



SUMMARY OF THE FIFTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 1-13 OCTOBER 2001

The Fifth Conference of the Parties (COP-5) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) took place at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, from 1-13 October 2001. Attended by delegates from over 150 Parties, eight observer States, 15 UN agencies and relevant organizations, and 17 intergovernmental organizations, as well as numerous non-governmental organizations, COP-5 focused on setting the modalities of work for the two-year interval before the next COP, scheduled for October 2003.

The COP was organized within the overall theme of poverty and the environment, in preparation for the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD). The preparations were undertaken through an NGO dialogue session, High Level Special Segment, parallel meetings of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), the fourth Interparliamentary Round Table and a Panel of Eminent Personalities.

Progress was made in a number of areas, most notably, the establishment of the Committee for the Review of Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), the identification of modalities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, and the enhancement of the CCD's financial base following strong support for a proposal by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to designate land degradation as another focal area for funding. The COP adopted 26 decisions, ten of which were drafted in the CST, which met in a parallel session to the COP from 2-5 October.

While COP-5 got off to a somber start, overshadowed by the tragic terrorist attacks in the US on 11 September, and the shootings by a lone gunman in Switzerland on 27 September, the Conference will certainly be remembered for the marathon negotiations in the contact groups on the CRIC, and the programme and budget. Despite a rapid

settling down to business during the first two days of the COP, negotiations in these contact groups lasted throughout the final night, resulting in the Conference concluding 12 hours later than scheduled.

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, subregional and regional action programmes (NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs, respectively) by national governments, in cooperation with donors, local populations and NGOs. There are currently 176 Parties to the Convention. The newest Party is Belarus, which acceded to the Convention on 29 August 2001.

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 desertifica-

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tion in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa (INCD). The INCD met five times between May 1993 and June 1994, and drafted the Convention and four regional annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean. A fifth annex for Central and Eastern Europe was elaborated and adopted during COP-4 in December 2000.

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 (GM), and the establishment of the 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 GM, remained 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 concurrently on 2-3 October. The COP-1 and CST-1 agendas consisted primarily of organizational matters. Delegates 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 GM. 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 in the absence of 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 GM, and the G-77/China proposal to establish a committee on the review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC).

COP-3: Parties met for COP-3 in Recife, Brazil, from 15-26 November 1999, with the CST meeting 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 GM. 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) and 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 additional draft 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 GM at COP-4.

COP-4: Parties met from 11-22 December 2000, in Bonn, Germany. The CST met in tandem with the COP on 12-15 December. The Conference's notable achievements were the adoption of the fifth regional annex for Eastern and Central Europe, commencement of work by the *ad hoc* working group to review CCD implementation, initiation of the consideration of modalities for the establishment of a committee to review implementation of the Convention (CRIC), submission of proposals to improve the work of the CST, and the adoption of a decision on the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council initiative to explore the best options for GEF support for CCD implementation. Delegates also decided to hold a resumed session to conclude the work of the AHWG before COP-5.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION (AHWG): The AHWG met in a three-week session in Bonn, Germany, from 19 March - 6 April 2001, which was attended by participants from over 170 countries. The AHWG reviewed 114 national and subregional reports, and discussed new strategies and policy frameworks, the implementation review process, the financial mechanism for the CCD and cooperation between regions. Developing countries reiterated the pressing need to open a GEF window for funding the implementation of the CCD and also called for the urgent establishment of a consultative mechanism at the country level to conclude partnership arrangements. Developed country Parties outlined their efforts to support the implementation process and made proposals for further improvements.

COP-5 REPORT

The fifth Conference of the Parties to the CCD opened on Monday afternoon, 1 October 2001. In his opening address, 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 his condolences to the Swiss Government for those killed in the town of Zoug on 27 September. A minute of silence was observed for the victims of these tragedies. Welcoming delegates, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo said the Convention had come of age with 176 ratifications. He stressed the importance of strengthening implementation of the Convention and the need for better synergies with other conventions, especially leading up to the WSSD in September 2002.

COP-4 President Zambin Batjargal (Mongolia), on behalf of the members of the COP Bureau, also expressed condolences to the US representatives and to the Swiss authorities for the recent tragic events. In his opening statement, President Batjargal stressed: the CCD's importance as the major international instrument addressing both land degradation and sustainable development as a whole; the fact that



desertified and drought-stricken areas serve as indicators of poverty; and the strong need for enhanced cooperation and partnerships with affected developing countries. He also highlighted the possibility of land degradation becoming a new GEF focal area, and stressed the need for delegates to prepare for the WSSD.

Joseph Deiss, Head of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, said the CCD is one of the most important multilateral conventions on sustainable development and is also a powerful instrument for poverty reduction. He noted the need for additional mechanisms to prevent catastrophes, as extreme climate variations had led to increased floods and droughts globally, and cautioned that poverty, violation of human rights, deterioration of the global environment and similar problems put human survival in danger. As a solution, Deiss proposed the "Global Deal" concept that had emerged from the regional European preparatory meetings towards the WSSD. He said the concept takes into account the multiple problems faced in the North and South, requires varied solutions, and urges an international commitment in which each country contributes to solving the global challenges according to its potential.

COP-4 President Batjargal then presented the nomination of Charles Basset (Canada) as COP-5 President. Delegates elected him by acclamation. In his opening remarks, President Basset highlighted the fact that desertification continues to affect tens of millions of people around the world, and that solving desertification problems will require a major effort. He suggested that everyone, "from politicians to peasants," could do something concrete to make a contribution to the CCD's work.

Delegates then adopted the proposed organization of work (ICCD/COP(5)/1). Iran, on behalf of the 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, COP-5 should include in its agenda the preparations for the WSSD. Calling attention to the agenda item on consideration of specific conclusions and recommendations made by the Global Mechanism (GM) related to affected Country Parties' experiences, Belgium, on behalf of the EU, noted that a similar item relating to the CST was missing from the agenda, and called for its insertion. Delegates then adopted the agenda, as amended.

Regional groups nominated, and the Plenary elected by acclamation, nine Vice Presidents, a Rapporteur and a CST Chair to serve with the President as Bureau Members. The Vice Presidents elected were: Etienne Kayengeyenge (Burundi) and Aboubaker Doualé Waïss (Djibouti) for Africa; Zamba Batjargal (Mongolia) and Mohammad Jabbari (Iran) for Asia; Dagmar Kubinova (Czech Republic) and Ashot Vardevanyan (Armenia) for Eastern Europe; Guido Soto (Chile) and Carmen Farías (Venezuela) for Latin America and the Caribbean; and Markku Aho (Finland) for the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG). Dagmar Kubinova was also elected Rapporteur and Philbert Brown (Jamaica) was elected CST Chair.

Delegates accredited, without objection, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations (IGOs and NGOs) (ICCD/COP(5)/9). The COP accredited 19 additional NGOs on Friday, 5 October 2001 (ICCD/COP(5)/9/Add.1).

ORGANIZATION OF WORK: The Plenary 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. President Basset designated Mohammad Jabbari (Iran) as Chair of the COW. The COW was tasked with the programme and budget, review of implementation and outstanding issues. In order to facilitate its work, the COW established two contact groups, on programme and budget and on the CRIC, and reconstituted the *Ad Hoc* Group of Experts set up during COP-3.

The CST met in parallel to the COP on 2-5 October, and adopted 10 decisions on its substantive work. A two-day session of the fourth Interparliamentary Round Table and a panel of eminent personalities, were also organized in parallel with the COP.

PLENARY

OPENING STATEMENTS: On Tuesday, 2 October, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo elaborated on the Secretariat's interventions at national, subregional and regional levels, and on its work with NGOs since COP-4.

Regional groups and an NGO representative then delivered opening statements. The G-77/China stressed the importance of the 2002-3 budget, the need to strengthen the *Ad Hoc* Working Group (AHWG) and to adopt strategic decisions for the WSSD, and also supported the possibility of the GEF designating a focal area for land degradation. The EU supported mainstreaming NAPs into national strategies for sustainable development, stressed the need to promote synergies between multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) and supported GEF efforts to increase support for dryland management.

Benin, on behalf of the Africa Group, highlighted progress made and constraints encountered in CCD implementation, welcomed the Executive Secretary's contract extension to 2004 and called for making the GEF the CCD's financial mechanism. Syria, speaking for the Asian Group, noted the high number of CCD regional and subregional implementation plans, emphasized the need for partners to support national plans and projects, and supported partnerships with other environmental agreements. Haiti, on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), *inter alia*, expressed hope for resolution of CST and implementation review issues and called for the Secretariat's support in the NAPs. UNEP urged stronger global environmental governance with links to poverty alleviation, and emphasized linkages between trade, land degradation and development, as well as the need to support local community participation. An NGO representative outlined several issues of concern, including low prioritization of socioeconomic issues and Parties' limited implementation capacity at the community level.

HIGH LEVEL SPECIAL SEGMENT: The High Level Special Segment took place from 8-10 October, and featured more than 80 statements from senior country delegates including Heads of State and Government, as well as from representatives of UN bodies and agencies, IGOs and NGOs. The Segment took as its theme the implementation of the Convention, with COP-5 President Basset using his opening address to appeal to participants to find ways to relieve the people's suffering by effectively addressing the linkages between poverty, desertification and land degradation.



