SENEGAL highlighted the GM's activities in facilitating partnerships for pilot projects. SOUTH AFRICA, along with GUATEMALA, the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, MYANMAR, LAOS, INDONESIA and others, stressed the important role of the GM in assisting with NAP implementation. The SOLOMON ISLANDS requested support from the GM in developing a RAP and SRAPs to combat land degradation in the Pacific. INDIA called for strengthened partnership activities in mobilizing funds.

The EU said the GM had demonstrated its effectiveness as a brokering institution, helping improve resource allocation for CCD implementation. He noted the importance of enhancing its response capacity, but proposed that this issue be taken up at COP-6 when more information will be available from the review of the GM's policies and activities. He also said that the GM should prioritize the use of existing resources to activities directly contributing to innovative approaches to cooperation and resource mobilization, adding that other work, such as information dissemination and mainstreaming, should be assessed along these lines.

GM Managing Director Per Rydén responded to delegates' comments and concerns by noting, *inter alia*, that the GM: does not intend to duplicate the work of other organizations; is discussing the possibility of support for capacity building in accessing GEF funding; and is continuing its efforts to mobilize new resources for CCD implementation. He also underlined the necessity of increasing the GM's response capacity, particularly in the area of human resources, and stressed the importance of voluntary contributions in effectively carrying out the GM's work.

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CONVENTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: Following its consideration of the GM, the COW took up the agenda item on review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies (ICCD/COP(5)/6). Rajeb Boulharouf, CCD Secretariat, introduced the item, reporting on interactions with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and noting cooperation with a number of organizations and institutions, including UNEP.

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SWITZERLAND submitted a draft decision prepared, in cooperation with several members of JUSCANZ, for consideration by the COW. The draft decision contains a preambular section, which includes reference to a decision by the UNEP Governing Council at its 21st Session to establish an Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers on International Environmental Governance (IEG). The operative paragraphs: emphasize the importance of the IEG process and request the CCD's Executive Secretary's active participation; encourage the GM to ensure inter-agency and convention synergies in mobilizing resources in developing and implementing NAPs and RAPs; stress the need to consider lessons learned from Parties on synergies when reviewing CCD implementation; invite Parties to document synergies found in CCD implementation in their national reports; and invite Parties to explore innovative opportunities for efficiencies in addressing cross-cutting issues. The decision recognizes the importance of synergies among scientific and technological bodies, and instructs the CST to develop recommendations for a joint work plan with the CBD's Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice (SBSTTA) for consideration at COP-6. It also requests the Secretariat to develop a proposal for discussion at COP-6 on how cooperation between the UNFCCC and CCD can be advanced at the political, scientific and operational level.

NORWAY and CANADA supported Switzerland's proposal that a decision on this issue be adopted by this COP. Chair Jabbari asked delegates to consider the draft decision and report back to the COW on Friday.

OUTSTANDING ITEMS: Consideration of Rule 47 of the rules of procedure: Delegates briefly considered Rule 47 of the rules of procedure (ICCD/COP(5)/7), recalling that previous COPs had discussed Rule 47, and had not agreed on whether failure to reach consensus should be decided by a "simple majority vote" or on a "two-thirds majority" basis. Chair Jabbari proposed that Plenary take up this matter on Friday, with a view to deferring further consideration until COP-6 in 2003.

Draft decision on the WSSD: The G-77/CHINA introduced a draft decision on the WSSD, which: welcomes the establishment of a Panel of Eminent Persons to consider the poverty-environment nexus, with the Panel's outcomes to be submitted to the WSSD; requests the CCD's Executive Secretary to continue to participate actively in WSSD preparations to ensure that CCD goals are reflected in its outcome; invites the WSSD to address new challenges and opportunities relating to desertification and land degradation, with a view to renewing political commitments; requests the Secretariat to produce comprehensive reports on CCD implementation for the WSSD Preparatory Committee; and invites developed countries to support CCD National Focal Points and NGOs to participate in the WSSD process.

DRAFT DECISION ON COLLABORATION WITH THE GEF: On the agenda item on the review of available information regarding the financing of the implementation of the Convention by multilateral agencies and institutions, including information on the activities of the GEF concerning desertification relating to its four focal areas, the G-77/CHINA introduced a draft decision on the GEF for consideration by the COW. The proposed text, *inter alia*: invites the next GEF Assembly in October 2002 to designate "desertification" as a GEF focal area; invites the GEF Assembly to designate the GEF as the principal financial mechanism for CCD implementation; requests the CCD's Executive Secretary to explore modalities for anticipating funding needs and defining the

focal area with regards to GEF replenishment; requests the Executive Secretary to liaise with the GM in consultations with the GEF Secretariat to develop a Memorandum of Understanding; and calls on the third replenishment of the GEF to take account of the need for "new adequate and additional financial resources" with regard to the new focal area.

Chair Jabbari asked negotiators to discuss the two draft decisions proposed by the G-77/China and the draft decision submitted by Switzerland both within and between their respective negotiating groups, and said the COW would take up these issues again on Friday.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Delegates have been expressing concerns as COP-5 draws to a close about progress in the contact groups, noting that the COW ended its work early Thursday to allow regional groups to consult further on two outstanding issues: the committee to review the implementation of the convention (CRIC), and the programme and budget.

Negotiations on the CRIC are being conducted in a small group chaired since Tuesday by Alain Tellier (Canada), following the early departure of its former chair, Franklin Moore (US). According to one participant, a small group of negotiators from developed and developing countries spent all Thursday behind closed doors, dealing with both the draft decision and the annexed terms of reference. As ENB went to press Thursday evening, observers were suggesting that a consensus was emerging on the establishment of a CRIC as a COP subsidiary body, which would be reviewed after four years at COP-7. They said the relationship this new body will have with the COW at future COPs seems to be the major remaining hurdle.

On the other hand, participants at the negotiations on the programme and budget noted that it ended prematurely Wednesday evening in deadlock on proposed budget increases. Debate has apparently been polarized throughout the week over negotiating strategies, with some preferring to reach consensus on the overall budget before determining priority items and their respective increases. Apparently, a delegate from one group would not negotiate increases of more than 10%, much less than the increase some others had anticipated. The delegate justified this limit by presenting a detailed budget breakdown. However, as proponents of a higher increase were unable to justify their figures in such detail, the group adjourned to allow for more consultations in regional groups. Many participants remained pessimistic about the possibility of concluding the matter by Friday afternoon, especially since decisions in the CRIC will affect programme and budget issues. Speculation on what time the gavel will fall remains high on many delegates' minds.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

PLENARY: The Final Plenary is expected to meet in the afternoon, or following the conclusion of work in the COW and contact groups, to adopt draft decisions and take up any other outstanding matters.

COW: The COW will convene at 10:00 am in Room XVIII, and will consider the three draft decisions submitted on the GEF, the WSSD, and linkages with other Conventions. It is also expected to hear reports on progress in the contact groups on the budget and on the CRIC, and to consider the programme of work for COP-6.

CONTACT GROUP: The contact group on programme and budget is expected to meet and conclude its work.