



CCD COP-6 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 27 AUGUST 2003

Delegates met in morning and afternoon sessions of the CRIC and the CST and in afternoon sessions of the COP and COW. The CST deliberated on traditional knowledge, benchmarks and indicators, early warning systems, the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA), and on the priority issue of the CST's programme of work. The CRIC considered the Global Mechanism (GM) and the review of information on the financing of the CCD's implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions. The COW considered the outcomes of the WSSD and rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure. The COP elected the Bureau members from the Western European and Others Group in a brief meeting.

CST

Regarding the CST Bureau, Chair Valentini announced the resignation of Vice-Chair Hassane (Niger) and Parties elected Rigondja Georges (Gabon) as the new Vice-Chair for the African Group.

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE: ITALY provided an overview of its revised proposal for a network of institutions, bodies, and experts on traditional knowledge. BRAZIL, for the G-77/CHINA, with CHILE, for GRULAC, and CANADA requested that this agenda item be deferred due to the late publishing of the proposal. COLOMBIA, supported by BRAZIL and CUBA, objected to addressing the proposal without considering prior informed consent and participation of indigenous and local communities. He stressed the need to: examine protection systems for traditional knowledge; harmonize the CCD's efforts with those undertaken under the WTO and CBD; and determine the kind of knowledge to be included in the network. A representative from the NGO community called on delegates to take prompt action in light of the rapid loss of traditional knowledge. SAINT LUCIA emphasized the need for participation of traditional knowledge holders in this discussion. ITALY clarified that its proposal presents a list of possible activities from which countries could select appropriate initiatives to increase the use and benefit of traditional knowledge. Delegates agreed to establish a group to elaborate a "roadmap" for addressing traditional knowledge.

BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS: The SAHARA AND SAHEL OBSERVATORY (OSS) presented its report on monitoring and evaluation systems. Several Parties reported on their national efforts to develop benchmarks and indicators. CHINA and CUBA stressed the importance of practical and harmonized indicators, and SAINT LUCIA highlighted the needs of small island developing States. EGYPT proposed the establishment of a small group to address benchmarks and indicators. A

representative of the NGO community called on Parties to develop benchmarks for participation, and suggested the involvement of NGOs in designing benchmarks and indicators. The Secretariat explained the rules for submitting future contributions from Parties, and outlined the contents of a possible COP-6 draft decision. Chair Valentini referred to the added value and visibility given to the CCD by work on benchmarks and indicators, and emphasized the need for a mechanism to facilitate experience sharing by Parties. He said that the Group of Experts will continue addressing the issue as part of its work programme.

EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS: Kazuhiko Takeuchi, Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Group on Early Warning Systems, noted that there are no long-term early warning systems for desertification, and observed that short-term early warning systems for national and regional levels are insufficient. Chair Valentini called on Parties and national focal points to adopt an integrative approach in developing long-term early warning systems. CANADA highlighted the interlinkages between indicators for desertification and long-term early warning systems. NORWAY stressed the need to develop short-term early warning systems for local and national levels based on local knowledge. In response to an enquiry, Kazuhiko Takeuchi suggested using existing early warning systems to cost-effectively develop early warning systems for desertification.

LAND DEGRADATION ASSESSMENT IN DRYLANDS AND THE MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT: A representative of the MA provided a status report on its work, and responded to Parties' questions regarding: countries' involvement in the assessment; nomination of experts; the MA's development of indicators and benchmarks; use of traditional knowledge; and the relationship with the LADA. The FAO reported on LADA's activities and achievements.

PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE CST: Several Parties expressed support for an integrated approach to best practices and research relating to land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation. GERMANY and SWITZERLAND suggested Parties examine existing projects that are adopting an integrated approach and identify how they relate to desertification.

CRIC

GLOBAL MECHANISM: GM Managing Director Per Rydén spoke on the review of the report on activities of the GM, highlighting two evaluations of the GM and the finalization of its business plan. He outlined several recommendations from the evaluations and lessons learned, underscoring mainstreaming and partnership building as the two pillars of its operational strategy. He urged enhanced collaboration with the Facilitation Committee



and monitoring resource flows to the CCD. Pierre Marc Johnson, head of the Secretariat's independent evaluation team, underscored challenges faced by the GM on regarding both supply and demand.

Numerous Parties congratulated the GM for its contribution to implementing the CCD. VIETNAM outlined some shortcomings of the GM, including staff limitations and the lack of a monitoring system for its activities. With ALGERIA, she recommended that the GM identify and mobilize new financial resources from the private sector. NORWAY noted that combating desertification has to be a national priority if donors are to provide financial support, and, with CANADA, said the business plan reflected the recommendations from the evaluations. KENYA stressed that the GM should work closely with other agencies on the demand side, while UGANDA encouraged co-financing. HAITI said it supports the GM's involvement in mobilizing national institutions addressing natural resource degradation and poverty eradication.