In his introductory remarks, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo said the High Level Special Segment was a reminder that the CCD process depends on political will. He then read a message on behalf of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who commended the CCD's work in combating poverty, urged the international community to mobilize resources for affected countries, and supported making the GEF the Convention's main financial mechanism.

Statements by Heads of State and Government: Pedro Verona Rodrigues Pires, President of Cape Verde, said the success of the CCD depends on political will and a predictable financial mechanism such as the GEF. He stressed the importance of stakeholder participation and said the COP should: establish a follow-up committee to review CCD implementation; fund regional coordination units (RCUs); and consider ways to contribute to the WSSD.

Hugo Chavez Frias, President of Venezuela, expressed concern at the current military response to the terrorist attacks in the US, stating that lasting peace will only be achieved by addressing poverty, inequality and injustice, which he said were the causes of violence. Emphasizing the links between poverty and desertification, he called for global cooperation and new ideas in tackling environmental degradation, and said current neo-liberal models are not the answer. He further proposed cutting global military spending by 50% and using the funds to address poverty and the environment. Although desertification does not seriously affect Venezuela, he underscored his country's commitment to tackling this "international problem" by announcing financial support for South-South cooperation on desertification-related projects.

Pascoal Manuel Mocumbi, Prime Minister of Mozambique, highlighted the linkages between climate change and desertification, noting that massive flooding in Mozambique had intensified soil degradation, destruction of infrastructure and economic stagnation. He called on the COP to regularly review CCD implementation at the national level, and urged the GEF to make land degradation a GEF-designated focal area.

Hama Amadou, Prime Minister of Niger, called for urgent CCD implementation, stressing in particular the role of the international community in providing technological and financial assistance to Africa. He also expressed support for a CCD subsidiary body to review implementation, an increase in the Secretariat's budget, and South-South cooperation.

Benin's Prime Minister, Bruno Amousou, highlighted his country's seven-year plan to address desertification, welcomed the GEF's offer to support the CCD as the financial mechanism and, as a beneficiary country, thanked Venezuela for its support.

Statements by Country Representatives, IGOs and NGOs: Following speeches by Heads of State and Government, participants heard statements from other high-level country representatives, as well as from UN agencies, IGOs and NGOs. Many speakers reported on NAP-related activities and noted the linkages between the CCD and other MEAs. Developing country representatives, in particular, called for more financial support and capacity building. Delegates also welcomed a GEF proposal to designate land degradation as a focal area for funding, and recognized the role of civil society and NGOs in combating desertification. In addition, speakers from many affected developing countries stressed the need to resolve outstanding issues

such as the financing of RCUs, the establishment of a CRIC, and the CCD biennium budget, while some developed country Parties stressed mainstreaming desertification NAPs in poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) and national strategies for sustainable development. A number of delegates highlighted the positive role of the GM and the need to strengthen its resources. In addition, many speakers highlighted the opportunity for COP-5 to provide clear guidance and input to the 2002 WSSD.

On funding issues, Norway said the CCD's financing is its most critical challenge. Many developing countries called for various forms of support, including: the provision of funding for the CCD's core budget to cover the functioning of the RCUs; action by the GEF to designate land degradation as a focal area; a decision to invite the GEF to become the CCD's financial mechanism; the value of debt-for-nature swaps; and special preferences for the least developed countries. On the other hand, a majority of the developed countries stressed efforts they have made to meet their obligations, including financial contributions, trade barrier reductions, scientific and technical cooperation, and increases in aid. The GEF said it was considering designating land degradation as a focal area for funding, and was proposing US\$500 million for land degradation activities during the next replenishment period. IFAD said it would contribute another US\$2.5 million to help the GM carry out its work.

Various aspects were highlighted regarding cooperation and collaboration, in particular, the value of participatory approaches in CCD implementation; the role of NGOs; the value of raising public awareness; the involvement of the private sector in CCD implementation; South-South cooperation; scientific and technical cooperation; and multi-stakeholder participation.

On linkages with other MEAs, delegates focused on: links between the Rio conventions, integration and a focus on promoting synergy. The Convention on Migratory Species noted a convergence of objectives with the CCD and plans to develop a memorandum of understanding and joint work programme. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) highlighted the political, ecological, economic and sociological linkages with the CCD, as well as a trilateral arrangement with the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands highlighted linkages with the CCD through, *inter alia*, cooperation on the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment and at the country level.

Regarding regional and subregional matters, speakers emphasized promoting regional coordination and the need for international participation in regional and subregional activities. On NAPs development and implementation, issues raised included the mainstreaming of NAPs in national and subregional programmes, lack of support from development partners, the need for technical and financial support, and the benefits of decentralization in helping local communities manage their resources.

Obstacles to achieving CCD implementation identified by delegates included population density, land productivity, military occupation, anti-personnel mines, chemical and nuclear contamination, and soil erosion.

Interactive Dialogue: As part of the High Level Special Segment, an interactive dialogue on the poverty-environment nexus was held on Tuesday, 9 October. Many speakers highlighted the need to integrate



desertification-related goals and actions into the broader development agenda. Delegates also discussed financing and funding, regional and subregional planning, stakeholder participation and local involvement and empowerment, and land ownership and productivity.

Regarding funding issues, delegates raised concerns related to:

- land tenure;
- the need for direct access by environmental ministries to finance ministries when addressing CCD implementation;
- the need to mainstream developing country legal and institutional systems;
- implementation of financial and technology transfer obligations;
- the benefits of public-private partnerships;
- credit provision for local initiatives; and
- the debt problem.

Concern was also raised about the need for technical assistance for developing countries in determining potential economic returns on rehabilitated land, to assist in planning.

Several delegates noted that regional and subregional planning provide useful frameworks and facilitates local action. Many speakers also highlighted the need for multi-stakeholder participation and a multi-sectoral approach, focusing particularly on: local involvement and empowerment; inclusion of affected rural communities in decision making; public mobilization strategies to promote local initiatives; and efforts to encourage local citizens' input in identifying sustainable income-generating initiatives. Several speakers also underscored the value of education and public awareness-raising and for local community measures that integrate health, literacy and water management programmes.

On land tenure and productivity, issues raised included land redistribution policies, the link between poverty and the low productivity of capital, and efforts to support productive traditional farming systems.

Other matters addressed by speakers include food security and job creation, linkages with other MEAs, trade-related issues, particularly problems with market access, urban migration and poverty, and the need for political will.

In his closing remarks, President Basset said the dialogue session – which had been an “experiment” – had proven very informative and valuable.

NGO DIALOGUES: Open and interactive NGO dialogues, moderated by COP-5 President Charles Basset, were held on Friday, 5 October, and Tuesday, 9 October. Each session began with a series of presentations, which were followed by discussions among NGO representatives, delegates and other participants.

The first dialogue session focused on the poverty-environment nexus. Emmanuel Seck's (ENDA-Tiers Monde) presentation focused on emphasizing the role of NGOs' in NAP development, while Christian Comelieu (University Institute of Development Studies, Geneva) elaborated on a conceptual framework in which the CCD and sustainable development are implemented. Deiter Imhof (Swissaid) focused on the links between monoculture, desertification and the impact of capitalistic production on the environment and biodiversity in developing countries. Ruth Mubiru (Uganda Women Tree Planting Movement) elaborated on the gender, poverty and desertification nexus within the African context. In their presentations on interlinkages

among the conventions, Venkat Ramnaya (Youth for Action) and Yves Corriveau (Solidarité Canada-Sahel) discussed synergies at international, regional and local levels. Rogatien Biao of Benin stressed NGO and civil society roles in CCD implementation various forms of partnerships with NGOs. Maryam Niamir-Fuller (GEF) elaborated on the lessons learned from the PRSP processes.

In the ensuing discussion, participants endorsed the role and participation of civil society in combating desertification. Sweden emphasized the importance of land tenure and women's empowerment for CCD implementation. India stressed that NGO participation, particularly of women, must be built into the national decision-making process. The Organization of African Unity underscored civil society's role in the decision-making process and Kenya highlighted the benefits of involving the National NGO Coordinating Committee in its NAP. Senegal also stressed the New Africa Initiative as the best way forward for sustainable development in Africa.

The second NGO dialogue focused on civil society involvement in CCD implementation. Zakiya Uzoma-Wadada (Caribbean Network for Integrated Rural Development) outlined key requirements for effective NGO consultation, including incorporation of NGO viewpoints into project implementation. Tsaruk Oleg (International Central Asian Network on Biodiversity) highlighted NGO integration in government efforts as a result of CCD activities, noting obstacles related to the legal status of NGOs and allocation of project funds. Jürgen Gliese (AG Desertifikation/Forum Umwelt & Entwicklung) presented results from a survey of German NGOs examining awareness and the value of NGO involvement in policy making.

