



CCD COP-7 HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY, 25 OCTOBER 2005

Participants to COP-7 met in the special segment in the morning and afternoon to conduct an interactive dialogue and to hear statements from parties. Contact groups continued discussions on: the programme and budget; draft decisions of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC); regional coordination units (RCUs); and the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU).

SPECIAL SEGMENT

GLOBAL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE: COP-7 President Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka opened the dialogue. Uriel Safriel, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, introduced the theme of the dialogue "Economic Opportunities in the Drylands under the UNCCD."

The interactive dialogue focused on: innovative measures for removing existing barriers and enabling rural people to adapt to alternative livelihoods; compatibility of historical land allocation with recent changes and current trends; development of national action programmes (NAPs) into a mechanism to promote sustainable livelihoods and economic opportunities in drylands; and strategies for maintaining livelihoods in the drylands under scenarios of renewed natural catastrophes and climate change projections for the drylands.

CHINA called for financial and technological support to developing countries. INDIA said that it has adopted policies that complement the CCD objectives. MOROCCO urged parties to be proactive in their response to the impact of desertification on migration, by preparing a relevant strategy through the CCD. GHANA called for removing trade barriers, raising awareness, and adopting UN Green Accounting standards. CAPE VERDE emphasized the need for training for local communities, and appealed to countries to focus on income-generating activities during the 2006 International Year of Deserts and Desertification.

The CZECH REPUBLIC outlined its official development assistance (ODA) to affected countries for promoting research on land degradation issues. The UK called on parties to capture socioeconomic factors, address the causes of and solutions to desertification, and disseminate best practices on land reform. The NETHERLANDS called for the CCD to engage the private sector and urge public-private partnerships to attain the Millennium Development Goals. ITALY spoke on an integrated approach to energy and water access problems and combating desertification. FRANCE said it would continue to support the implementation of NAPs in developing countries.

Describing the use of solar energy in the Sahel for domestic water use, the PERMANENT INTER-STATE COMMITTEE FOR DROUGHT CONTROL IN THE SAHEL said it was a prospective area for private sector investment.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS: In the afternoon, delegates heard statements by parties.

Chérif Rahmani, Minister of Regional Planning and the Environment, Algeria, commended the JIU report on the activities of the Secretariat.

Mtiti Fakudze, Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives, Swaziland, stressed the need to review CCD achievements in the last ten years, and urged implementation of the JIU's recommendations.

Bountiem Phissamay, Minister to the Prime Minister's Office, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, described his country's development goals, actions for eradication of poverty, and NAP implementation.

Abdymalik Anarbaev, Acting Minister of Agriculture, Water Economy and Processing Industry, Kyrgyzstan, reported on national activities and projects to combat desertification, including those with CCD and Global Mechanism support.

Davlastsho K. Gulmahmadov, Minister, State Committee for Land Management, Tajikistan, expressed hope that the CCD will have an effective financial mechanism, and suggested focusing on training.

Henri Djombo, Minister of Forestry and the Environment, the Congo, voiced concern over deforestation in the region, called for promoting the effectiveness of the CCD Secretariat, and supported the JIU report.

Abobakar El Mansori, Minister of Agriculture of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, called upon all parties to promote coordination in implementation of regional and subregional efforts and to encourage information and data transfer.

Iyorchia Ayu, Minister, Federal Ministry for the Environment of Nigeria, emphasized fair access to GEF funds and additional resources to developing countries, and called upon all stakeholders to work together in reaching the Convention objectives.

Yves-André Wainright, Minister for the Environment of Haiti, highlighted links between activities for combating land degradation and promoting land restoration, and called for multi-sector action programmes.

Laurent Sedogo, Minister of the Environment, Burkina Faso, called for developing practical recommendations at COP-7, and highlighted the importance of synergy between the Rio Conventions, and partnerships.

Nancoman Keïta, Minister for the Environment and Sanitation of Mali, supported the establishment of an observatory of natural resources, and called for greater efforts by NGOs for Convention implementation.

Arcado Ntagazwa, Minister of State for the Environment of the United Republic of Tanzania, called for GEF support for country-driven programmes and increased resource allocation to GEF OP 15 (sustainable land management).



Jean-Eudes Téya, Minister of Water, Forests, Hunting and Fishing of the Central African Republic, said that conflicts in his country had undermined Convention implementation, and appealed to developed countries and international donors to increase their support.

Martin Puta Tofinga, Minister for the Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development of Kiribati, spoke on behalf of Pacific island parties. Emphasizing the vulnerability of small island developing States (SIDS) to climate change and land degradation, he called for financial and technical support.

Bill Vakaafi Motufoou, Minister for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Niue, noted the acknowledgement of the vulnerability of SIDS in the Mauritius Declaration, and called for greater flexibility under the UNDP/GEF portfolio project for least developed countries and SIDS.

Max Puig Miller, Secretary for the Environment and Natural Resources, the Dominican Republic, referred to desertification refugees, and described his country's efforts to combat desertification in fragile ecosystems.

Tariqul Islam, Minister for the Environment and Forests, Bangladesh, highlighted the problems caused by water scarcity and coastal land degradation.

Tereza Seresio Ero, Minister of State for the Environment, Sudan, described economic opportunities in the drylands, and eco-social activities.