The G-77/CHINA urged the COP to set a clear mandate and priorities for the GM. A representative of the NGO community called for an improvement in NGO participation in the GM's activities. ETHIOPIA called for increased community-level responses, and TANZANIA noted that the GM should address issues relating to rural communities. SOUTH AFRICA recommended strengthening support for NEPAD. CUBA highlighted the importance of traditional knowledge and suggested closer coordination between the GM and the CCD Secretariat. CHINA raised a number of questions relating to the GM, including staff composition and administrative costs. Noting the importance of the report's recommendations, he enquired whether the next COP will address them.

Many delegates welcomed the new GEF operational programme and noted that new funds should be mobilized together with the GM. MALI noted that the GEF should be a supplementary source to the GM. CHILE on behalf of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru, requested the CCD Secretariat and the GEF to strengthen coordination for mobilizing resources. CHAD called for donors to increase contributions to the GM. The US highlighted the need to elaborate criteria and indicators for monitoring the CCD's implementation. BURKINA FASO said that NAP implementation should be strengthened, while INDIA and SAUDI ARABIA suggested that the GM support the revision of NAPs. SENEGAL proposed that the GM's mandate take into account CRIC decisions. PAKISTAN urged the GM to expand its activities to drought, water management, and agriculture in drylands.

In response to the comments, Per Rydén underscored the complementary roles of the GM and GEF, and stressed that the Facilitation Committee would address the role of NGOs in the GM. Pierre Marc Johnson noted two challenges for the GM: to increase ODA flow, and to facilitate the emergence of policies that have to involve planning, finance and agriculture ministries.

REVIEW OF INFORMATION ON THE FINANCING OF CCD IMPLEMENTATION BY MULTILATERAL AGENCIES AND INSTITUTIONS: BURUNDI and NIGERIA urged Parties to endorse the GEF as a financial mechanism of the CCD. SWAZILAND appealed to the CCD's partners to ensure that adequate resources be made available to the GEF. ZIMBABWE proposed that the CRIC should give guidance to the consultation between the Secretariat and the GEF. MEXICO and the DOMINICAN REPUBLIC highlighted the need to focus on the GEF's mandate and its interaction with the GM. The G-77/CHINA said the GEF could play a role in assisting countries in elaborating their NAPs. IRAN noted that the memorandum of understanding between CCD and the GEF should comprise timetable and budget estimates. PAKISTAN recommended the establishment of criteria for GEF funding, which should focus on, *inter alia*, mega-projects

based on the NAPs. CUBA urged further synergies among other conventions to complement actions that are relevant for combating desertification.

COP PLENARY

The COP elected Anne Marie Skjold (Norway) and Jozef Buys (Belgium) as the COP-6 Vice-Chairs for the Western European and Others Group. The Chair welcomed the Russian Federation's accession to the CCD, which became effective on 27 August 2003.

COW

OUTCOMES OF THE WSSD: The G-77/CHINA suggested achieving effective synergy between the CCD and the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) Secretariats, and that they launch a dialogue to prepare for the discussion on desertification in the CSD work cycle for 2008-2009. The EU stressed that work under the CCD should take into account the WSSD's outcomes and the Millennium Declaration. The AFRICAN GROUP noted the recognition given by the WSSD of the role of the CCD in fighting poverty and promoting sustainable development. GRULAC called for a focus on water issues.

RULE 47 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE: The EU proposed postponing the discussion of this item to COP-7, since voting rules are an outstanding issue in other international fora. The US and IRAN asked for deferment of any discussion until the arrival of their legal experts.

IN THE CORRIDORS I

Apparently, the EU and a number of other ministers will miss the plane to Havana this time. The CCD will still enjoy comfortable backing from 115 ministers, who have already confirmed attendance at COP-6. However, some observers feel that preferring political postures on bilateral issues to demonstration of commitment to an authoritative multilateral instrument might create an awkward precedent for the future.

IN THE CORRIDORS II

The discussions in the CST gained in intensity during the consideration of Italy's proposal to create a network on traditional knowledge. Some delegates had previously voiced concern in the Palacio de Convenciones' humid corridors about addressing this proposal due to its late publication. Despite the more amenable conditions in Sala 4, many developing countries openly raised objections to the proposal, because it fails to address intellectual property rights of traditional knowledge holders. According to one participant, the informal group defining a "roadmap" for this item agreed to refer the matter to COP-7, when Parties' views on the topic would be submitted.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

CRIC: The CRIC will convene in an informal meeting from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm and from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm, to consider draft COP decisions.

CST: The CST will meet from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm and from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm, to elaborate its report, and consider draft decisions for adoption by the COP.

CONTACT GROUPS: The contact group on the programme budget for the biennium 2004-5, and the group dealing with the outcomes of the WSSD will meet today.

Please check the announcement screen and the Journal for further information.