



## SUMMARY OF THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 17-28 OCTOBER 2005

The seventh session of the Conference of the Parties (COP-7) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (CCD) took place at the UN Office at Nairobi, Kenya, from 17-28 October 2005. The COP was attended by nearly 1000 participants with 33 ministers, 182 parties, 17 UN agencies, 21 intergovernmental organizations, 4 observers, as well as 125 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from 65 countries.

During the COP, parties also convened the eighth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), and the fourth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC-4). The COP also included a high-level special segment and two open dialogue sessions with NGOs and governments. Progress was made on a number of issues, including: review of the implementation of the Convention; inclusion of NGO activities in COP's official programme of work; development of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the CCD and the Global Environment Facility (GEF); and review and implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations as well as development of a long-term strategic plan for the implementation of the Convention.

Nevertheless, COP-7 made a little headway in the implementation of the Convention. Although parties discussed a number of important issues such as inclusion of an additional agenda on the procedure for the selection of an Executive Secretary, regional coordination units, and the programme and budget for the 2006-2007 biennium, COP-7's outcomes did not meet countries' expectations, and therefore the meeting was not deemed successful in moving forward the Convention's implementation.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CCD

The UN Convention to Combat Desertification is the centerpiece in the international community's efforts to combat desertification and land degradation. The CCD was adopted on 17 June 1994, entered into force on 26 December 1996, and currently has 191 parties. The CCD recognizes the physical, biological and socioeconomic aspects of desertification, the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand-driven, and the involvement of local communities in combating desertification and land degradation. The core of the CCD is the development of national, subregional and regional action programmes by national governments, in cooperation with donors, local communities and NGOs.

**NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION:** In 1992, the UN General Assembly, as requested by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, adopted resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of a convention to combat desertification 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 CCD and four regional implementation annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the

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Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean. A fifth annex for Central and Eastern Europe was elaborated and adopted during COP-4 in December 2000.

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 for 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 CCD – the Global Mechanism (GM) – and the establishment of the Committee on Science and Technology.

**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 from 2-3 October. The COP-1 and CST-1 agendas consisted primarily of organizational matters. Delegates selected Bonn, Germany, as the location for the CCD'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:** COP-2 met in Dakar, Senegal, from 30 November to 11 December 1998. The CST met in parallel with the COP from 1-4 December. Delegates approved arrangements for the institutional linkage between the CCD 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 rule 47 on majority voting in the absence of consensus. Central and Eastern 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 MoU 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 MoU regarding the GM. It decided to establish an *ad hoc* working group to review and analyze in depth the reports on national, subregional and regional action programmes and to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the CCD. Delegates also agreed to continue consultations on the additional draft regional implementation annex for Central and Eastern Europe, with a view to adopting it at COP-4. The COP also appointed an *ad hoc* panel on traditional knowledge and an *ad hoc* panel on early warning systems.

**COP-4:** COP-4 convened from 11-22 December 2000, in Bonn, Germany. The CST met from 12-15 December. The COP's notable achievements were the adoption of the fifth regional Annex for Central and Eastern Europe, commencement of work by the *ad hoc* working group to review CCD implementation, initiation of the consideration of modalities for the establishment of the CRIC, submission of proposals to improve the work of the CST, and the adoption of a decision on the GEF Council initiative to explore the best options for GEF support to the CCD's implementation.

**COP-5:** COP-5 met from 1-13 October 2001, in Geneva, Switzerland, and the CST met in parallel from 2-5 October. The COP focused on setting the modalities of work for the two-year interval before COP-6. Progress was made in a number of areas, most notably, in the establishment of the CRIC, identification of modalities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, and in the enhancement of the CCD's financial base following strong support for a proposal by the GEF to designate land degradation as another focal area for funding.

**CRIC-1:** The first meeting of the CRIC was held at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 11-22 November 2002. The CRIC was established in accordance with decision 1/COP.5 to regularly review the implementation of the CCD, draw conclusions, and propose concrete recommendations to the COP on further implementation steps. CRIC-1 considered presentations from the five CCD regions, addressing the seven thematic issues under review: participatory processes; legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements; linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies; measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land, drought and desertification monitoring and assessment; early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought; access by affected country parties to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how; and resource mobilization and coordination. The meeting also considered information on financial mechanisms in support of the CCD's implementation, advice provided by the CST and the GM, and the Secretariat's report on actions aimed at strengthening the relationships with other relevant conventions and organizations.

**COP-6/CRIC-2:** COP-6 met from 25 August - 6 September 2003, in Havana, Cuba, marking the CCD's transition from awareness raising to implementation. Among the issues marking this transition were the designation of the GEF as a financial mechanism of the CCD and identification of criteria for the COP-7 review. Progress was made on a number of other issues as well, including: activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies; enhancing the effectiveness of the CST; and follow-up to the WSSD. The COP adopted 31 decisions, of which eight were developed in the CST and six in the CRIC.

CRIC-2 convened from 26-29 August 2003, and addressed the review of the implementation of the CCD and of its institutional arrangements, and review of information on the financing of CCD implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions.



**CRIC-3:** The third meeting of the CRIC was held from 2-11 May 2005, in Bonn, Germany. It reviewed the implementation of the Convention in Africa, considered issues relating to Convention implementation at the global level, shared experiences, and made concrete recommendations for future work of the Convention. CRIC-3 concluded its work by adopting its report, containing recommendations on the implementation of the Convention both in Africa and at the global level, for consideration and decisions at COP-7.

### COP-7 REPORT

The seventh Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification convened on Monday afternoon, 17 October 2005. After a cultural performance by Kenyan singing and dancing groups, Andrew Kiptoon, Permanent Representative of Kenya to UNEP, opened the session.

On behalf of UNEP Deputy Executive Director Shafiqat Kakakhel, Bakary Kante, Director of the Division of Environmental Conventions, UNEP, welcomed participants to UNEP headquarters, and thanked the Kenyan Government for hosting COP-7.

CCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo noted strong support for the Convention expressed at the 2005 World Summit, especially with regard to its ability to address the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), but lamented that affected country parties continue to have difficulties in implementing financial commitments under the CCD.

Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, highlighted the importance of the 3R (reduce, reuse and recycle) approach and suggested the addition of a fourth R, "repair resources," as this appeals to people in both developed and developing countries in their respect for nature. She called upon delegates to plant more trees, and said we could win the fight against desertification if we remain committed.

Kenyan Vice President Moody Awori welcomed delegates to Kenya. Reiterating Kenya's commitment to implement practical measures for combating desertification and eradicating poverty, he emphasized the importance of investment in environmental management. He urged the international community to provide additional financial resources and technology for the implementation of national action programmes, and supported engaging the private sector and civil society. Awori then officially declared COP-7 open.

### PLENARY

Following the opening ceremonies, José A. Diaz Duque, COP-6 President and Cuba's Vice-Minister for Science, Technology and the Environment, reviewed the achievements made at COP-6 and said that the COP-6 decisions strengthened the implementation of the Convention and had contributed to desertification control and poverty reduction.