Octavio Perez Pardo (Argentina) elaborated on the various roles civil society organizations (CSOs) can play, including: ensuring continuity of CCD implementation; creating CCD awareness among peers; and channeling resources to local activities. Sina Maiga (Association de Formation et d'Appui au Développement) and Anne Mossige (Drylands Coordination Group) presented the findings of studies in Mali and Ethiopia on lessons on the participation of CSOs and local level actors in CCD implementation. They recommended, *inter alia*, facilitating capacity building and training, communication, experience sharing, while noting the impact of resource deficiencies, and lack of awareness and coordination. Noting democratization, political will, and adequate funding as prerequisites for active NGO involvement, Juan Luis Mérega (Fundacion del Sur) highlighted measures to strengthen civil society participation, including improving NGO-government cooperation, effecting a bottom-up approach, capacity building at the local level, and raising public awareness.

In the ensuing discussion, several delegations, including Mauritania, Senegal and China, highlighted the value of CSO input in CCD implementation. Ethiopia, supported by others, recommended, *inter alia*: that donors earmark a significant percentage of desertification-related funding for government and civil society activities at the local level and assist affected country Parties to develop monitoring mechanisms; and that affected Parties allocate a significant percentage of funds to addressing social and environmental issues relating to land degradation. Norway called for government-NGO cooperation in developing indicators and, with Denmark, emphasized NGO capacity building.



Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso highlighted inadequate funding as a critical obstacle for NGOs and developing country governments. Mauritania challenged the involvement of foreign NGOs in the South, when there are capable indigenous NGOs available. In closing the discussion, President Basset underscored the challenging role of NGOs in both expressing and shaping the opinions of those they represent.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE WSSD: In preparation for the 2002 WSSD, a Panel of Eminent Personalities met on Tuesday and Wednesday, 9-10 October, in a closed meeting to consider the poverty-environment nexus. On Thursday, 11 October, the G-77/China introduced to the COW a proposed draft decision on the WSSD. After informal consultations between Parties, a decision was adopted on this matter in the final Plenary.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.18) calls for the COP to submit the Chair's summary of the Ministerial and High Level Interactive dialogue session, and for the CCD Executive Secretary to submit the COP-3 and COP-4 reports of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group to the WSSD for its consideration. It also: requests the Executive Secretary to continue to participate actively in the WSSD preparatory process, and in the Summit itself, with a view to ensuring that the CCD goals and objectives are reflected in its outcome; invites the WSSD to take into account the challenges of and opportunities in combating desertification; and encourages governments to involve CCD focal points and NGOs in the WSSD process, and developed countries to provide support to achieve this.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) met from 2-5 October. Philbert Brown (Jamaica) served as CST Chair, and delegates elected the following Vice-Chairs: Moussa Hassane (Niger) for the Africa Group; Abdel-Majid Khabour (Jordan) for the Asia Group; Marija Vihovanec (Croatia) for the Eastern Europe Group; and Helmut Woehl (Germany) for WEOG, who acted as Rapporteur. Pursuant to its agenda (ICCD/COP(5)/CST/1), the Committee held seven sessions and produced 10 draft decisions for consideration and adoption by the COP on: the survey of networks; the roster of experts; scientific and technological aspects of national reports; traditional knowledge; early warning systems; the Dryland Degradation Assessment and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment; improvements to CST efficiency and effectiveness; the programme of work of the CST; the programme of work of the group of experts; and benchmarks and indicators. The draft decisions were transmitted to the COP and adopted on Saturday morning, 13 October.

Other items covered by the CST include the report of the Bureau (ICCD/(5)/INF.6), presented by Chair Brown on Tuesday, 2 October, and strategies for the communication of information (ICCD/COP(5)/CST/6), considered on Wednesday, 3 October. On the latter, the Secretariat noted that only two submissions had been received, which Canada linked to the debate on efficiency and effectiveness of the CST. No further action was taken on this item.

SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF NETWORKS: On Tuesday, 2 October, the Secretariat highlighted the proposal for Phase 2 of surveying and evaluating networks focusing on Anglophone countries in southern Africa (ICCD/COP(5)/CST/3). UNEP, on behalf of the

consortium carrying out the survey, outlined the revised proposal's objective of reducing costs without affecting the output level. In the ensuing discussion, several countries expressed support for the proposal. Germany supported relying more on regional organizations, questioning whether the project could be implemented on a global scale. The US, supported by Canada, said lack of understanding of the project's aims presented an obstacle to further progress. Chair Brown concluded by noting agreement for furthering the consortium's work.

Final Decision: The decision on the survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies (ICCD/COP(5)/L.1) takes note of the lack of financial support for Phase 2 of the proposal and, having reviewed the positive evaluation of Phase 1, accepts the revised proposal by UNEP. It also requests the Secretariat to enter into contractual arrangements for its implementation and requests Parties and interested organizations to contribute to the relevant trust fund.

ROSTER OF EXPERTS: On Tuesday, 2 October, the Secretariat introduced a document on maintenance of the roster of experts (ICCD/COP(5)/5/Add.1), noting that the roster was set up and maintained by the Secretariat, based on nominations from Parties, and aims to ensure geographic representation, gender balance and distribution of disciplines. He said the roster is available on the CCD website and is updated regularly.

The Arab Center for Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands urged countries to provide more detail regarding the area of specialization of their experts, so as to make the roster more useful. Senegal underscored countries' responsibilities to involve and propose NGO experts. In discussing the draft decision, the CST agreed to include a proposal by Burkina Faso that countries be requested to report on their use of the roster.

Final Decision: The decision on the roster of independent experts (ICCD/COP(5)/L.2) encourages Parties to include community-based organizations and NGOs in their roster submissions and invites them to supplement their submissions to achieve better gender balance, representation of all relevant disciplines and expertise of civil society. It also requests the Secretariat to update the electronic version of the roster and distribute hard copies to Parties prior to COP-6.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF NATIONAL REPORTS: On Wednesday, 3 October, the Secretariat presented its proposed revisions to the National Reports Help Guide (ICCD/COP(5)/CST/5). The proposal adds indicators on scientific and technical desertification control activities and on implementation of the recommendations of the CST. It also adds corresponding evaluation parameters, remarks and questions. 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.

Final Decision: The decision on review and implementation of scientific and technological aspects of national reports (ICCD/COP(5)/L.3) requests the Secretariat to make the proposed revisions to the next edition of the Help Guide.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: On Wednesday, 3 October, Chair Brown 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. Many delegates expressed interest in being associated with the proposed project. Delegates stressed merging traditional knowledge 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 traditional knowledge holders, proposing they be immediately included.

Final Decision: The decision on traditional knowledge (ICCD/COP(5)/L.3) takes note of the process of establishing an international research center on traditional knowledge in Matera, Italy; invites the Italian authorities to continue their work; and encourages them to revise the proposal considering CST-5 comments. It further requests Parties and others to explore a partnership agreement to establish the proposed network on traditional knowledge.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS: On Wednesday, 3 October, Kazuhiko Takeuchi, Chair of the Early Warning Systems (EWS) *ad hoc* panel, presented the findings of the panel (ICCD/COP(5)/CST/4) at its June 2001 meeting. Morocco and Norway highlighted the linkages between EWS, benchmarks and indicators, and information assessment. 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.

Final Decision: The decision on Early Warning Systems (ICCD/COP(5)/L.5) requests the Secretariat to seek the resources to publish and distribute background papers submitted to the *ad hoc* panel on EWS; invites Parties to carry out pilot studies to test the panel's recommendations; and encourages Parties and international organizations to provide technical and financial assistance to developing countries wishing to carry out such studies.

DRYLAND DEGRADATION ASSESSMENT AND THE MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT: On Wednesday, 3 October, 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) reported 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. She noted that LADA is now in its second planning phase and has entered the GEF pipeline. 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 regional assessments, noting MA seed funding for this purpose. In response to questions from participants, Reid stressed Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change and MA similarities, including the fact that both are policy relevant, but not policy prescriptive, and are grounded in the Parties. Several speakers highlighted the need to develop procedural links between the MA and the CST/COP.

Final Decision: The decision on the Dryland Degradation Assessment and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (ICCD/COP(5)/L.6) takes note of the two initiatives and the presentations at CST-5, and

requests the Secretariat to continue following the LADA and MA and to facilitate involvement of Parties so that their concerns are taken into account in the assessments.

IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CST: On Tuesday, 3 October, the Secretariat presented a report on this issue synthesized from seven submissions it had received (ICCD/COP(5)/3/Add.2). Points of general agreement included calls for reform based on the CST's existing mandate and for smaller scientific and technical groups reflecting geographical diversity. However, proposals differed on how experts should be selected. Other concerns included the political nature of discussions within the CST, the competence and continuity of representation to the CST, and the need for linkages with other MEAs. During the discussion, delegates expressed their perspectives on the challenges of selecting experts for the proposed small group, especially with respect to the complexity of desertification issues. Concerns over designation of terms of reference for such a body included the range of potential topics and the need to realize synergies with other conventions and initiatives. Methodological issues for mobilizing resources and integrating the work of the CST into the COP were also raised.

A contact group, composed of the members of the current CST Bureau and one additional member of each regional group, was formed to resolve this issue. The contact group met on Tuesday and Wednesday, 3-4 October. A draft decision, which includes the establishment of a group of experts under the CST to provide scientific input, was adopted by the CST for transmission to the COP on Thursday, 4 October.

