



## CCD COP-7 HIGHLIGHTS WEDNESDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2005

The Special Segment continued to hear statements by delegations and NGOs. Delegates also met in the Committee of the Whole (COW) to consider: review of the implementation of the Convention; review of activities for the promotion and strengthening of relations with other relevant organizations; follow-up to the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development; and the progress made in mobilizing financial resources for CCD implementation. 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

**STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS:** COP-7 President Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka invited statements by parties and representatives of civil society.

JORDAN spoke on his country's experience with the NAP, and called for financial support for CCD implementation. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA underlined the link between natural disasters, climate change and desertification, and appealed to COP-7 to adopt a decision on its offer to host COP-8. ZAMBIA noted reduced official development assistance (ODA) flows, and suggested that the COP call on the GEF to provide US\$5 million to affected parties that had completed their NAPs. The GAMBIA proposed that the core budget of the Convention be increased, and called for capacity building.

SAUDI ARABIA reported on his government's support to developing countries, and urged more assistance to the CCD Secretariat. BRAZIL underscored the need to identify synergies among the Rio Conventions, and supported the RCUs. SOUTH AFRICA spoke of her country's efforts to address land degradation, and said that it would be ready to provide funds to make the 2006 International Year of Deserts and Desertification a success. ARGENTINA emphasized synergies between environmental conventions, and said that COP-7 should promote solidarity and coordination of regional efforts. VIET NAM outlined national policies and strategies to combat desertification, and expressed hope for continued support from international organizations and development partners for Convention implementation.

DENMARK emphasized prioritization of desertification and land degradation at the national level, sharing of lessons learned and best practices, and increasing awareness of linkages between desertification and poverty. The EUROPEAN COMMISSION said that political will and mainstreaming of desertification are crucial for addressing land degradation, and reaffirmed its financial support and partnership building. He also stressed the need for improving the efficiency of the Secretariat's activities.

FRANCE highlighted: adequate scientific expertise; wider participation of NGOs; and appropriate use of the budget and resources. Drawing attention to its proposal to transform UNEP into a UN Environment Organization, he said addressing desertification, a crosscutting issue, needs a more integrated structure. GERMANY emphasized: the CCD's role in promoting a global proactive approach to addressing desertification; the need for moving to Convention implementation; and guidance on financial opportunities in relation to the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness. ICELAND stressed that addressing desertification must integrate all relevant disciplines, and supported synergies with other conventions.

JAPAN said that it would double its ODA to Africa in the next three years. He emphasized the importance of mainstreaming desertification into development plans, and expressed concern regarding overspending of the Secretariat's budget, as well as the cost effectiveness and transparency of the Secretariat's activities. ITALY stressed: actions and additional resources; the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and poverty eradication; synergies, partnerships, and capacity building; and traditional knowledge for CCD implementation. SWITZERLAND highlighted local community initiatives, implementation of the JIU report, and CCD implementation.

INDONESIA said that little progress has been achieved in CCD implementation, and called for concrete actions. VENEZUELA said that fighting desertification is the most effective way to eradicate poverty, and called for strengthening international and regional cooperation. TUNISIA emphasized the need for moving to practical actions in CCD implementation while addressing famine, poverty and regional conflicts, and stressed experience sharing and South-South cooperation. PAKISTAN outlined his country's desertification-related problems including poverty and ecological degradation, and actions taken to address them. BOTSWANA introduced his country's efforts in implementing the NAP, supported strengthening RCUs, and stressed the role of the GEF in addressing land degradation.

GUINEA drew attention to land degradation-related problems in his country, including food security and refugees, and called for strengthening CCD subsidiary bodies. The RUSSIAN FEDERATION stressed the effect of drought on agricultural output and socioeconomic indicators, and offered space monitoring and training courses to address desertification. NEPAL said that marginal and steep terrain combined with extreme precipitation patterns poses challenges for implementing its recently completed National Action Programme. IRAN referred to socioeconomic and environmental imperatives linked to the MDGs and desertification, and called for the use of traditional and modern methods of combating desertification.



COTE D'IVOIRE said that conflicts in his country have caused migration and land degradation. He called for capacity building and financial support, and supported the RCU in Africa.

ISRAEL commended the outcomes of the MA regarding drylands and desertification, and reaffirmed partnerships with African countries. EGYPT said that his country has finalized its NAP, and expressed commitment to provide support to other African countries, such as training. LEBANON informed that its NAP was launched in 2003. MALAWI expressed hope that COP-7 would be a turning point in CCD implementation, and stressed the importance of financing the CCD. MAURITANIA stressed the need for national legislation on combating desertification.

YOUTH FOR ACTION, on behalf of NGOs, urged donors and other country parties to take action in CCD implementation and called for assistance to NGOs. He also emphasized the role of women in combating desertification. The PERMANENT INTERSTATE COMMITTEE FOR DROUGHT CONTROL IN THE SAHEL described its role in NAP development, CCD implementation, and promoting interstate dialogue in this region. The CENTRAL AFRICAN FORESTRY COMMISSION emphasized the ecological importance of this region, and the threats it currently faces. The WORLD CONSERVATION UNION (IUCN) called upon parties to: mainstream the value and importance of dryland ecosystem services; increase economic opportunities in drylands by promoting diversification of livelihoods; and recognize pastoralism as a sustainable dryland management practice, and adopt concrete measures for sustainable pastoralism.