Delegates then elected Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, Minister of Environment and Natural Resources of Kenya, COP-7 President by acclamation. Musyoka congratulated the outgoing COP-6 President and other COP-6 Bureau members for their contributions, and noted that this COP convenes under the theme "Combating Desertification for Sustainable Livelihoods."

CCD Executive Secretary Diallo presented an overview of the Secretariat's activities to date. He reported on specific activities at the regional and subregional levels in all five affected regions, including joint projects with UNEP and UNDP, support to priority activities under the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), and technical support and coordination. He noted that 81 countries have finalized their national action programmes (NAPs), and that an additional four have completed drafts. He also reported on activities related to the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and the 2006 International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD).

The plenary then adopted the agenda and organization of work (ICCD/COP(7)/1) with a minor amendment. President Musyoka noted that Norway, on behalf of Australia, Canada, Japan, Switzerland, and the US, had requested to include an additional item regarding the procedure of the selection of an Executive Secretary. He then proposed, and delegates agreed, that the COP should adopt the agenda as contained in ICCD/COP(7)/1 and defer the discussion on the Norwegian proposal for consultations in regional and interest groups.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** President Musyoka then introduced the regional nominations for the posts of Vice Presidents of COP-7: Syria (Khaled al-Sharaa) and the Philippines (Bernarditas Muller) for the Asian Group; Chad (Maide Komandje) for the African Group; Bolivia (Erwin Ortiz Gandarillas) and Saint Lucia (Michael Andrew) for the Latin American and Caribbean Group; and Belarus (Vladimir Sauchanka) and the Czech Republic (Yuri Hlovacek) for the Central and Eastern European Group. The UK nominated Belgium (Joseph Boyce) and the US for the Western European and Others Group (WEOG). The nominated countries, except the US, were elected as Vice Presidents.

At the plenary on Friday, 28 October, Vladimir Sauchanka (Belarus) was nominated and elected the Rapporteur.

Viorel Blujdea (Romania) was elected as the CST Chair. President Musyoka announced that consultations would continue regarding the election of the remaining members of the COP Bureau.

On Tuesday, 18 October, President Musyoka designated Riccardo Valentini (Italy) as Chair of the Committee of the Whole (COW). On Friday, 21 October, nominated by the Western European and Others Group, Charles Haines (Canada) was elected Vice-President of COP-7 by acclamation. CRIC-4 Chair Mohamed Mahmoud Ould El Ghaouth nominated, and delegates elected by acclamation, Franklin Moore (US) as Chair of CRIC-5 and 6. His term will begin upon conclusion of the current CRIC session.

**ACCREDITATION OF ORGANIZATIONS:** The meeting approved the accreditation of intergovernmental and nongovernmental organizations, as listed in ICCD/COP(7)/11 and Add.1. CCD Executive Secretary Diallo noted that with the latest additions, the total number of NGOs accredited with the CCD was 793.

**STATEMENTS BY PARTIES, UN AGENCIES, AND OBSERVERS:** President Musyoka then invited general statements by parties, UN agencies, and observers. Jamaica, on behalf of the G-77/China, expressed concern about the current lack of support for multilateralism. She supported the findings



in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit, but warned against reopening the “environment versus development” debate. Venezuela, on behalf of the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), called for new and additional resources to facilitate the implementation of the CCD at all levels, highlighted South-South cooperation, and stressed the need for a synergistic approach to fulfill the objectives of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs).

Swaziland, on behalf of the African Group, complained that depletion of the resources for Operation Programme (OP) 15 (Sustainable Land Management) of the GEF reflects the lag in CCD implementation, called for more financial resources to be allocated to this programme, and urged making COP-7 a turning point from words to action. Saudi Arabia, on behalf of the Asian Group, called for financial resources for the formulation of national reports for CRIC-5.

The EU outlined the priorities for COP-7, including: renewing the CCD’s vision; clarifying the role of the Secretariat, subsidiary bodies and civil society; identifying synergies between the Rio conventions; and budgetary matters. Belarus, on behalf of the Central and Eastern European Group (CEE), reported that most countries in the region have developed NAPs. He called for international support, especially in providing financial resources, and appealed for allocating adequate resources to GEF OP 15.

The Asian Development Bank introduced the Bank’s initiatives and projects in addressing land degradation in the Asia and Pacific region, and said that it will mainstream its CCD efforts and mobilize more resources for CCD implementation. The FAO said that it is committed to sustainable land management, and highlighted the importance of immediate action, financial resources and partnerships. He explained FAO’s initiatives for CCD implementation, in particular assisting several countries in formulating their NAPs. The World Health Organization said it is committed to forming partnerships with parties and international organizations for CCD implementation.

UNESCO introduced its initiatives and projects on education and awareness raising in sustainable land management. UNEP described the support it has provided to the CCD, and highlighted: efforts to create markets for ecosystem services; an ecosystem approach to dryland management; and the need for monitoring, assessment and early warning. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) outlined its efforts to link desertification with its underlying causes such as climate change, and the use of new early warning technologies.

The Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Drylands highlighted its efforts to address desertification within the region. Climate Change Network Africa, on behalf of the NGO community, highlighted the role of civil society in CCD implementation and the need for further funding.

**OPEN DIALOGUE SESSION:** On Friday, 21 October, COP-7 Vice-President Jozef Buys (Belgium) chaired the open dialogue session and introduced its theme: “Crisis Management and Long-term Adaptation through Local Action.” CCD Executive Secretary Diallo stressed that the objective of this open dialogue session is to advance NGO participation in Convention implementation. Franklin Moore (US) moderated

the session. Vore Seck, Conseil des ONG d’Appui au Développement, launched the dialogue by introducing five case studies on local actions in Africa and Latin America.

In the ensuing discussion, NGO and government representatives stressed the importance of: small-scale projects; synthesizing local practices; cooperation between local communities and governments; advantages and disadvantages of decentralization; and the need for funding NGO activities. Several NGOs called for institutionalizing local communities within the Convention. Patrice Burger, Cellule d’Appui à la Réforme Institutionnelle (CARI), rounded up the discussion by calling for the empowerment of all stakeholders to implement the CCD. Diallo urged NGOs to strengthen their activities at the local and national levels, and invited them to participate in future CCD-sponsored meetings.

On Thursday, 27 October, the open dialogue session continued with the theme: “Facilitators and Obstacles on CCD Implementation.”

The Secretariat stressed the need to grant NGOs open access to decision making in CCD implementation. Moderator Octavio Perez Pardo (Argentina) highlighted the need to identify ways and means to improve CCD implementation. In introducing the panelists, Cecilia Leal, Fundación Oasis de Vida, Colombia, emphasized that the aim of this dialogue is to share experiences.

Jackeline Nkoyok, Confederation des ONGs d’environnement et de développement de l’Afrique Centrale, Cameroon, made a presentation on the economic dimension of environmental protection in Africa with a view to facilitating CCD implementation. She urged donor countries to fulfill their commitment to contribute 0.7% of their total GNP as official development assistance (ODA).

Tanveer Arif, Society for Conservation and Protection of Environment-SCOPE, Pakistan, spoke about removing barriers at the grassroots level for CCD implementation, stressing: promoting education in rural areas, especially for women; empowering local farmers to participate in decision making; providing accessible loans to farmers; subsidizing technology transfer; and promoting equitable benefit sharing and dissemination of research results.