Several technical concerns with language in the draft were subsequently raised by the US. These concerns were addressed through consultations between the US, the CST Bureau and regional representatives, resulting in a revised proposal for consideration by the COP.

In Plenary on Saturday, 13 October, CST Chair Brown emphasized that this decision does not preclude the creation of *ad hoc* panels in the future. The US highlighted the importance of ensuring adequate representation of affected Parties in the composition of the group of experts.

Final Decision: The decision on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST (ICCD/COP(5)/L.7/Rev.1) takes note of Party submissions and interventions on the matter, considers the results of regional consultations, and decides to adopt ways and means to improve CST efficiency and effectiveness, including by establishing a group of experts, as defined in an annex. The annex specifies, *inter alia*, that:

- CST reform should be considered within its existing mandate;
- CST meeting duration should remain unchanged;
- the CST should be involved in reviewing national reports;
- CST activities should be better integrated into national and regional activities, and CST representatives should play a more active liaison role;
- a group of experts in combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought, with a four-year maximum programme of work, should be established under and report back to the CST;
- membership of the group of experts should not exceed 25 persons, should ensure equitable geographic distribution, and selection – based on the roster of experts and competence – will be recommended by the CST for approval by the COP. For the first year



only, selection will be handled by the CST Bureau in consultation with the regional groups and the Secretariat;

- the CST should define the programme of work and the Terms of Reference of the group of experts, and should focus on the state of knowledge, scale of impact, opportunities for mitigation and implications for policymakers;
- the group of experts should communicate using electronic means and meetings, and should meet annually for a maximum of one week; and
- funding for the group of experts should come from the regular budget.

FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME OF THE CST:

On Thursday, 4 October, the Secretariat recalled a COP decision stating that each CST session should consider one priority issue. Delegates then discussed possible topics for the next CST session. Namibia highlighted proposals on, *inter alia*, new and renewable energy and promotion of alternative livelihoods. The EU, supported many other participants, suggested the topic of land degradation. This triggered discussion of the concept's definition and relationship to desertification. Japan and others supported examining synergies between the Rio Conventions. Norway, with other delegates, proposed an integrated evaluation of early warning systems, benchmarks and indicators, and traditional knowledge. Egypt and Niger suggested focusing on success stories of land rehabilitation. A small contact group was established, and returned with a proposed CST topic on "land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation: an integrated approach," which was adopted.

Delegates then discussed the establishment of a work programme for a smaller group of experts under the CST. Several participants noted that the subject should emanate from national reports, but felt a precise definition for the work was premature. Morocco, supported by the EU and Japan, said the group of experts should operationalize the Convention in a concrete way. A US draft decision requesting Parties to submit proposals on the topic through the regional groups by 1 February 2002 was approved.

Final Decisions: The decision on the programme of work of the CST (ICCD/COP(5)/L.8) states that the priority issue to be addressed in depth at CST-6 shall be "land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation: an integrated approach." It invites Parties to submit reports on case studies on the topic and the Secretariat to synthesize them prior to CST-6, decides that the CST-6 agenda shall include the CST-5 topics, and requests the Secretariat to convene one intersessional meeting of the CST Bureau.

The decision on the programme of work for the group of experts (ICCD/COP(5)/L.9) requests the CST Bureau to review and synthesize the recommendations transmitted from the Secretariat, and to define the programme of work of the group of experts and make the necessary arrangements for the selection of experts. The decision notes that this procedure will be used on a one-time basis, and that the CST will establish the programme of work in the future.

BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS: This issue (ICCD/COP(5)/CST/7) was taken up on Wednesday, 3 October, with a description of the Secretariat's efforts to date. The Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought and Desertification (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. On Thursday, 4 October, discussion continued with statements by delegates. Burkina Faso, Turkey, Germany, France, Cape Verde, Denmark, Mexico and the International NGO Network on Desertification and Drought (RIOD) noted the need for: national capacity building; financial support; harmonization between actors; coordination and decentralization of data; strengthened regional cooperation; civil society indicators and involvement; and information sharing mechanisms. Canada, Germany and Mexico also called for strong follow-up measures by the CST.

Final Decision: The decision on benchmarks and indicators (ICCD/COP(5)/L.10) takes note of the work by CILSS and the Sudano-Sahelian Observatory and encourages them, as well as Parties and other interested organizations, to continue their initiatives in this area. It also encourages Parties to develop and test benchmarks and indicators, particularly those that target local level and civil society involvement; and invites Parties to support developing country initiatives and training and capacity development.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Committee of the Whole (COW), chaired by Mohammad Jabbari (Iran), started its work on Tuesday, 2 October and finished on Saturday morning, 13 October. The items on its agenda included the programme and budget and review of the implementation of the Convention and its institutional arrangements, including: the report of the Secretariat and Global Mechanism (GM); review of activities for strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions; consideration of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group report; procedures for the resolution of questions on implementation in accordance with Article 27, and consideration of annexes containing arbitration in accordance with Article 28; and consideration of Rule 47 of the rules of procedure.

COW Chair Jabbari established three contact groups to consider programme and budget, legal matters, and review of CCD implementation. The contact group Chairs presented their recommendations and conclusions to the final COW and Plenary on Saturday, 13 October.

PROGRAMME AND BUDGET: On Tuesday, 2 October, CCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo introduced the programme and budget (ICCD/COP(5)/2), which contains: the 2002-3 biennium budget (ICCD/COP(5)/2/Add.1 and Add.2); performance of the Convention's trust funds for 2000-1 (ICCD/COP(5)/2/Add.3); performance of the trust funds for supplementary activities in 2000-1 (ICCD/COP(5)/2/Add.4); regional coordination units (ICCD/COP(5)/2/Add.5); and status of contributions to the Convention's trust funds for 2000-1 (ICCD/COP(5)/2/Add.6). He also recommended further consideration of a draft proposal that explores the establishment of common administrative services between the CCD and UNFCCC.

Chair Jabbari then introduced each addendum for debate. In the first deliberation on the budget issue, the EU noted a considerable increase in the Secretariat and GM budgets. The Africa Group and others also sought clarification for the GM and Secretariat proposed 126% budget increase for the GM. Many delegates stressed that the GM is not a financing mechanism, but an institution aimed at mobilizing resources. Others emphasized the role of the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) in funding some GM activities.



Diallo noted the Convention's modest financial contributions for NAPs compared with other MEAs and stressed the need for resources to fill six positions previously approved at COP-3. GM Managing Director Per Rydén welcomed collaboration with the GEF and said the increase in the budget and staff was based on an increased workload requested by the COP.

The COW also considered the report on the status of contributions to the Convention's trust funds. In an appeal to delegates, Diallo urged Parties to pay their contributions in a timely manner.

A contact group on programme and budget, chaired by Mohammad Jabbari, was established to consider this item further. Beginning on Wednesday, 3 October, the contact group met daily, often late into the night, in an effort to reach a compromise on an acceptable budget increase. Proposals ranged from 0-30%, with considerable attention being given to high priority issues, including NAP implementation, CRIC and CST support, synergies with other conventions, and WSSD preparation. By the second week, the debate had polarized over negotiating strategies, with some preferring to reach consensus on the overall budget before determining priority items and their respective increases and others preferring to first establish the priorities. After extensive negotiations, delegates finally agreed to text for a decision, which was adopted by acclamation during the Closing Plenary.

Final Decision: The decision on the programme and budget for the biennium 2002-3 (ICCD/COP(5)/L.11) states that the budget shall amount to US\$15,325,200 based on the scale of assessments adopted by the UN General Assembly. It also approves a staffing level of 43 for the Secretariat and 14 for the GM for 2002-3 from the core budget, and approves a contingency budget for conference services amounting to US\$5,583,000, in the event that the UN General Assembly does not provide resources for these activities in the UN's regular budget for that biennium. An additional US\$919,000 will be incurred in the event that COP-6 is held in Bonn, Germany. In addition, the decision: requests the CCD Executive Secretary to continue negotiations with the UN Secretary-General on the issue of an allotment of overheads for the financing of additional posts or the Secretariat's administrative activities; invites Parties to note that contributions to the core budget are expected on or before 1 January each year; and requests the Executive Secretary to report to COP-6 on the financial performance of the Convention's funds, and to submit a programme and budget for the biennium 2004-5 for Party consideration.

On the supplementary and special fund, the decision takes note of the funding estimates for the supplementary fund (US\$12,643,500) and the special fund (US\$1,243,000) and invites Parties, IGOs and NGOs to make contributions. It also requests the Executive Secretary to report to COP-6 on the status of the trust funds established under the COP's financial rules.

REGIONAL COORDINATION UNITS: This issue was initially considered under the item on programme and budget (ICCD/COP(5)/2/Add.5), but was subsequently discussed as a separate issue by the contact group on programme and budget. Delegates briefly considered the report on regional coordination units (RCUs) on Tuesday, 2 October. The G-77/China and others supported the need for RCUs and their funding, explaining that the RCUs had proved both

effective and efficient in implementing the convention at the regional level. Following consultations in the contact group, a final decision was brought before the Plenary on Saturday, 13 October.