#### **THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**

Chair Ricardo Valentini (Italy) opened the session.

**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION:** The Secretariat introduced the document (ICCD/COP(7)/3). The EU, supported by NORWAY, emphasized the importance of the review process in taking stock of the CCD's contributions, suggested that this be initiated prior to the new reporting cycle, and that the full review should take place prior to COP-8. SWAZILAND, supported by the G-77/CHINA, called for the renewal of the mandate and the institutionalization of the CRIC, and suggested that initiating the formal review process would be premature at this time. ARGENTINA, supported by RWANDA, cautioned against sacrificing substantive debate in favor of long country statements.

**REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROMOTION AND STRENGTHENING OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CONVENTIONS AND INSTITUTIONS:** The Secretariat introduced the documents (ICCD/COP(7)/5 and Add.1), and drew attention to a Joint Liaison Group paper on options for enhanced cooperation among the three Rio Conventions (FCCC/SBSTA/2004/INF.19).

IRAN drew attention to the government-led initiative, Tehran Process on Low Forest Cover Countries, and expressed hope that it would receive adequate support from donors. ARGENTINA urged the strengthening of capacity building. The EU sought clarification from the Secretariat on the distribution of relevant documents of the UNFCCC, and stressed operational and field-level synergies, as well as institutional cooperation. She also suggested developing a website and a compilation of activities undertaken with regard to synergies. In response to the EU, the Secretariat explained that procedures do not allow reproduction and circulation of documents of other UN meetings.

IUCN referred to the report of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group, which identified examples of synergies among the three Rio Conventions. BRAZIL stressed synergies at the national level. NORWAY emphasized that synergies should focus on: harmonization of reporting systems; improving civil society participation; promoting capacity building; strengthening cooperation at the scientific level, and promoting cooperation at the national level. She also stressed cooperation in areas of sustainable use and conservation of dryland ecosystems.

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE WSSD RELEVANT TO THE CCD:** The Secretariat introduced the document (ICCD/COP(7)/6). JAMAICA welcomed this report, asked the COP to acknowledge what has been done by the CCD, and suggested that the profile of the Convention be raised.

**PROGRESS MADE IN MOBILIZING FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR CCD IMPLEMENTATION:** Chair Valentini made a brief introduction on the agenda item (ICCD/CRIC(4)/4), but no interventions were made.

#### **CONTACT GROUPS**

**PROGRAMME AND BUDGET:** Discussions continued on the draft decision on the programme and budget for the biennium 2006-2007. Delegates focused on: reforms to deal with currency fluctuations and budget presentation; the core budget for the biennium 2006-2007; and Supplementary Funds and the Special Fund. While consensus was reached on a few paragraphs, most parts of the draft decision remain bracketed. One delegation proposed additional paragraphs urging the Executive Secretary to give priority to managing the Convention's finances with a view to arresting further deterioration of the cash position, and urging the parties in a position to do so to make additional contributions to the 2005 core budget.

**REGIONAL COORDINATION UNITS:** Discussions in the contact group continued to focus on whether COP-7 should recognize "the functions of the existing RCUs" or "the need to strengthen the coordination activities currently carried out by existing RCUs." One country indicated that there are better institutions for coordination activities, and that it is not prepared to recognize the existing RCUs. Some participants said that a paragraph inviting voluntary contributions for the RCUs' activities would meet the RCUs' financial needs.

**REVIEW OF THE CONVENTION:** The contact group on CRIC draft decisions remained divided regarding the Memorandum of Understanding with the GEF, and whether their relationship permitted them to "request" or merely "invite" them to make financial resources available, and report to the COP on the implementation of the decision. Text was adopted reaffirming the applicability of the MoU to all eligible affected country parties.

**REPORT OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT:** Discussions continued to focus on the draft decision prepared by Chair Sem T. Shikongo (Namibia). There was a debate on whether a clear and targeted strategy for the future of the Convention's implementation should be developed, taking into account the JIU report, and by whom. A group of developing countries stressed that COP-7 is to review the recommendations of the JIU, and not to develop any strategies for the Convention. Text was proposed suggesting a plan for implementing recommendations not covered by COP-7 decisions and the JIU report. Additional text was proposed inviting parties and other stakeholders to submit their views on the JIU report. There was no agreement on these two issues. Participants also debated the need to identify to whom each recommendation in the JIU report applies.

#### **IN THE CORRIDORS**

Delegates in contact groups, under pressure to produce results after a week of negotiations, showed a great deal of movement on divisive issues. In the CRIC group, however, there appears to be fundamental disagreement on whether the GEF is part of the CCD "family" – the rationale being that one can "request" a family member to do something, but only "invite" a non-family member. One delegate has encouraged the frequent use of the word "adopt" with regards to the MoU to encourage this family bond.

A sense of urgency filled the meeting, as the sun begins to set on COP-7. The impetus to use remaining time efficiently drove a conference officer to run around, ringing a bell to summon lingering delegates to the Committee of the Whole, to be known as the "COW Bell."