Khadija Razavi, Centre for Sustainable Development Studies and Application-CENESTA, Iran, made a presentation on mobile pastoralism as a practice for sustainable nature conservation and rangeland management. She stressed the importance of: recognizing pastoralism as a sustainable way of land management; respecting and protecting pastoralists’ right to land, resources and decision making; and recognizing the economic role of pastoralism.

Juan Luis Mérega, Fundación Del Sur, Argentina, introduced the activities of a Clean Development Mechanism afforestation and reforestation project, and noted that the expected outcomes of the project include: reforestation of 3000 hectares of land; job creation and income generation; improvement of local and global environmental conditions; and promotion of sustainable dryland management.

In the ensuing discussion, participants stressed the need to: promote traditional knowledge; empower pastoralists and develop and implement a programme of work on sustainable pastoralism; facilitate access to research results and sharing



of experiences; recognize farmers' central role in combating desertification and provide direct financial and technical support to them; and promote awareness of on-going World Trade Organization discussions on agricultural goods that will have long-term socioeconomic impacts.

**CONSIDERATION OF THE NORWEGIAN PROPOSAL:**

On Friday, 21 October, in the plenary, Australia and many other developed countries urged the plenary to take a decision on the Norwegian proposal. After consultation with the Secretariat, Vice-President Erwin Ortiz Gandarillas (Bolivia) announced that this issue will be addressed by an afternoon plenary session on Monday, 24 October.

During plenary on Monday, 24 October, the G-77/China appealed to the proponents of the Norwegian proposal to withdraw it, while Japan supported it, noting that it aims to ensure a smooth selection process. The EU, together with the US, noted that the proposal was submitted to the Secretariat in compliance with the relevant rules of the CCD. Due to lack of consensus, President Musyoka ruled that the matter be deferred to the next plenary session.

At the plenary on Friday, 28 October, Canada, speaking on behalf of the proponents of the Norwegian proposal, withdrew it, expressing frustration that this item had not been properly considered during the plenary. He noted that the Secretariat had not responded to previous efforts to have this included on the agenda, and suggested that the Secretariat was impeding their initiative. He stated that the intention of the proposal was to secure an open and transparent process for the appointment of the Executive Secretary, and reiterated concerns regarding timing, availability, short listing of candidates, and appropriate regional consultation. He said that they would like to see this style of process adopted across the UN system.

The G-77/China rejoined that the CCD does not lack an Executive Secretary, and that the UN already has procedures in place for the appointment of the head of the CCD, and is aware of the associated rules, which she considers rigorous and transparent. She suggested that the proposal threatens to set a precedent for the entire UN system, and that they are annoyed at the "petulance and stubbornness" of the proposal proponents. President Musyoka announced that both the statement and the rejoinder will be recorded in the report.

**HIGH-LEVEL SPECIAL SEGMENT**

The special segment took place from Monday to Wednesday, 24-26 October. Following a cultural performance by Kenyan artists, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo delivered a message from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, urging parties to advance efforts including more concerted actions and financial resources to combat desertification. UNEP Executive Director Klaus Töpfer said that many people's livelihoods depend on ecosystem services, and that combating desertification is crucial in meeting the MDGs.

COP-6 President José A. D. Duque, Cuba's Vice Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment, called on parties to act promptly in order to achieve the objectives of the Convention.

Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, said that political will, rather than financial resources, is the solution to combating desertification.

COP-7 President Musyoka stressed that the CCD is an important tool to achieve the objectives of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD), and suggested empowering the subsidiary bodies of the Convention.

Kenyan President Mwai Kibaki said the outcome of the session will have a direct bearing on Kenya and all other affected countries, and will contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. He called for increased financial and technical support for the NEPAD Environmental Initiative, and translating the obligations under the Convention into concrete actions.

**STATEMENTS:** The GEF noted that the fourth phase of the GEF will continue to support the CCD's work in this area. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) called upon stakeholders to join partnerships to commit new investment to CCD implementation. UNDP called for a focus on the interlinkages between MEAs and the MDGs, as well as a rights-based approach to addressing land tenure reform. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) highlighted the synergies between MEAs in areas linked to combating desertification. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) described the close links that exist between climate change and desertification.

The G-77/China stressed that the creation of economic opportunities in the drylands is primarily a means to attain social improvement. The EU noted that the CCD highlights links between poverty and land degradation, and said that it is a unique forum to disseminate best practices.

The Asian Group reported progress in the implementation of national action programmes in Asia, emphasized capacity building for addressing land degradation, and called on developed countries and international agencies to provide assistance to affected countries.

GRULAC urged developed countries to renew their commitment to the Convention and emphasized the importance of setting measurable targets and providing financial resources for the implementation of the Convention.

The African Ministerial Conference on the Environment said that developed countries had been unable to adequately support the Secretariat, and proposed that the CRIC should become a permanent body of the COP. Soo-hwa Lee, Deputy-Minister of Korea's Forestry Service, expressed his country's interest in hosting COP-8.

Algeria, the Congo, Togo, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and the Dominican Republic commended the JIU report on the activities of the Secretariat, and urged implementation of the JIU's recommendations.

Kyrgyzstan and the Lao People's Democratic Republic spoke about support from the CCD and the GM for the implementation of the Convention in his country, with Tajikistan expressing hope that the CCD will have an effective financial mechanism.

Libya called upon all parties to promote regional and subregional coordination for CCD implementation and, with Nigeria, Madagascar and Lesotho, urged the GEF to provide greater support for sustainable land management in Africa. Haiti highlighted links between activities for combating land degradation and promoting land restoration.

Burkina Faso highlighted the importance of synergy between the Rio Conventions, and partnerships.



Mali called for greater efforts by NGOs for Convention implementation. Tanzania called for GEF support for country-driven programmes and increased resource allocation to GEF OP 15 (sustainable land management).

The Central African Republic appealed to developed countries and international donors to increase their support. Kiribati, speaking on behalf of Pacific island parties, and joined by Niue, emphasized the vulnerability of small islands developing states (SIDS) to climate change and land degradation, and called for greater flexibility under the UNDP/GEF portfolio project for least developed countries and SIDS. Bangladesh highlighted the problems caused by water scarcity and coastal land degradation in his country. Sudan described economic opportunities in the drylands, and eco-social activities.

Namibia spoke on the implementation of integrated land management. Cuba said that industrialized countries still have to fulfill their ODA commitments, and emphasized South-South cooperation. Uganda called upon parties to mark the 2006 IYDD with concrete actions. Benin, Niger, Eritrea and Albania highlighted issues related to: forest coverage reduction; food security; the widening gap between rich and poor countries; and illegal logging. Burundi, Ethiopia and the Czech Republic called for provision of technical support and financial resources to the CCD Secretariat.

The Republic of Korea underlined the link between natural disasters, climate change and desertification. Zambia noted reduced ODA flows, and suggested that the COP call on the GEF to provide funding for NAPs. Jordan, the Gambia, Viet Nam and Saudi Arabia proposed that the core budget of the Convention be increased, and called for capacity building.

Brazil and Argentina underscored the need to identify synergies among the Rio Conventions, and supported regional coordination. South Africa said that it would be ready to provide funds to make the IYDD a success.