Willem Konjore, Minister for the Environment and Tourism, Namibia, spoke on the implementation of integrated land management.

Fernando Mario Gonzales Bermudez, Acting Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment, Cuba, said that industrialized countries still have to fulfill their commitments, and emphasized South-South cooperation.

Issifou Okolou-Kantchati, Minister of the Environment and Forest Resources, Togo, supported the JIU report, and called for greater solidarity among parties.

Charles Sylvain Rabotoarison, Minister of the Environment, Water and Forests, Madagascar, expressed hope that the GEF will provide greater support for land management in Africa.

Francis Nhema, Minister for the Environment and Tourism, Zimbabwe, described national activities for poverty eradication, and urged implementation of the JIU recommendations.

Mary Mugenyi, Minister of State for Animal Industry, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda, called upon parties to mark the 2006 International Year of Deserts and Desertification with concrete actions.

Heruy Asghedom Woldemariam, speaking for Arefaine Berhe, Minister of Agriculture of Eritrea, described its national efforts to combat desertification and stressed the widening rift between rich and poor countries.

Jules Codjo Assogba, Minister of the Environment and Human Settlement, Benin, stated that desertification can undermine social goals, and highlighted reduction in forest cover in the Northern region of his country.

Abdou Labo, Minister for Water Resources, the Environment and Combating Desertification of Niger, stated that his country's Poverty Reduction Strategy is the guiding policy concerning desertification, and described food insecurity as their greatest crisis.

Lufter Xhuvëli, Minister for the Environment, Forestry and Water, Albania, stated that illegal logging and overgrazing contribute to land degradation in his country.

Pierre Hele, Minister for Environment and Protection of Nature, Cameroon, highlighted actions his country has taken towards implementing the Rio conventions.

Lebohlang Nts'inyi, Minister for Tourism, the Environment and Culture, Lesotho, urged GEF to increase resource allocation to OP 15, and called for technical and financial support by development partners and renewed commitment to the CCD by all parties.

Odette Kayitesi, Minister of Regional Planning, the Environment and Tourism, Burundi, supported the permanent institutionalization of the CRIC and funding for its functions, and called for provision of adequate resources to the CCD Secretariat.

Tewelde Berhan Gebre Egziabher, Director General for Environmental Protection Authority, Ethiopia, emphasized that CCD activities should involve reforestation and afforestation efforts as deforestation leads to land degradation, and called for GEF funding for marginal lands.

Tomás Novotný, Deputy Minister for the Environment, the Czech Republic, outlined its financial and research assistance to affected countries in addressing land degradation, and reiterated that his country will continue to provide experts, suitable technologies and know-how.

CONTACT GROUPS

PROGRAMME AND BUDGET: The contact group continued its discussion on the draft decision on programme and budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

Text was proposed, but not agreed to, on issues including: the CCD Secretariat's efforts to stay within the approved budget for 2004-2005; the authorization of the Executive Secretary for 2003-2004 and 2005-2006 to draw on available cash resources from the core budget to incur obligations and make payments to meet contractual commitments; developed countries making additional contributions towards alleviating the impact of currency fluctuations on the Secretariat; the introduction of the Euro as the functional currency for 2008-2009; and the financial amounts of parties' indicative contributions in the future budget documents. Most parts of the draft decision remain bracketed.

REGIONAL COORDINATION UNITS: In considering a revised draft decision on RCUs submitted by Chair Mohammed Ismail (Tunisia), participants continued to debate whether COP-7 should recognize "the functions of the existing RCUs" or "the need to strengthen the work currently carried out by existing RCUs." The proposal for establishing an *ad hoc* working group on the role of RCUs was dropped due to lack of consensus. For the same reason, a paragraph on exploring the possibility of establishment of a RCU for the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe region was bracketed.

REVIEW OF THE CONVENTION: The contact group achieved consensus on the decision on adjustments to the elaboration process and implementation. On communication and reporting procedures, differences persisted over modalities and funding sources for the development of standardized national reporting. Regarding mobilization of resources for implementation, one developed country was unwilling to include text regarding the commitment on the part of developed countries to allocate 0.7 percent of GNP to ODA. On collaboration with the GEF, several issues continued to elude consensus.

REPORT OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT: The contact group met in the morning to hear general statements on the report of the JIU, with many commending the report and supporting a draft decision for adoption by COP-7. In the afternoon and evening sessions, discussions focused on a draft decision prepared by Chair Sem T. Shikongo (Namibia). The draft suggests the development of a strategic target to enable parties to reach a common view and understanding of the future of the implementation of the CCD, and the establishment of an intersessional working group to address the recommendations in the JIU report. Participants were divided on the draft decision.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While the plenary heard minister after minister urging financial support for CCD implementation, a sense of despondency was spreading, as developing country delegates had difficulty identifying any sign that donor countries are ready to come up with additional funds. This was echoed by some Annex V parties, who felt marginalized in the scramble for projects. The affected transition countries of the region of Central and Eastern Europe did not receive mention in the course of drafting the GEF/CCD Memorandum of Understanding. As a delegate observed ruefully, this would be yet another reason for the gradual unraveling of the Annex, already strained by new loyalties and affiliations.