Final Decision: The decision on the RCUs initiative (ICCD/COP(5)/L.15) decides to include on the COP-6 agenda an item on the need for, modalities for, costs involved, and feasibility and possible terms of reference of the "regional coordination units." The decision states that until this item is considered by the COP, funding shall continue through the supplementary fund, and that developed countries and multilateral agencies are invited to contribute on a voluntary basis to the supplementary fund for the RCU initiative.

CONSIDERATION OF ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES TO ASSIST THE COP IN REGULARLY REVIEWING CCD IMPLEMENTATION: This issue was considered by the COW on Thursday, 4 October, and was then taken up in an open-ended contact group. The group was initially chaired by Franklin Moore (US), who due, to an early departure, was replaced by Alain Tellier (Canada). Except for Sunday, 7 October, the contact group met daily, concluding its negotiations on Friday night, 12 October.

On 4 October, the Secretariat introduced a document on additional institutional mechanisms to regularly review Convention implementation (ICCD/COP(5)/Add.1). The G-77/China stressed the need to establish a committee to review the implementation of the Convention as a subsidiary body. The EU said the review should be conducted by Parties, through national reports, and should be regular, structured, flexible and cost-effective.

Debate centered around six concerns: durability, composition, operational modalities, relation to the COW during COP sessions, and function and reporting approach. Another concern was the basis of negotiations, with some preferring to start with a consideration of its function, while the US suggested that there may be a divergence in views regarding what was meant by "implementation of the Convention."

Following these initial discussions, consultations were conducted in the contact group. After an initial exchange of views, delegates provided written submissions, on the basis of which Chair Moore prepared a draft decision on the CRIC. The terms of reference were annexed and the contact group negotiated on the basis of this text. On the last day of the Conference, drawn out negotiations on the CRIC also held up the conclusion of the negotiations on programme and budget, since it had budgetary implications to consider. The group finally concluded its work on Friday, 12 October.

During its presentation to the final COW session on Saturday, 13 October, Chair Tellier called attention to minor changes in the draft decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.15), including a proposal that Parties should submit "by 31 January 2003" written proposals on criteria against which the Committee will be reviewed. On the annexed terms of reference, the EU suggested that for consistency with decision 20/COP2, the composition of the CRIC bureau should have adequate representation of affected country Parties, "particularly those in Africa, while not neglecting affected country Parties in other regions." The decision was adopted as orally amended.

Final Decision: This decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.15), which also contains the terms of reference (TOR) of the CRIC, decides to:



- establish a CRIC as a subsidiary body of the COP to regularly review CCD implementation;
- adopt the TOR of the CRIC annexed thereto;
- subject the mandate and functions undertaken during COP sessions to renewal at COP-7 on the basis of lessons learned;
- review the annexed TOR, schedule of meetings and operations no later than COP-7; and
- hold the first meeting of the CRIC in November 2002.

It also invites Parties to submit written proposals to the Secretariat by January 2002, criteria against which the review will be undertaken and, with others, to contribute financially to the organization of regional meetings. The decision also requests the Secretariat to prepare a preliminary analysis of the reports along thematic lines for submission to the COP and the Executive Secretary to facilitate the preparation of regional inputs for the review process. The TOR covers mandate and functions, composition, frequency of sessions and organization of the work, nature of the review and methodology and the review process.

AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON THE REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION: On Wednesday, 3 October, the Secretariat introduced the report on the *Ad Hoc* Working Group for the in depth review and analysis of the reports submitted to COP-3 and COP-4 (ICCD/COP(4)/AHWG/6) and highlighted the recommendations and conclusions of numerous national and subregional reports. In its conclusions on further steps to implement the Convention, the report, *inter alia*, welcomes the holding of the WSSD and considers it an opportunity to mobilize more political will and financial resources to promote the CCD; recognizes the need to mainstream NAPs into the broader strategic frameworks for sustainable development; stresses the need to further strengthen regional thematic networks; emphasizes the need for partnership agreements at subregional and regional levels; and recommends that the GEF Council include a financing window for combating desertification to access GEF resources.

During the discussion on this matter, Argentina noted the importance of broad participation and progress made in addressing poverty alleviation in the context of desertification. 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.

During the final COW session on Saturday, 13 October, CRIC contact group Chair Tellier introduced draft decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.24/Rev.1) and said it was one of two draft decisions considered by his contact group. He highlighted a minor amendment, and the document was adopted as amended both in the COW and Closing Plenary.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.24/Rev.1) recognizes the need to foster partnership building for the implementation of action programmes within affected countries, and invites Parties to facilitate the completion of NAPs and the implementation of such programmes at the local level. It also urges Parties to negotiate and conclude partnerships based on NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs.

REVIEW OF THE SECRETARIAT REPORT ON PROGRESS MADE BY AFFECTED COUNTRIES IN CCD IMPLEMENTATION: On Thursday, 4 October, and Thursday, 11 October, the Secretariat presented its report on progress made by affected Parties in the implementation of the Convention (ICCD/

COP(5)/3), which includes measures to support implementation in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean and other European regions, as well as at the inter-regional level. The report was prepared following Party requests, for national, subregional and regional activities and draws attention to the complementary informational AHWG report.

Morocco and Tunisia suggested updating the report to cover all activities undertaken before COP-5. Malawi noted successful incorporation of NAP activities in its cooperation framework with the African, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP) and the EU's "Cotonou Agreement." CCD Executive Secretary Diallo expressed hope that such cooperation would take place within a wider context including with the World Bank and UNDP poverty eradication initiatives. There was no decision on this item.

REVIEW OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION REGARDING FINANCING OF CCD IMPLEMENTATION, INCLUDING GEF ACTIVITIES: On Thursday, 4 October, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo introduced the review of available information regarding CCD financing, including information on the activities of the GEF (ICCD/COP(5)/3/Add.3). He highlighted action on decisions taken at the November 2000 GEF Council and CCD COP-4, and reported on follow-up action to the May 2001 GEF Council decisions, which agreed that designating land degradation as a focal area should be pursued as a means for enhancing GEF support for CCD implementation. The Council also requested the preparation of a detailed note to elaborate the modalities for designating land degradation as a GEF focal area for consideration at the GEF Council's December 2001 meeting and October 2002 Assembly.

The G-77/China, with many others, stressed the need to designate the GEF as the main financial mechanism for CCD implementation. Some delegates, including Nepal, Zimbabwe and Morocco, expressed hope that future GEF funding would be instrumental in implementing NAPs. Argentina and Tunisia said GEF funding for the CCD should be on the same basis as other MEAs. The EU welcomed strengthening the efforts of the GEF to finance land degradation activities, but said the COP should also look to other multilateral agencies. Switzerland added that it would be premature to designate the GEF as the CCD's principal financial mechanism, as it only covers incremental project costs. Norway noted that the COP should not preempt decisions to be made by the GEF and added that the GM should continue playing a central role in mobilizing funding. Australia, the US, and Canada encouraged the Secretariat to work closely with the GEF on modalities for designating land degradation as a GEF focal area, but said that any COP decisions should await confirmation of the GEF Council and Assembly. CCD Executive Secretary Diallo said that the Secretariat would proceed with negotiations. Following consultations, a decision submitted to the COW by the G-77/China on Thursday, 11 October, was adopted.

Final Decision: This decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.25) welcomes the decision taken by the GEF Council to pursue the designation of land degradation as a GEF focal area as a means of enhancing GEF support for CCD implementation. It also, *inter alia*, requests the CCD Executive Secretary and GM Managing Director to continue to cooperate actively in the GEF Secretariat's work on modalities for designating



land degradation as a focal area; and encourages further meetings of the third replenishment of the GEF to consider the need for new and additional resources to assist the CCD in achieving its objectives.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE GM ON AFFECTED COUNTRY EXPERIENCES IN CCD IMPLEMENTATION: GM Managing Director Per Rydén presented the report of the GM (ICCD/COP(5)/4) in discussions held on Friday, 5 October, and Thursday, 11 October. He stressed that the GM needs more financial and human resources to fulfill growing demands on it, which include: collecting and disseminating information; promoting actions for cooperation and coordination; and mobilizing and channeling financial resources. Welcoming suggestions that land degradation become a GEF focal area, he said the GM would assist countries in accessing funds for GEF projects. He also suggested conducting an independent external review of the GM's operational strategy and work for the COP-6 GM review.

Commenting on the report, many countries praised the work of the GM, especially in assisting with NAP implementation, and called for further resources to strengthen its role. Delegates also strongly endorsed a proposal to open a new GEF funding window for land degradation.

The G-77/China requested the GM to mobilize additional resources and supported a gradual staff increase. Argentina noted that the GM and the GEF are complementary mechanisms, but emphasized the need to strengthen GM activities, particularly through increased voluntary contributions, while Tunisia stressed the need to strengthen the GM's human resources. Burkina Faso noted the important work of the GM in assisting developing countries to combat desertification at the local level.

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 through 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 prioritized only if it contributes to such activities.

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 need to increase 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. As a decision on this agenda item was taken up under the previous item (ICCD/COP(5)/L.25), no separate decision was considered.

