



CCD COP-6 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 3 SEPTEMBER 2003

In the morning, delegates concluded the interactive dialogue among ministers. The COP convened throughout the day to hear statements by the heads of delegation, UN agencies and international organizations. In the evening, the COP considered and adopted draft decisions forwarded by the CST and CRIC. Informal consultations on the programme and budget, Regional Coordination Units (RCUs), *Ad Hoc* Group of Experts (AHGE), synergies, follow-up to regional meetings and rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure met throughout the day and evening. The Fifth Round Table of Parliamentarians began its deliberations on the role of members of parliament in promoting the CCD and sustainable development at the national level.

HIGH LEVEL SPECIAL SEGMENT

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE OF MINISTERS: Pierre Marc Johnson facilitated the concluding segment of the interactive dialogue of ministers. Several speakers emphasized: the WSSD's affirmation of the CCD as an instrument to combat poverty; the commitments made by developed countries in the Monterrey Consensus to increase donor contributions; the importance of synergies, and mainstreaming desertification and land degradation; and the importance of the GEF in financing projects on desertification and land degradation. BRAZIL stressed the importance of civil society participation to combat social inequalities. CANADA underscored the importance of financing real projects rather than investing in administrative infrastructure. He said funding for combating desertification and land degradation will increase only if these become national priorities of affected countries. GAMBIA stressed the loss in real value of ODA due to conditionality, and urged a standardization of the GEF and implementing agencies' procedures.

COP PLENARY

President Simeón Negrín opened the Plenary. She invited CCD Executive Secretary Diallo and Ramón Linares Torres, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Communication of Cuba, to present a commemorative stamp in honor of the COP.

MOZAMBIQUE said many developing countries have limited capacity to effectively implement the CCD's requirements due to poor human resources, lack of institutional capacity and financial resources, and limited participation of local communities and NGOs. JORDAN, CHINA and SYRIA urged technology transfer. ZAMBIA noted conditionality placed on aid, and said attempts by donors to "punish the governments" affect the poor. TIMOR LESTE said it is designing policies with the participation of stakeholders, coupled with enhancing food security and generating rural employment. BOTSWANA urged Parties to approve the budget and invited those Parties that have not yet paid their contribution to do so. CHINA and CHILE called for developed countries to provide new and additional resources to the GEF.

UGANDA said the CCD offers an opportunity for cooperation and increased financial flows to rural areas, and called on the GM to increase its efforts in assisting countries in securing the required co-financing. TAJIKISTAN, for Central Asia, announced the adoption of the subregional action programme and a Ministerial Declaration on desertification and land degradation. PAKISTAN said the GM must focus on mobilizing resources to support the CCD's implementation and work with developed countries to mobilize resources, such as private capital, foreign direct investment, and carbon finance. VANUATU, for the Pacific Island Countries, requested COP-6 to amend Article I of the Regional Implementation Annex for Asia to read "Asia Pacific."

GHANA proposed that financial assistance be offered to developing countries to enable them to document and disseminate traditional knowledge related to environmental protection. IFAD, for the GM's Facilitation Committee, said that its member organizations are committed to: enhancing their financial support; identifying at least two full collaborative projects per year; and integrating NAP and SRAP priorities into their own country and regional strategies. UNITED ARAB EMIRATES underscored its support for a "comprehensive agriculture renaissance."

FRANCE emphasized the importance of work "on the ground" and regional cooperation activities within existing institutions. ARGENTINA said that international cooperation is necessary, since poverty, environmental degradation, underdevelopment and unsustainable production and consumption patterns have global impacts. IRAN noted the lack of adequate funds, political will, and appropriate technology as the main obstacles to realizing the provisions of the CCD in developing countries. On mainstreaming, GERMANY said that national development processes cannot be expected to automatically adhere to the principles of the CCD. He said the implementation process should be country-driven and underscored long-lasting partnerships between donors and affected countries.

JAPAN underscored several factors for the effective implementation of the CCD, including: consistent and harmonized efforts by country Parties, relevant international agencies and the CCD Secretariat; and transparent and cost effective running of the Secretariat and GM. The NETHERLANDS said the CCD will be an important framework for ODA cooperation if the national and regional policies and programmes are merged with those on biodiversity and climate change, and if affected countries prioritize land degradation. ISRAEL stressed synergies for supporting efforts to achieve sustainable development of drylands.

INDIA stressed empowerment of women, and encouraged new models for economic growth and human development to support the CCD's implementation. BAHAMAS said that the GEF executing agencies should consider vulnerability indices in determining the eligibility for financial and technical assistance. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION underscored the importance of the Regional Annex for Central and Eastern Europe. Highlighting the restoration of habitats, the RAMSAR CONVENTION noted the

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designation of 26 new Ramsar sites in semi arid-zones in Africa. The IUCN said the COP should adopt an ecosystem approach to operationalize the CCD's work programme, and called on Parties to address the implementation of NAPs along with National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, and National Communications and National Adaptation Programmes of Action.

CST: In the afternoon, CST Chair Valentini introduced the draft decisions. The decisions adopted without amendments include those on: the roster of independent experts (ICCD/COP(6)/L.7); early warning systems (ICCD/COP(6)/L.8); survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies (ICCD/COP(6)/L.9); Land Degradation Assessment in Dryland and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (ICCD/COP(6)/L.10); the programme of work of the CST (ICCD/COP(6)/L.11); benchmarks and indicators (ICCD/COP(6)/L.12); and traditional knowledge (ICCD/COP(6)/L.13). The decision on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST (ICCD/COP(6)/L.14) was adopted with a minor textual change.