Denmark emphasized prioritization of desertification and land degradation at the national level, while the European Commission said that political will and mainstreaming of desertification in development plans are crucial for addressing land degradation. France highlighted the need for: adequate scientific expertise; wider participation of NGOs; and appropriate use of the budget and resources. Germany emphasized: the CCD's role in promoting a global proactive approach to addressing desertification 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 emphasized the importance of mainstreaming desertification into development plans, and expressed concern regarding overspending of the Secretariat's budget. Italy stressed: the MDGs and poverty eradication; synergies, partnerships, capacity building; and traditional knowledge for CCD implementation.

Venezuela called for strengthening international and regional cooperation. Tunisia, with Indonesia, emphasized the need for moving to practical actions in CCD implementation, 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 supported strengthening Regional Coordination Units (RCUs).

Guinea drew attention to land degradation-related problems in his country, including food security and refugees. The Russian Federation stressed socioeconomic indicators, and offered space monitoring and training to address desertification. Nepal said that marginal and steep terrain combined with extreme precipitation patterns poses challenges for implementing its recently completed NAP. Iran called for the use of traditional and modern methods of combating desertification.

Côte d'Ivoire said that conflicts in his country have caused migration and land degradation. Israel and Egypt reaffirmed partnerships with African countries. 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 parties to take action in CCD implementation and called for assistance to NGOs. 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 threats it currently faces. The World Conservation Union called upon parties to: mainstream the value and importance of dryland ecosystem services, recognize pastoralism as a sustainable dryland management practice, and adopt concrete measures for sustainable pastoralism.

**GLOBAL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE:** On Tuesday morning, 25 October, delegates to the special segment engaged in a global interactive dialogue on the theme "Economic Opportunities in the Drylands under the UNCCD." Uriel Safriel, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, introduced the theme.

The interactive dialogue focused on: innovative measures for removing existing barriers and enabling rural people to adapt to alternative livelihoods; development of 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.

Morocco urged parties to be proactive in their response to the impact of desertification on migration. Ghana called for removing trade barriers, raising awareness, and adopting UN Green Accounting standards. Cape Verde emphasized the need for capacity building for local communities, and appealed to countries to focus on income-generating activities. The Czech Republic outlined its ODA to affected countries for 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 stressed the importance of engaging the private sector, and urged public-private partnerships.

**LAUNCHING OF TERRAFRICA:** On Monday, 24 October, an initiative entitled "The New Alliance to Combat Land Degradation in Africa (TerrAfrica)," was launched during the special segment.



Participants heard presentations by ministers, as well as representatives of international bodies participating in the initiative. President Musyoka delivered a statement from Olukorede Willoughby, Deputy Chief Executive of NEPAD, highlighting NEPAD's role in TerrAfrica. Iyorcha Ayu, Minister of the Environment of Nigeria, highlighted that it is a new business model for the participation of key stakeholders and to channel investment in the region. Laurent Sedego, Minister of the Environment of Burkina Faso, deemed the initiative a true partnership for collective efforts, and mobilization of additional funding. Len Good, GEF Chief Executive Officer and Chair, said that the GEF will provide significant financial resources for the initiative. Emphasizing that TerrAfrica builds a new paradigm in addressing land degradation through sustainable agriculture, partnership and cooperation. Cyril Enweze, Vice-President of IFAD, said that the initiative will contribute to improving livelihoods of the poor in Sub-Saharan Africa. J. Warren Evans, Director of the Environment Department, the World Bank, highlighted TerrAfrica as a stage for partnership and collective actions in addressing land degradation, and mobilizing financial resources.

Summarizing the presentations, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo underscored that TerrAfrica is an alternative business model for sustainable agriculture, and called upon all stakeholders to engage in mainstreaming land degradation into development programmes.

#### COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW was chaired by Riccardo Valentini (Italy) and met throughout the two weeks. Contact groups on the programme and budget, JIU report and RCUs were established and also met throughout the two weeks. The report is organized according to the agenda. Unless otherwise noted, all decisions were adopted during the closing plenary on 28-29 October.

#### CONSIDERATION OF RULE 47 OF THE RULES

**OF PROCEDURE:** Rule 47 was addressed in the COW on Thursday, 27 October. The Secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(7)/8 on rule 47 for the majority voting required to adopt COP decisions, and presented alternative solutions.

COW Chair Valentini proposed that the COP Bureau collect views of parties, explore possible solutions, and refer recommendations to COP-8. The US and Canada cautioned against overburdening the work of the Bureau and additional cost implications, and suggested adopting a decision requesting the Secretariat to include this item in the agenda of COP-8. The EU suggested including information on the status of decision-making procedures in other conventions in the draft decision. The G-77/China requested the Secretariat to provide information on the impact of this outstanding procedural situation on the work of other conventions.

Delegates agreed that the Secretariat will collect information regarding the same issue in other Conventions, and refer the item to COP-8.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (IISD/COP(7)/L.20/Rev.1), the COP requests the Secretariat to include consideration of this outstanding rule of procedure in the agenda of the COP-8 and to report on the status of similar rules of procedure in other

MEAs, including the views of other secretariats on the impact of the small island developing states status on the work of their respective MEAs.

**PREPARATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DESERTS AND DESERTIFICATION (IYDD):** The item was discussed in the COW on Thursday, 27 October. The Secretariat noted the UN General Assembly's designation of 2006 as the IYDD, and introduced documents containing an interim report on the status of the preparation of IYDD (ICCD/COP(7)/13 and Add.1).

Several delegates announced that a wide range of events will be organized during IYDD. The Secretariat announced the establishment of a website dedicated to IYDD (<http://www.iydd.org>) for the coordination of events, Italy highlighted its support to countries for organizing events to mark IYDD, and Germany said that it will launch an internet platform on IYDD events. Algeria, announcing that it will be hosting a high-level conference "The Protection of Deserts and the Combat against Desertification," called for drawing the attention of the international community to the event. The World Youth Alliance requested the Secretariat to come up with ways to involve young people in IYDD.

The COW took note of the need for coordination of events that will be organized at both international and national levels, and for updating the website regularly.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.22), the COP: reiterates the call by the General Assembly to all relevant international organizations and member states to support the activities related to desertification; encourages parties to contribute, as they are able, to the Convention, and to undertake special initiatives in observance of the year, with the goal of enhancing the implementation of the Convention; requests the Secretariat to make a list all activities envisaged, prepare an interim report to CRIC-5 and a report to COP-8; and encourages parties to make voluntary contributions to the CCD Special Fund for IYDD observance.

#### REPORT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE

**SECRETARIAT AND ITS HOST COUNTRY:** This item was discussed in the COW on Thursday, 27 October. The Secretariat introduced the report (ICCD/COP(7)/14), and noted the on-going relocation of all UN bodies in Bonn to a new UN campus, and its associated costs. Germany reported on the progress of the relocation. The G-77/China expressed concern about the costs associated with the relocation and called for increased contributions.