REVIEW OF THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT AND THE GM ON THEIR ROLE AND RESULTS IN CONSULTATIVE PROCESSES: This agenda item was considered in conjunction

with the two items above, on review of the report of the Secretariat on progress made by affected countries in CCD implementation and on conclusions and recommendations by the GM on affected country experiences. No separate draft decision was taken on this item.

STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CONVENTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: This issue was considered on Thursday, 11 October. The Secretariat introduced the item (ICCD/COP(5)/6), reporting on interactions with the CBD, the UNFCCC, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and noting cooperation with a number of organizations and institutions, including UNEP.

Switzerland submitted a draft decision prepared in cooperation with several members of JUSCANZ for consideration by the COW. Norway and Canada supported Switzerland's proposal that a decision on this issue be adopted by this COP. The decision was adopted the COW on Saturday morning, 13 October.

Final Decision: This decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.23) notes the establishment of an Open-Ended Intergovernmental Group of Ministers on International Environmental Governance and recognizes the importance of synergies among scientific and technological bodies. It also:

- welcomes the on-going work on International Environmental Governance and encourages the Executive Secretary's involvement;
- requests the CST to include land/soil degradation and its linkages to other environmental conventions in its programme of work and to enhance its cooperation with the scientific and technological subsidiary bodies of other conventions and to report on that cooperation at COP-6;
- encourages international organizations, institutions and agencies to promote synergies in their mobilization of resources for CCD implementation;
- encourages Parties to share information on synergies and to report on this at COP-6; and
- invites the Secretariat to report at COP-6 on its activities to enhance cooperation with the CBD, UNFCCC, Ramsar Convention and Convention on Migratory Species.

OUTSTANDING ITEMS: Three separate matters were considered under this item, relating to the COP's voting procedures (Rule 47 of the rules of procedure), compliance with the Convention (Article 27) and dispute settlement (Article 28). The deliberations on these issues resulted in two draft decisions: one on Rule 47 and the other on both Articles 27 and 28.

While discussion on these issues was scheduled for the end of the second week, the COP agreed on Tuesday, 2 October, to a US proposal to discuss all legal issues during the first week, since many of the legal experts had plans to leave at the end of the first week.

Resolution of Questions of Implementation (Article 27) and Annexes Containing Arbitration and Conciliation Procedures (Article 28): Delegates met on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, 3-5 October, in an informal contact group chaired by Patrick Szell (UK) and considered these two items simultaneously.



Consideration of these two issues was based on a Secretariat report on outstanding items (ICCD/COP(5)/8). During their first meeting, delegates agreed to hold general discussion without attempting to reach any conclusions, as some regional groups needed more time to consult and due to the possibility that a CRIC would be established.

Discussion on compliance focused on the scope of the resolution of questions and whether compliance was linked to Articles 22 (Conference of the Parties), 26 (communication of information) and 28 (settlement of disputes). Delegates discussed whether “resolution of questions” referred to the overall review of CCD implementation or to individual country compliance. Regarding Article 28 on dispute settlement, there was brief debate on whether it was sufficiently independent of Article 27 to warrant immediate negotiation, but despite an emerging consensus regarding its independence, discussion was deferred pending the outcome of the CRIC.

The group presented its draft decision on compliance (Article 27) and dispute settlement (Article 28) to the COP on Friday, 5 October, which was adopted *ad referendum*.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.12): elects, for purposes of fulfilling Articles 27 and 28 of the CCD, to reconvene the open-ended *Ad Hoc* Group of Experts (AGHE) during COP-6 to examine further and make recommendations on each of these issues; decides further that the AGHE shall take as the basis of its work on each of these issues, new working documents prepared by the Secretariat in light of ICCD/COP(4)/8 and ICCD/COP(5)/8; notes progress made in negotiations on the same matter in other relevant environmental conventions; invites Parties wishing to communicate their views on these issues to do so, in writing, by 31 January 2003; and requests the Secretariat to include such views in the new working documents.

Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure: On Thursday, 11 October, COW Chair Jabbari drew delegates’ attention to Rule 47 of the rules of procedure (ICCD/COP(5)/7), recalling that previous COPs had discussed this rule but had not agreed on whether decisions should be taken on the basis of a “simple” or “two-thirds majority” vote when consensus could not be reached. Jabbari proposed that Plenary take up this matter on the following day, with a view to deferring further consideration until COP-6. Without further discussion, the COW adopted a draft decision during its final session on Saturday, 13 October.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.22) requests the Secretariat to include this issue on the COP-6 agenda.

CLOSING SESSION OF THE COW

The COW was scheduled to meet and adopt its report at 3:00 pm on Friday, 12 October. However, the final day of COP-5 was marked by the constant rescheduling of meetings. The morning had been set aside for the conclusion of the COW’s still unresolved issues – the CRIC and the programme and budget – that were being negotiated in two contact groups, and to allow time for the preparation of the draft decisions. Delegates not participating in the contact groups continued informal negotiations on two draft decisions on the WSSD and on CCD collaboration with the GEF that had been presented to the COW on Thursday

afternoon, as well as on new draft decisions that were distributed Friday morning on the World Day to Combat Desertification and on the programme of work for COP-6.

At 3:00 pm on Friday, neither contact group had reached agreement, and the COW was postponed pending decisions on the CRIC and on programme and budget. The contact group on the CRIC reached an agreement at 11:30 pm, and the contact group on programme and budget, which had been awaiting the CRIC agreement, then resumed its own negotiations. These negotiations finally concluded at 5:00 am on Saturday morning, 13 October – after the COW had ended its final session – and a decision was adopted by the Plenary.

Chair Jabbari convened the last meeting of the COW at 2:40 am on Saturday, 13 October, and adopted its draft decisions for transmission to the COP, with the exception of the decision on programme and budget. The final COW session also took up for the first time, three issues: World Day to Combat Desertification, the programme of work for COP-6, and the date and venue of COP-6.

WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: Delegates considered the theme of the 2002 World Day to Combat Desertification, which was amended to accommodate a proposal mandating the COP Bureau to determine the theme of the 2003 World Day to Combat Desertification. The G-77/China proposed, and delegates also adopted, an amendment recognizing that countries may choose sub-themes for national activities, which made the decision consistent with CCD provisions.

Final Decision: In addition to these amendments, the decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.19) recognizes the need to designate a theme for the World Day to Combat Desertification each year, agrees to adopt “Land degradation” as the theme for the World Day to Combat Desertification on 17 June 2002, and invites Parties to carry out relevant activities in support of the above theme.

Chair Jabbari then suspended the meeting to await the conclusion of the draft decision on programme and budget for adoption by the COW. However, the COW never reconvened and that draft decision was subsequently adopted without consideration by the COW during the final Plenary.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR COP-6: Chair Jabbari introduced a draft decision on the programme of work for COP-6 (ICCD/COP(5)/L.17) during the final meeting of the COW. In accordance with a decision taken earlier regarding the need to refer to the CST each time the GM is mentioned in the context of “the review of implementation of the CCD pursuant to Article 22, paragraph 2(d),” the COW amended the document at the request of the EU in order to ensure both institutions are reflected. The decision was adopted.

Final Decision: The final text (ICCD/COP(5)/L.17) decides to include in the COP-6 and, if necessary, COP-7 sessions, *inter alia*:

- adjustment of the programme and budget for 2002-3;
- review of the implementation of the Convention and its institutional arrangements;
- review of the report of the CST and of synergies with other conventions;
- review of the report, policies, operational modalities and activities of the GM;



- review of information on the financing of the Convention, including activities of the GEF;
- consideration of Rules 47, 27, and arbitration and conciliation procedures; and
- open and interactive NGO dialogues.

DATE AND VENUE OF COP-6: A draft decision on the date and venue of COP-6 was approved without discussion on Saturday, 13 October, and was forwarded to the COP for adoption.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.20) states that COP-6 shall be held from 19-31 October, 2003 in Bonn, Germany, in the event that no Party makes an offer to host that session prior to 31 January 2003.

CLOSING PLENARY

COP-5 President Basset convened the final Plenary on Saturday, 13 October, at 6:50 am. Delegates adopted decision ICCD/COP(5)/L.16 on the credentials of delegations.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE CST: CST Chair Brown then introduced the recommendations transmitted from the CST (ICCD/COP(5)/L.1/Rev.1-L.10). The ten CST decisions were adopted.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COW: Introducing the report and draft decisions of the group, COW Chair Jabbari noted that the Committee had successfully concluded its work, and was recommending its 11 draft decisions for adoption, as amended by the final COW.

Regarding the decision on the date and venue of COP-6 (ICCD/COP(5)/L.20), Germany said in the event of no country offering to host the Conference, it would be willing to cooperate with the Secretariat to host the meeting.

During the adoption of the decision on programme and budget for the biennium 2002-3 (ICCD/COP(5)/L.11), Argentina requested consideration of this agenda item only after adoption of the decision on the "Regional Coordination Unit" initiative (ICCD/COP(5)/L.26/Rev.1). She noted that the draft decision was precipitated by negotiations in the contact group on programme and budget. The decision on RCUs was adopted without objection. Iran, on behalf of the G-77/China, expressed his full support for the decision and said it should be reflected in the Programme of Work for COP-6. Finally, decision (ICCD/COP(5)/L.17) on the Programme of Work for COP-6 was adopted.