CRIC: CRIC Chair El Ghaouth introduced the draft decisions. Parties adopted, without amendment, decisions on: the overall review of the activities of the Secretariat and of the progress made by affected country Parties in the implementation of the CCD (ICCD/COP(6)/L.2/Rev.1); implementation of the Declaration on the commitments to enhance the implementation of the obligations of the CCD (decision 8/COP.4) (ICCD/COP(6)/L.3/Rev.1); review of the policies, operational modalities and activities of the GM (ICCD/COP(6)/L.4/Rev.1); and programme of work of CRIC-3 (ICCD/COP(6)/L.6/Rev.1). Parties adopted, with minor editorial amendments, decisions on: further steps in the implementation of the CCD (ICCD/COP(6)/L.1/Rev.2); and collaboration with the GEF (ICCD/COP(6)/L.5/Rev.2).

ELECTION OF CHAIR OF THE CRIC: President Simeón Negrín noted that Mohammed Mahmoud Ould El Ghaouth (Mauritania) had been nominated for the position of the new CRIC Chair by the African Group. CANADA, for WEOG, nominated Annetarie Watt (Australia). Noting two candidates and no consensus, President Simeón Negrín suspended the Plenary to allow for consultation among regional groups.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS

PROGRAMME AND BUDGET: Informal consultations continued throughout the day and late into the night, with delegates completing a first reading of the draft decision submitted by the Chair. Among the contentious issues is a reference to text adapted from a CBD decision, noting that Parties whose contributions are in arrears for more than two years, that are not LDCs, will not receive Secretariat funding to attend CCD meetings, and will only be allowed to send a maximum of two delegates to attend such meetings. The size of the Secretariat's budget also remains unresolved.

REGIONAL COORDINATION UNITS: Negotiations continued on a composite draft decision tabled by the facilitator in the morning. They centered on the modalities of an independent costed feasibility study on regional coordination, including RCUs, and on other inputs that would be required for addressing the issue at COP-7.

RULE 47 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE: A new informal version of the draft decision was tabled, with a number of Parties expressing preference for a two-thirds majority vote on matters of substance in absence of a consensus. Delegates suggested deferring the text on rule 47 to COP-7. Several delegates proposed that information on the debate should also be forwarded to the next COP to facilitate future discussion.

AD HOC GROUP OF EXPERTS: Procedures and institutional mechanisms for implementing the CCD (Article 27): Some developing and developed countries said Article 27 does not include a compliance mechanism, and Parties should focus on facilitating implementation rather than sanctions for non-compliance. Many developed countries noted that delegates should be careful not to duplicate work relating to these mechanisms under

the CRIC and the AHGE. Chair Javad Amin-Mansour (Iran) said he will draft a decision, and delegates agreed to continue discussing the issue on Thursday, 3 September.

Arbitration and conciliation procedures (Article 28): A developed country noted it does not accept compulsory arbitration but suggested that the Secretariat compile views submitted by the Parties. Chair Amin-Mansour postponed the issue until Thursday, 3 September.

OUTCOMES OF THE WSSD: The draft decision on the outcomes of the WSSD is agreed.

FOLLOW-UP TO REGIONAL MEETINGS: The draft decision, which refers to meetings held in preparation for COP-6, has been largely agreed, except for the bracketed paragraph on SIDS' access to GEF financial resources.

SYNERGIES: The draft decision, which addresses the strengthening of relations with other conventions and international organizations, was discussed at length during the day. Portions of the text remain bracketed.

FIFTH ROUND TABLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

The Fifth Round Table of Parliamentarians opened in the morning. Alain Valtat, representative of the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, noted that desertification, climate change and other environmental issues continue endangering political stability, biodiversity and human beings. The CCD Executive Secretary Diallo noted the importance of parliamentarians in implementing the CCD at the national and local levels. Ricardo Alarcón de Quesada, President of the National Assembly of Cuba, underscored the need to incorporate local community participation in decision-making processes. In the morning, discussion focused on the role of parliamentarians in promoting the effective elaboration and implementation of policies to address desertification and eradicate poverty, especially in the light of the Monterrey Consensus and the WSSD's recommendations. In the afternoon, delegates debated the support of members of parliament at the national level to ensure the elaboration and adoption of pertinent legislation to facilitate the effective implementation of sustainable development measures within the framework of the MDGs.

IN THE CORRIDORS

There was an audible sigh of relief when the small informal group that addressed the elusive "rule 47" of the Rules of Procedure (voting by two thirds, or by simple majority) relegated the item, once again, to COP-7. Though some lawyer delegates were eager to continue drafting, the prevailing and sobering view was that the issue was too important to be left to the experts, since political considerations were involved. In a tortuous drafting process, the decision on the RCUs was also effectively deferred to the next COP. It will have to go through a series of hurdles – submissions by Parties, feasibility studies, consultations and meetings – before a new generation of negotiators will be allowed to pick up the item in 2005.

THINGS TO LOOK FOR TODAY

COP PLENARY: The COP will convene from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm in Sala 1, for the second ODS on agroforestry and nomad pastoralism.

COW PLENARY: The COW will meet from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm to hear reports on the status of the informal consultations.

INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS: Informal consultations on the programme and budget, RCUs, *Ad Hoc* Group of Experts, rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure, follow-up to regional meetings, synergies, and the criteria for the review of the CRIC, will take place throughout the day.

Please check the Journal and monitors for more information.