A decision was adopted with an amendment by the G-77/China hoping that the Government of Germany would make arrangements to absorb the costs associated with the relocation.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.22), the COP: welcomes the proposal of relocation made by the Government of Germany; requests the Secretariat to continue developing its relations with it and other relevant German entities; encourages the Secretariat to seek more cost-effective solutions for official meetings to be held in Bonn; and invites the Government of Germany to continue contributing, on a voluntary basis, to CCD meetings organized in Bonn.



**REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD AND ITS INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The COW considered this issue (ICCD/COP(7)/3) on Friday and Wednesday, 21 and 26 October. The discussion centered on recognizing the importance of the review process and taking stock of the CCD's contributions. Many called for the renewal of the CRIC's mandate and its institutionalization as a permanent body.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.17/Rev.1), the COP decides to renew the CRIC's mandate until COP-8, at which point its terms will be reviewed and modalities reconsidered. It also invites parties and relevant stakeholders, including civil society, to submit responses to the questionnaire on this issue contained in ICCD/COP(7)/3, which will be compiled by the Secretariat for consideration at COP-8.

**REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE PROMOTION AND STRENGTHENING OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:** This item was discussed by the COW on Wednesday, 26 October. The Secretariat introduced documents for consideration (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). The discussion focused on the need to identify and capitalize on synergies between conventions and organizations at all levels, including at the operational level. Many delegates drew attention to efforts within their countries that had benefited from, or created such synergy, and appealed for support. The EU suggested the creation of a website and a compilation of activities undertaken with regard to synergies. IUCN referred to the report of the CBD *Ad Hoc* Technical Expert Group, which identified examples of synergies among the three Rio conventions, as well as institutional cooperation.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.18/Rev.1), the COP commits to promote synergy between Rio conventions, and invites the review of the paper on "Options for enhanced cooperation among the three Rio conventions" (FCCC/SBSTA/2004/INF.19). It suggests a synergetic approach to encouraging sustainable forest management.

**FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOME OF THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** The COW discussed this item on Wednesday, 26 October. After the Secretariat tabled the document ICCD/COP(7)/6, it was supported by the G-77/China, who asked the COP to acknowledge what has been accomplished by the CCD, and suggested that the profile of the Convention be raised.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.19/Rev.1), the COP requests development partners to draw upon the CCD to achieve the MDGs, and to raise the political profile of the Convention by tying it to other related efforts.

**PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR COP-8:** This item was considered by the plenary on Friday, 28 October, and a related decision was adopted with no amendments.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.24), the COP establishes its programme of work for COP-8, including: programme and budget for the biennium 2008-2009; review of the implementation of the Convention; review of the report of the CST; review of activities for promotion of relationships with other relevant organizations; follow-up to the

WSSD; RCUs; and review of IYDD activities. The decision also includes interactive dialogue sessions with relevant stakeholders, including NGOs and ministers.

**PROGRAMME AND BUDGET:** The programme and budget for the biennium 2006-2007 was addressed in the COW on Wednesday, 19 October 2005, and in a contact group from 20-28 October. In the initial meeting in the COW, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo made a presentation on the programme and budget, and introduced the relevant documents (ICCD/COP(7)/2 and Add.1(A) and(B)). Diallo highlighted budget constraints due to the depreciation of the US dollar against the Euro, inflation and salary adjustments, and recommended that measures be taken to guard against further budget erosion. He noted that the current surplus figure is distorted by substantial unpaid contributions, which he urged parties to rectify.

The Asian Group supported the proposed programme and budget, but was concerned about the depletion of funds for CCD implementation, and expressed hope that the committed resources will become operational. The EU emphasized improving the efficiency of financial management and prioritizing the programme of work. GRULAC suggested fair allocation of resources to operational and development activities. Australia expressed concern over new activities in the proposed programme and budget. The EU suggested that funding for the remainder of 2005 should be addressed first, along with criticism leveled by the auditors' report, and other issues such as unpaid contributions and currency fluctuations. One delegation stated that voluntary funds have enabled civil society participation from the least developed countries (LDCs) and should be increased.

Beginning on Thursday, 20 October, the contact group chaired by Gerardo Guiza (Mexico) met on a daily basis, often late into the night, in an effort to reach a compromise on a draft decision on the programme and budget for the biennium 2006-2007.

On the issue of contributions, a group of developed countries, supported by several other delegations, expressed their deep concern that the accumulated arrears due under the indicative scale of assessments from parties to the core budget are adversely affecting the activities and operations of both the Secretariat and the Global Mechanism. This group proposed that the Secretariat prepare an arrears payment plan, and requested the Executive Secretary to publish tables on countries in arrears or unpaid contributions on the website, and urged countries in arrears to make payments as soon as possible.

A group of developing countries supported making a statement in the draft decision urging countries in arrears to rectify the issue. One delegation said the funding provided to the CCD is a voluntary contribution, therefore his country opposed any wording such as arrears, dues and assessment, objected to publishing tables with countries having unpaid contributions, and preparing a payment plan.

In the budget document (ICCD/COP(7)/Add.1(A)), the Secretariat recommended the COP to authorize the Executive Secretary to draw upon surplus funds from prior bienniums to fund the shortfalls that have arisen during the current biennium, up to an amount of US\$1,500,000. Many developed countries criticized the Secretariat for failing to give the COP prior warning and sufficient time to consider all options for the risk of an overspending and requested the Secretariat to give





an explanation. The Secretariat cited currency exchange rate fluctuations, inflation and salary adjustments as the primary reasons for the shortfalls. A group of developing countries held that there have been adjustments in fund allocations in order to carry out activities for the implementation of the CCD, therefore it could not be called overspending, as the expenditures are still within the approved budget.

On the auditors' report on the Convention's trust funds for the biennium 2002-2003, the Secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(7)/2/Add.5(A). Many delegates requested the Secretariat to produce a report on the actions taken in response to the auditors' recommendations. A group of developed countries suggested annexing the report to the budget decision, while others objected. A few delegations supported including paragraphs on the concrete actions taken by the Secretariat in the draft decision on budget. The Secretariat circulated five documents as requested, including a report on the status of the implementation of the auditor's recommendations.

For the purpose of reducing the risk posed by exchange rate fluctuations, a group of developed countries supported the JIU recommendation to change to a Euro-based budget, starting in the 2008-2009 biennium. Other delegations objected to the change. Two additional options were also proposed: that parties that benefited from the exchange rate pay back the difference; or that the EU countries assess and pay in Euros, and other countries assess and pay in US dollars. Many opposed these proposals. Many developing countries requested developed countries to make additional contributions towards alleviating the impact of currency fluctuations on the Secretariat, which the latter group opposed.

A group of developed countries, opposed by developing countries, proposed text "it does not automatically require a growing Secretariat budget."

One developed country delegation proposed 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 urged the parties in a position to do so to make additional contributions to the 2005 core budget.

Budget tables on resource requirements for the biennium 2006-2007 were circulated using the US dollar and the Euro to simulate five scenarios with a 0 to 25% increase based on 2004-2005 budget.

The last round of negotiations was held on Friday, 28 October, intended to be the last day of the COP-7, and continued until 10:00 am, Saturday, 29 October when agreement was reached on the draft decision after compromises were made by all parties. The draft decision was adopted by the closing plenary on Saturday morning, 29 October.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.26), the COP: approves the core budget for the biennium 2006-2007, with an increase of 5% on the basis of the total resource requirements of US\$17,049,000 for 2004-2005, and adopts the indicative scale of contributions for 2006 and 2007, as contained in the annex to this decision. It decides to maintain the level of the working capital reserve at 8.3% of the estimated expenditures.