Delegates then considered draft decision on programme and budget for the biennium 2002-2003 (ICCD/COP(5)/L.11). Cuba requested that "and a draft scale of assessments" be added to Paragraph 15, which requests the Executive Secretary, in the proposed programme and budget for the biennium 2004-5 and the performance report, to include detailed tables and narrative of the implemented as well as proposed expenditures, resource requirements for each subsidiary body under the budget line for substantive support to the COP and its subsidiary bodies, specified according to the actual Fund utilized. Plenary then adopted the decision on the programme and budget (ICCD/COP(5)/L.11). The US said she does not foresee similar budget increases in the future and noted the lack of transparency with regard

to use of the budget and strongly supported budget reform. Brazil made a reservation, noting it will follow the scale of assessments agreed at COP-1.

COP-5 President Basset noted that the adoption of the decision on the CRIC necessitated the election of a CRIC Chair. He said he had been informed that following informal consultations, it had been agreed that the position would be held on a rotational basis with the first Chair coming from the Africa Group, and that Rogatien Biaou (Benin) had been nominated as Chair. Kenya, on behalf of the Africa Group, with Iran, on behalf of the Asian Group, as well as Argentina and Jamaica, supported this nomination, noting the various facilitative roles he had played during the session. In the absence of other nominations, Biaou was elected CRIC Chair by acclamation.

In his concluding remarks, President Basset noted the Nobel peace prize awarded to the UN and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, as well as a new initiative between Africa and its EU partners, as events in recent days that had provided inspiration for the CCD. He expressed satisfaction with the exchange of ideas at the COP, including during the high level dialogue, and supported close cooperation between governments, NGOs and local communities in combating desertification. He noted CST reform and the creation of the CRIC as the two major achievements of the COP. However, he stressed that the conference had proceeded in a dysfunctional way, and urged that these aspects be improved. President Basset concluded by calling on all to remain engaged during the intersessional period, stressing as the key that participants leave the meeting determined to put into practice the vision and the ideas exchanged during the past two weeks. The EU and the G-77/China said the meeting had been successful and thanked President Basset and fellow negotiators.

Delegates then adopted the report of COP-5 (ICCD/COP(5)/L.14), agreeing that the Rapporteur will finalize the report after the close of the session.

The EU welcomed the significant progress made at COP-5 and hoped that CCD deliberations would contribute to productive debates at the WSSD. In the absence of President Basset, who had to leave the meeting before its close, CST Chair Philbert Smith, on behalf of President Basset, noted the challenge faced during the past two weeks and reiterated Parties' commitment for the Convention's implementation. He thanked participants and gave the meeting to a close at 8:18 am on Saturday, 13 October.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF COP-5

CCD COP-5 got off to a somber start with the 11 September terrorist attacks in the US and the 27 September shooting spree by a lone gunman in Zoug, Switzerland, fresh in everyone's minds. After a moment of silence in the opening Plenary for the victims of these tragic events, Parties settled down to the work at hand. COP-5 marked a turning point in the Convention's relatively short history. Until recently, the focus has been on negotiating priorities and directions for future action. Now, the Convention has entered a new five-year phase focused on progress and actual implementation. Unfortunately, there are already signs of trouble in making a smooth transition to this new phase. A two-year wait until the next COP, a hastily negotiated budget, inconclusive deliberations regarding the future of the COP's interes-



sional bodies, and the overall uncertainty regarding its financing bodies, mean the CCD is facing some tough challenges. With the meeting unable to conclude its business until Saturday morning, one day later than scheduled, COP-5 will certainly be remembered for the marathon negotiations over the committee to review implementation of the Convention (CRIC), and on the programme and budget.

COMING OF AGE...

Often referred to as the "poor sister" Convention when compared with other high profile multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), the CCD's status was given a little push in the right direction with high-level speeches from two Presidents, three prime ministers, and scores of senior ministers. This is even before one includes the panel of several eminent personalities with the likes of former UNEP Executive Director Mostafa Tolba, Pierre-Marc Johnson, the former Premier of Quebec; and Mahmoud Sahnoun, the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Africa.

The Interparliamentary Round Table also brought country representatives from far and wide to participate in the conference's deliberations. Many attending the conference welcomed the high profile of political leaders compared to previous years, even more than at the first COP in 1997. As one delegate summed it up, "their presence and commitment to the CCD recognizes the hard work we've put into this Convention over the years." The financial rewards also seem to have paid off to some extent, with a US\$1 million contribution from Venezuela. Although desertification does not seriously affect Venezuela, such generosity demonstrated remarkable commitment from a developing country in tackling this international problem and genuine support for South-South cooperation. Such positive news prompted at least one observer to suggest that the Convention has truly "come of age."

...BUT, STILL MATURING

Despite all the hoopla surrounding the three days of the High Level Special Segment, some participants felt their time could have been better spent on tackling more substantive issues, like the programme and budget, and the CRIC. Such a focus would have been consistent with the Secretariat's appeal from the very outset for Parties to conclude the bulk of the agenda by the end of the first week so as to allow sufficient time for the Segment, as well as a second NGO dialogue and WSSD preparations. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Poor organization on the part of the different regional groups, the inability of the COW and contact groups to meet in parallel sessions, and a lack of negotiating capacity as delegates were spread thin between the three groups, all contributed to slow progress. Reports of bad faith within the contact groups did not help the situation. Some participants also faulted the COP Bureau for not always observing the established rules of procedures and for "ambushing" delegates with new documents late in the game. The result was a series of long, grueling contact group meetings, which continued up until the very end.

CRACKS IN THE CRIC

The CRIC contact group met on numerous occasions in an effort to resolve the question of whether or not to make it a permanent subsidiary body. At the start of the informal session, developed countries were reluctant to establish a CRIC, citing that the already created *Ad Hoc* Working Group (AHWG) on the review of reports from COP-3 and 4 had been a useful enough process. Some expressed concern that the establishment of the CRIC would have further budgetary implications that they were not willing to accept. Although a subsidiary body was agreed upon, debate continued over the number of days the intersessional committee should meet, ranging from one to four weeks, as well as its composition and issues of equity. The AHWG took four weeks to reach its conclusions, thus it was the yardstick used, in addition to the bi-annual meetings of the UNFCCC's Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI).

Even though some CRIC opponents acknowledged the need for an institutionalized system to review and monitor Convention implementation, particularly in light of widespread distrust among different actors, they were unconvinced by the arguments presented. There was general concern about the lack of clarity in the CRIC's specific role and function and a feeling among some that the real motivation for wanting such a body was a result of the "poor sister" complex, which continues to try and replicate the structures of other MEAs. Another problem addressed was the kind of relationship it would have with the AHWG, and whether or not it would assume the role and function of the COW during future COP sessions. While the built-in provision for a review after four years was comforting for those who did not support the idea of a permanent body, many participants argued that with its creation, there is no turning back... but it could also be starved of resources.

WHERE'S THE MONEY?

The CCD is unique among the Rio conventions in that it does not have a funding mechanism. In fact, it is this very lack of permanent funding that gave rise to the CCD's reputation as the "poor sister" Convention. This all may change as the possibility of the GEF becoming what one participant referred to as the CCD's "godfather" is now firmly on the table. While many are optimistic, the results may not be known for some time as it must first be approved by the GEF Council in December 2001, and then by the GEF Assembly in October 2002. Many developed countries attending the conference warned against relying on the GEF as a "panacea" for the CCD's financial woes, noting that GEF criteria for project financing, particularly the criterion of "incremental cost," are a constraint, and that CCD's neediest countries still lack the human resources necessary to undertake the GEF's complex application process.

Regardless of the outcome, most welcomed the GEF's proposal to designate land degradation as one of its focal areas. According to some delegates, this will not only raise the profile of desertification as a major issue, but will also allow countries to access new resources for implementing anti-desertification projects. Until then, Parties will have to continue looking to the Global Mechanism (GM) as a means to mobilize funding resources.

The GM, though, got a bit of a "bashing" at the onset of the meeting after requesting a 180% staffing increase and a significant budget increase. Many delegates expressed dissatisfaction with the GM's



substantial requests and what a number of participants suggested were attempts to formulate its own mandate without the consent of Parties. However, during the second week, opinions appeared to shift considerably. The fact that a number of developing countries praised the role the GM had played in their region suggested that the lack of “delivery” in some other regions, particularly Africa, which is supposed to be accorded “priority” implementation, may have contributed to the earlier complaints. Participants also realized that such strong opposition towards an institution whose sole *raison d’être* is the Convention may be counter-productive. And whereas the GEF and GM serve different purposes, access to GEF funding is still some distance away. Furthermore, the GM Managing Director’s subsequent clarifications on a number of the thorny issues – particularly the need for sufficient response capacity – appeared to appease many.

Another matter that added to the confusion in planning the biennium budget was the UN financial reporting system, in which committed but unused funds are referred to as expenses. In addition, delegates also had to tackle the issue of whether or not to adjust the budget to the new UN scale of assessments, which was adopted by the UN two days after COP-4 ended, and which the Secretariat used albeit without CCD COP authority. The financial implications regarding the permanence or *ad hoc* nature of the CST panels and the CRIC also caused added complications and delays. Nonetheless, an agreement was finally reached that all Parties seemed fairly satisfied with, although it infuriated many delegates that there was virtually no change after five hours of overnight negotiation. By all indications, budget reform will surely be an issue at the next COP.