The COP also requests the Executive Secretary to report within 90 days of the conclusion of COP-7 to the COP President on all actions taken and all further actions necessary for the implementation of the audit report 2002-2003, and authorizes the Executive Secretary, on an exceptional basis, to draw up to US\$1.5 million from the reserve to cover over-expenditures for 2004-2005. The COP also decides to introduce the Euro as the budget and accounting currency beginning in 2008-2009.

**REPORT OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT:** The report of the JIU on the activities of the Secretariat and the Secretariat's report on the CCD implementation (ICCD/COP(7)/4 and ICCD/CRIC(4)/2) were considered by the COW on Friday, 21 October. Even Fontaine Ortiz, JIU, presented the report's major recommendations. The G-77/China, joined by many, supported a decision on the JIU report and proposed establishing an *ad hoc* working group to consider its recommendations during the period leading to COP-8. The EU, supported by many others, stressed the need for a fresh look at approaches for CCD implementation and the need for developing a common vision. GRULAC suggested, and delegates agreed, to establish a contact group on the JIU report.

The contact group, chaired by Sem T. Shikongo (Namibia), met from Monday to Friday, 24-28 October. Discussions focused on a draft text prepared by Chair Shikongo. The draft suggests the development of a targeted strategy 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. Developing countries stressed that COP-7 is to review the recommendations of the JIU, and not to develop any strategies for the Convention, while developed countries supported the establishment of an intergovernmental intersessional working group to develop a strategic plan to enhance the implementation of the Convention, proposing a timeframe of ten years.

The debate in the contact group focused on: the timeframe of the strategic plan; the terms of reference of and financial support for the working group; guidance to the working group by the COP Bureau; and completion of the group's work. After lengthy negotiations, delegates agreed to a compromise text, which was presented to the closing plenary on Saturday morning, 29 October.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.27), the COP decides to establish an *ad hoc* intergovernmental intersessional working group to review the JIU report, and, develop a draft ten-year strategic plan to enhance CCD implementation. The COP requests the Executive Secretary to provide the parties and the working group his comments and views on the JIU report, including his management response on the recommendations pertaining to the Secretariat contained in the JIU report. It also calls on the parties to submit their views and comments on the JIU report to the working group no later than 1 March 2006. The working group will consist of 18 members, including COP-7 President, the CRIC Chair, the CST Chair, and three members from each of the five regional groups. The COP urges: parties to contribute on a voluntary basis either to the Supplementary Fund or in kind to cover the cost of the activities of the working group; authorizes the Executive



Secretary to seek contributions; and directs the Working Group, by 1 June 2007, to complete its work and transmit its report and the draft strategic plan and framework to COP-8 for appropriate action.

**REGIONAL COORDINATION UNITS:** At the COW on Wednesday, 19 October, the Secretariat introduced the agenda item on the rationale for, modalities for, costs involved in, feasibility of, possible terms of reference of, and institutional and collaborative arrangements for RCUs (ICCD/COP(7)/7). The G-77/China urged COP-7 to take a decision to endorse the existing RCUs, with GRULAC and the Asian Group highlighting the RCUs' role in coordinating regional efforts and implementing the Convention. Japan opposed funding RCUs from the CCD's core budget. Chair Valentini established a contact group, which met from Wednesday, 19 October, through Thursday, 27 October.

In the contact group, chaired by Mohammed Ismail (Tunisia), discussions centered on whether COP Decision 11 has implied the COP's creation and/or endorsement of the RCUs, and whether COP-7 has the mandate to make a decision to recognize and endorse the existing RCUs. Developing countries urged COP-7 to focus on the role and operation of RCUs, while developed countries stressed the need to clarify the mandate of COP-7 on this issue.

On the draft decision prepared by Chair Ismail, discussions focused on two operative paragraphs, regarding: the establishment of RCUs as decentralized units of the Secretariat in the three regional implementation annexes for Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean, and the budgetary arrangement for the RCUs' staff. Several developed countries opposed establishing RCUs, warning against financial implications. Many developing countries supported their establishment, and urged COP-7 to approve payment of salary costs for RCUs, and requested the Executive Secretary to make budgetary arrangements drawing on the core budget.

The group considered a revised draft decision. The debate focused on endorsement of functions of RCUs and inclusion of their cost in the CCD's core budget. Several participants suggested establishing an *ad hoc* working group to discuss the issue and make recommendations at COP-8. A comparative study on advantages of other existing mechanisms for regional coordination was also suggested.

On Tuesday, 25 October, 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 an RCU for CEE countries was bracketed.

On Wednesday, 26 October, discussions focused 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 suggested a paragraph inviting voluntary contributions for the RCUs' activities.

On Thursday and Friday, 27 and 28 October, delegates negotiated various options in a Friends of the Chair group as well as informal consultations. However, no agreement was reached on the draft decision.

On Saturday morning, 29 October, President Musyoka asked the plenary to consider a "Summary by the President." The plenary approved the Summary as a non-paper of the meeting. As a result, there was no COP-7 decision on RCUs.

#### **COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Chair Viorel Blujdea (Romania) opened the seventh session of the CST on Tuesday, 18 October. Introducing the draft agenda, Chair Blujdea called upon delegates for active participation to provide technical and scientific expertise to the CST. The agenda and the organization of work (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/1) were adopted without amendment.

The Committee elected the following delegates as Vice-Chairs: Badraoui Mohamed (Morocco) for the African Group, Chenchu Norbu (Bhutan) for the Asian Group, Lawrence Townley-Smith (Canada) for the Western European and Others Group, and Nara Vargas (Panama) for GRULAC, also acting as Rapporteur.

The CST met from Tuesday to Friday, 18-21 October to consider: the roster of independent experts; traditional knowledge; benchmarks and indicators; early warning systems; the programme of work of the CST; land degradation assessment in drylands (LADA); the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA); liaison with international organizations and the scientific community; future programme of work of the CST; creation of *ad hoc* panels of experts; and other matters. Informal consultations were held to discuss the above items from Wednesday to Friday, 19-21 October. On Friday, 21 October, the Committee adopted its draft decisions, which were adopted by the COP on Friday, 28 October.

**ROSTER OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS:** On Tuesday, 18 October, the CST considered the Roster of Independent Experts (ICCD/COP(7)/10). The Secretariat noted that it has kept the roster up to date, including information on NGOs. Delegates stressed the utility of the roster. The G-77/China suggested including experts on social and economic issues and increasing the participation of experts from developing countries. An NGO suggested creating a list of local experts, especially elders and women, who hold rich traditional knowledge. Italy, supported by Belgium, proposed that parties identify national information points for coordinating national experts.