COMMITTEE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: EFFICIENT OR INSUFFICIENT?

The toughest and most time-consuming task at the fifth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) was how to make the work of the committee “more efficient and effective.” According to some, the functioning of the CST has been controversial from its inception, as it is perceived to be a more politically motivated, rather than purely scientific, body. Others have commented on its “lack of teeth” and expertise, suggesting that it lacks a much-needed independent scientific body, such as the one found in the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Participants have also noted that this lack of efficiency and effectiveness are a result of structural problems such as its large size and composition, which is based on regional representation. The usefulness of the CST *ad hoc* panels of experts has been called into question, as their work results in little debate or action, and is unknown by scientists outside the CCD process. To make matters even more difficult, CST initiatives, such as the UNEP-led survey of existing networks, are experiencing financial difficulties, as they rely completely on voluntary funding.

A positive development came out of this four-day session, however, in the shape of the establishment of a new, smaller body of experts to explicitly address scientific issues. Delegates expressed satisfaction with the outcome of the formation of such a body, and especially the fact that it would be more permanent than the *ad hoc* panel model of the past. How well it will function, though, will only become clear with time, especially as the topics of focus are still to be decided. Some observers noted the CST would also benefit from better guidance from the COP in helping it fulfill its role.

NGO PARTICIPATION: TWO STEPS FORWARD, ONE STEP BACK

Despite claims that the CCD is one of the most NGO-friendly MEAs, some participants observed a relatively low NGO profile at COP-5. As delegates stressed the importance of civil society in the High Level Special Segment, several NGOs noted that, ironically, they had been confined to the top gallery for most of its sessions. Other NGO representatives were disappointed with the low attendance at the second NGO dialogue and the absence of the kind of participatory role enjoyed in past COPs and in other MEAs.

One explanation is the lack of financial support to the NGOs to attend the COP. Others point to fatigue and the frustration that even after five years of investing in the NAPs, returns on the ground are still not visible. Nonetheless, several participants observed that, in spite of these reported difficulties, NGOs attending COP-5 continued to work “diligently” behind the scenes and were able to forward their recommendations, and have their voices heard, through country representatives.

TOWARDS COP-6

With all its faults and organizational flaws, as well as the persistent view that this Convention is the most disadvantaged of all MEAs, observers caution that the CCD’s uniqueness should never be underestimated. Unlike other agreements, it displays the best integration of environment, poverty and social issues, making it a truly sustainable, development-driven process. This could very well be the Convention’s strongest asset, as the poverty issue is currently at the heart of most international development strategies. The real test, however, will be its effectiveness in implementing its ambitious plan to address an environmental problem still affecting over one billion people around the world. Securing resources, both financial and human, will certainly be part of the answer. But its value will also be judged by the political will, budget reform and future implementation decisions to be taken at COP-6.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR BEFORE COP-6

PREPARATORY COMMITTEE MEETING FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT: The Preparatory Committee for the UN International Conference on Financing for Development will meet from 15-19 October 2001, in New York. For more information, contact: Harris Gleckman, Financing for Development Coordinating Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-4690; e-mail: gleckman@un.org or Federica Pietracci; tel: +1-212-963-8497; e-mail: pietracci@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd>

INTERNATIONAL WATER ASSOCIATION 2001 WORLD WATER CONGRESS: This conference, which is expected to attract over 3000 participants, will take place from 15-19 October 2001, in Berlin, Germany. Discussions will focus on water economics and politics and enabling efficient water management. For more information, contact the conference organizers at: tel: +49-212-2606-369; fax: +49-212-2606-207; Internet: <http://www.iwa-berlin.de>

FIRST INTERGOVERNMENTAL MEETING OF EXPERTS TO DEVELOP GUIDELINES ON COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT OF MEAS: This meeting will be held from 22-26



October 2001, in Nairobi, Kenya. For more information, contact: D. Kaniaru, UNEP Division on Environmental Policy and Implementation (DEPI); tel: +254-2-623507; fax: +254-2-624249; e-mail: donald.kaniaru@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org>

SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE:

COP-7 is scheduled to take place from 29 October - 9 November 2001, in Marrakech, Morocco. For more information, contact: the UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; Internet: <http://www.unfccc.int/>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (ICAST):

This conference will be held from 7-9 November 2001, in Beijing, China. For more information, contact: ICAST, China Science and Technology Exchange Center, PO Box 2143, Beijing 100045, China; tel: +86-10-6851-1837; fax: +86-10-6857-1255; e-mail: icast@agscience2001.org; Internet: <http://www.agscience2001.org>

MEETINGS OF THE OPEN-ENDED INTERGOVERNMENTAL GROUP OF MINISTERS OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVES ON INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE:

The fourth and fifth IEG meetings will be held on 1 December 2001, in Montreal, Canada, and at the end of January 2002 in New York, prior to the second Preparatory Committee meeting for the WSSD. For more information, contact: Masa Nagai, UNEP, Nairobi; tel: +254-2-623493; fax: +254-2-230198; e-mail: Masa.Nagai@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org/IEG/>

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON SUSTAINING FOOD SECURITY AND MANAGING NATURAL RESOURCES IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

This symposium will take place from 8-11 January 2002, in Chiang Mai, Thailand. For more information, contact: Rainer Schwarzmeier, tel: +49-711-459-3476/2581; fax: +49-711-459-2582; e-mail: symp2002@uni-hohenheim.de; Internet: <http://www.uni-hohenheim.de/symposium2002/index.htm>

SECOND MEETING OF THE UNCCD PANEL OF EMINENT PERSONALITIES IN PREPARATION FOR THE WSSD:

The second meeting of the members of the panel of eminent personalities is scheduled to take place in February 2002, in Niger. The panel will discuss the poverty-environment nexus in the context of timely and effective implementation of the UNCCD. For more information, contact: Rajeb Boulharouf, UNCCD Secretariat, tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2898/99; e-mail: rboulharouf@unccd.int; Internet: <http://www.unccd.int>

GLOBAL MINISTERIAL ENVIRONMENT FORUM: This meeting will take place from 13-15 February 2002, in Cartagena, Colombia. For more information, contact: Beverly Miller, Secretary, UNEP Governing Council, Nairobi; tel: +254-2-62-3411; fax: +254-2-62-4489/90; e-mail: beverly.miller@unep.org; Internet: <http://www.unep.org>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT:

The UN International Conference on Financing for Development will be held from 18-22 March 2002, in Monterrey, Mexico. It will bring together high-level representatives from governments, the United Nations, and other leading international trade,

finance and development-related organizations. For more information contact: Harris Gleckman, Financing for Development Coordinating Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-4690; e-mail: gleckman@un.org or Federica Pietracci, tel: +1-212-963-8497; e-mail: pietracci@un.org; Internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd>.

SYMPOSIUM ON 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, PO Box 20232, Windhoek, Namibia; tel: +264-61-229-855; e-mail: mseely@drfn.org.na; Internet: <http://www.drfn.org/des2002.html>

SEVENTEENTH WORLD CONGRESS OF SOIL SCIENCE:

This meeting will take place from 14-21 August 2002, in Bangkok, Thailand, and will address the topic "Soil Science: Confronting New Realities in the 21st Century." For more information, contact: Secretariat, 17th WCSS, Kasetsart University, PO Box 1048, Bangkok 10903, Thailand; tel: +662-940-5787, 9405-7078; fax: +662-940-5788; e-mail: o.sfst@nontri.ku.ac.th; Internet: <http://www.17wcsc.ku.ac.th>

WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

The WSSD will take place in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 2-11 September 2002. For more information, contact: Andrey Vasilyev, DESA, New York; tel: +1-212-963-5949; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: vasilyev@un.org; Major groups contact: Zehra Aydin-Sipos, DESA, New York; tel: +1-212-963-8811; fax: +1-212-963-1267; e-mail: aydin@un.org; Internet: <http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/>

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE FOR DRY AREAS FOR THE SECOND MILLENNIUM:

This conference will be held from 15-19 September 2002, in Shijiazhuang, China. For more information, contact: Catherine Vachon, Lethbridge Research Center, 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>

INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON LAND USE MANAGEMENT, EROSION AND CARBON SEQUESTRATION:

This colloquium will be held from 24-28 September 2002, in Montpellier, France. Separate sessions on a biological approach to soil and water conservation and soil erosion and carbon sequestration will be held, each in French and English with simultaneous translation, as necessary. For more information, contact: Eric Roose, Institut de recherche pour le développement, BP 5045, F34032 Montpellier, France; tel: +33-0-467-41-62-65; fax: +33-0-467-41-62-94; e-mail: roose@mpl.ird.fr; Internet: www.ird.fr

CCD COP-6: This meeting is scheduled to take place from 19-31 October 2003, in Bonn, Germany, unless another country offers to host the meeting. For more information, contact: CCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2898/99; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; Internet: <http://www.unccd.int>