A draft decision was introduced on Thursday, 20 October. Delegates discussed the draft decision in an informal group on the same day. The CST adopted the draft decision with minor amendments.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision on the roster of independent experts (ICCD/COP(7)/L.6/Rev.1), the COP encourages parties to revise and update the database on their national experts, and to propose new candidates. It also requests parties to incorporate in their national reports an annex with an updated list of their experts on the roster, and invites Parties to actively promote the use of independent experts at the national level, and to encourage active participation of the experts in the implementation of the TPNs. The COP encourages all



organizations, institutions and bodies that will organize events scheduled for the IYDD to use the knowledge and expertise of experts on the roster.

**EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS:** The CST addressed early warning systems (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/7) on Wednesday, 19 October. Delegates heard findings of pilot studies on early warning systems. The Secretariat noted the importance of the pilot studies for understanding the causes of desertification and drought, and relevance to disaster reduction strategies. Japan presented a pilot study on desertification assessment and constructing an early warning system in North-East Asia. Turkey outlined national activities on early warning of drought. Morocco called for greater reliance on regional systems, and Italy urged empowering local stakeholders.

A draft decision was issued on Thursday, 20 October. In the course of its discussion, the EU noted that in the case of desertification, early warning applies chiefly to assessment and monitoring. The EU also suggested adding a request to the Group of Experts (GoE) to report on progress made on this issue to the CST at its eighth session, and deleting text requesting the Secretariat to report to COP-8 on this matter. The draft decision was adopted by the CST with several amendments.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.7/Rev.1), COP-7 invites UN agencies and developed country parties to provide technological and financial support to developing countries for early warning systems. It requests the GoE to carry out its work programme on early warning systems by integrating relevant benchmarks and indicators, as well as monitoring and assessment components, and to report to the CST at COP-8.

**SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF EXISTING NETWORKS, INSTITUTIONS, AGENCIES AND BODIES:** The CST addressed the survey and evaluation of existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/10) on Tuesday, 18 October.

UNEP presented the interim progress report of the project "Survey and Evaluation of Existing Networks, Institutions, Agencies and Bodies," an annex to the document on this agenda item. Noting the absence of funding for the implementation of Phase 2 of the project, UNEP said that it has submitted a GEF Medium Sized Project proposal entitled "Building Capacity for Networking among Desertification Institutions in Southern Africa." Argentina, Morocco, the EU, and France highlighted the need to link project activities to the work of the GoE.

A draft discussion was developed during informal consultations. On Friday, 21 October, delegates considered the draft (ICCD/COP(7)/L.8). It contained two operative paragraphs: a request to the Secretariat to develop a strategy to maintain a database of institutions developed under Phase 1, and merging the Phase 2 activities with the NEPAD's Environment Initiative activities. Regarding the database of institutions, Morocco, supported by the US and Belize, proposed that the database should be transferred to the Secretariat. The EU, with Norway, questioned the cost implications of the transfer, and suggested deleting both operative paragraphs. The US urged retaining the proposal to deliver the existing database to the Secretariat, but this was met with EU objections. As consensus was not reached, the draft decision was withdrawn.

**LAND DEGRADATION ASSESSMENT IN DRYLANDS:** On Wednesday, 19 October, the CST considered land degradation assessment in the drylands (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/8). FAO presented an interim report on the progress of the LADA project, which was annexed to the above document.

A draft decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.9), produced during informal consultations, was circulated on Thursday, 20 October. Norway, supported by the EU and the US, proposed several amendments, including: deleting a preambular paragraph on the relevant work of the GoE; deleting reference to a request to the Secretariat to facilitate the involvement of Parties in LADA activities; and deleting operative paragraphs on links between the GoE and LADA, and on the involvement of national focal points in LADA activities. Morocco, Cuba, China and Tanzania opposed the amendments. Several paragraphs were changed accordingly.

**Final Decision:** The decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.9/Rev.1) encourages the continuation of work on the LADA project, invites the GoE to strengthen its links with the work of LADA, encourages the involvement of the UNCCD focal points, and requests the Secretariat to present a progress report to COP-8.

**THE MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT:** On Thursday, 20 October, the CST considered the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/9). The contributing authors of the MA presented the report entitled "Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Desertification Synthesis." The report includes scientific findings on: causes of desertification; linkages between desertification, climate change and biodiversity loss; policy approaches to combating desertification; and future scenarios, which predict that desertification is likely to continue in the next 50 years and that a globally proactive ecosystem management approach would lead to relatively less pressure on drylands. The presenters emphasized that addressing desertification is crucial to achieving the MDGs, especially poverty reduction. Delegates commended the outcomes of the MA. Norway stressed that the CCD could benefit from the MA, especially regarding indicators and benchmarks.

A draft decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.10) was introduced on Thursday, 20 October. Israel initially proposed detailing the findings of the MA synthesis report, but agreed to restrict additions to a factual rendition of the outcomes of the assessment. The draft decision was adopted with minor amendments by the CST.

**Final Decision:** In the decision on the MA (ICCD/COP(7)/L.10/Rev.1), the COP acknowledges that the Convention should benefit from the MA findings in its further consideration of benchmarks, indicators, and monitoring and assessment activities. The COP encourages the parties to consider the findings, conclusions and response options contained in the MA synthesis report, and to make the best possible use of them in addressing the problems of land degradation. The COP also invites the CST to take the findings of the MA into consideration in its programme of work and in the Group of Experts.

**PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE CST:** On Tuesday, 18 October, the Committee considered the report of the CST Bureau (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/4), and a report entitled "Priority issue: Synthesis of reports submitted by the country Parties on case studies illustrating best practices and research relating to



land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation: an integrated approach" (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/2). A draft decision on the item (ICCD/COP(7)/L.11) was presented on Thursday, 20 October.

Belarus, Japan, Turkey, and Thailand made presentations on their experiences. Norway suggested that reports of case studies be made available through the CCD website. The EU requested the Secretariat to summarize lessons learned. Italy and France suggested that a summary of best practices be reflected in the recommendations. The US encouraged dissemination of lessons learned from all case studies, whether successful or not.

Delegates also addressed the outcomes of intersessional meetings, and recommendations regarding the ways and means for improving the functioning, efficiency and effectiveness of the CST. Regarding the CST budget, the EU and Germany emphasized prioritizing the work of the GoE, and the US stressed increasing resource allocation to the CST. The G-77/China recommended that, *inter alia*, resources be provided to *ad hoc* panels on specific issues. France opposed increasing the number of intersessional meetings. Regarding the appointment of CST national focal points, many countries called for making use of existing coordinating bodies and avoiding the proliferation of institutional structures.

Several speakers emphasized the consideration of two emerging topics: the creation of a task force on renewable energy; and the impact of crime and conflict on the environment. Tanzania, supported by Kenya and Belize, suggested establishing an *ad hoc* working group on climate and land degradation.

The WMO, supported by several countries, proposed text on its offer to organize a workshop on the impact of climate variability and change on land degradation. The G-77/China, opposed by the EU, suggested including a reference to the RCUs in the draft decision.

During the COP plenary on Friday, 28 October, the WMO noted that no financial implications are expected for the CCD Secretariat from the proposed international workshop on climate and land degradation. After detailing the responsibilities of the WMO and the CST, and agreeing to other minor amendments, the plenary adopted the draft decision.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.11/Rev.2), COP-7 decides that the priority theme for the CST would be the effects of climatic variations and human activities on land degradation. It welcomes the offer of the WMO to organize and fund an international workshop on the impact of climate change on land degradation in 2006, requests that the results are presented to COP-8, and invites the CST to assist in collecting experts for the workshop. It encourages parties and accredited organizations to prepare and transmit reports on the theme to the Secretariat, decides that work on benchmarks and indicators is the most urgent activity for the next two-year period, and encourages parties to work in other CST priority areas, including the communication and information strategy (THEMANET), and the development of an integrative assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation.

**BENCHMARKS AND INDICATORS:** On Wednesday, 19 October, the Committee addressed benchmarks and indicators (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/6). The Secretariat recalled work already accomplished, in particular the methodological framework contained in ICCD/COP(1)/CST/3/Add.1.

Delegates emphasized appropriate and broader use of indicators and benchmarks, and the need for resources and guidelines for indicators implementation in developing countries. The EU, supported by many delegations, stressed the importance of impact and socioeconomic indicators. Canada introduced additional text elaborating on requests addressed by the CST to the GoE on benchmarks and indicators, most of which was supported by other delegates. Delegates agreed to a proposal made by the G-77/China to add a request to the Secretariat to facilitate the assimilation and development of region/country specific benchmarks and indicators.

A draft decision on this item was developed and issued on Thursday, 20 October, and adopted by the CST.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.12/Rev.2), COP-7 requests the Secretariat, in collaboration with relevant actors, to facilitate the assimilation and development of country-specific benchmarks and indicators, and encourages their wide use. It requests the CST, through the GoE, to develop guidelines in their utilization in preparation of national reports, and also requests the GoE to give high priority to this work, including special attention to socioeconomic and biophysical aspects, and to present the final report, through the CST, to COP-8. The COP also encourages parties to develop and use indicators to assess progress in the Convention's implementation.

**TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE:** On Wednesday, 19 October, the CST discussed traditional knowledge (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/5). The Secretariat circulated a publication, "The Promotion of Traditional Knowledge," which contains the outcomes of two *ad hoc* panels. Italy, supported by India and Cuba, announced its proposal to set up a network of institutions, bodies and experts on traditional knowledge. GRULAC proposed to establish a thematic programme network (TPN) on best practices and traditional knowledge, and UNESCO described its work on protecting traditional knowledge.

The discussion on the issue took place in informal consultations on Wednesday and Thursday, 19 and 20 October. Delegates could not agree on the development of an inventory of traditional knowledge, and relevant text was bracketed. On Friday, 21 October, the CST considered a draft decision, containing bracketed text (ICCD/COP(7)/L.13) developed in informal consultations. Brazil and Canada, opposed by the EU, suggested alternatives to the bracketed text in an operative paragraph regarding the development of inventories of traditional knowledge. As consensus was not reached, the paragraph containing the bracketed text was deleted. Regarding the protection of traditional knowledge, insertion of a new paragraph was proposed and agreed on. The draft decision was approved by the CST, as amended.

**Final Decision:** In the decision on traditional knowledge (ICCD/COP(7)/L.13/Rev.2), the COP takes note of the state of progress in the Iconographic System of Traditional Knowledge and Innovative Use presented during the seventh session of the CST, and encourages Parties to develop initiatives on traditional knowledge. It also invites parties to protect, promote and use traditional knowledge, involving local experts and communities, and to foster integration of traditional and modern knowledge in combating desertification.

**IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY AND**

**EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CST:** On Tuesday, 18 October, the Committee addressed improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/3, Add.1 and 2). The interim report of the Group of Experts (GoE), highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of national reporting and progress made on thematic issues, was presented by David Mouat (US), Chair of the GoE.

The discussion focused on: the GoE's priority activities and programme of work; progress made on thematic issues; questions emerging from the review of national, subregional and regional programmes; and the efficiency of those programmes for implementing the Convention. Delegates generally commended the work of experts, noting the outcomes of the third and fourth meetings of the GoE. Suggestions were made on: improving the scientific input to the CCD; funding the GoE and according it a higher profile; prioritizing themes for its further work; and improving interaction with the experts.

A draft decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.14) was circulated on Thursday, 20 October. In the course of its discussion the EU suggested commissioning a review of the future role of science and technology in implementation of the CCD, and, on this basis, to recommend future work of the GoE, and addressed the issue of replacing non-active members of the GoE and its Chair.

The Secretariat's proposal to establish a CCD Fellowship Programme (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/INF.1) figured prominently in the negotiations. The EU, with Norway, opposed the proposal, citing insufficient information and lack of clarity on sources of funding. The G-77/China insisted that the programme would facilitate training and capacity building in land degradation, and funding would be provided from private sources. The CST could not resolve differences over this paragraph.

The debate on the issue continued in plenary on Friday, 28 October, with Argentina, Morocco, Belize and other G-77/China members arguing for the COP lending support, as a minimum, to the "idea" of a Fellowship Programme. Compromise language offered by the EU was amended by the G-77/China, and the decision was adopted.

**Final Decision:** In the decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.14/Rev.2), COP-7 requests the GoE to continue its priority activities, including in conjunction with the CST's priority areas – the development of a communication and information strategy (THEMANET), a land degradation and poverty strategy, and benchmarks and indicators, and to submit a report to the CST during COP-8. The decision extends the GoE's mandate from December 2006 up to the CST's eighth session, requests the CST Bureau to review the functions and work of the GoE and report to COP-8, and asks for the replacement of non-active GoE members. It welcomes the idea of the CCD Fellowship Programme, and invites the CST Bureau to establish a need for a specific CCD Fellowship Programme, taking account of existing fellowship programmes and national capacity self-assessment reports, and requests the CST Bureau to set priorities and prepare a programme for the fellowships for consideration at COP-8. It also requests the Secretariat to report to COP-8 on the implementation of this decision.

**LIAISON WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

**AND THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY:** On Thursday, 20 October, the CST considered the liaison with international organizations and the scientific community (ICCD/COP(7)/5 and Add.1). Delegates discussed two issues: the ongoing CBD-CCD Joint Work Programme on the Biodiversity of Dry and Sub-humid Lands, and the outcomes of the Viterbo Workshop on "Forests and Forest Ecosystems: Promoting Synergy in the Implementation of the Three Rio Conventions," organized jointly by the CCD, CBD and UNFCCC in 2004. No decision was adopted on this item.

**CREATION OF AD HOC PANELS OF EXPERTS:** On Thursday, 20 October, the CST addressed creation of *ad hoc* panels, as necessary, with their terms of reference and modalities of work (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/4). The Secretariat noted that there was no background document on this item and that relevant information is included in the report of the CST Bureau. Argentina, on behalf of the G-77/China, said that the CST should have sufficient means to finance the panels of experts, and the panels should not replace the Roster of Independent Experts, but rather complement their work. After consultations it was decided not to adopt any decision on this item.

**FUTURE PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE CST:** On Thursday, 20 October, the CST considered the future programme of work of the CST. The recommendations of the Bureau on this issue contained in document ICCD/COP(7)/CST/4 were presented by the Secretariat. Delegates suggested prioritizing key themes of the future programme of work. Specific topics were suggested, including: the continuation of work on land degradation; vulnerability and rehabilitation; and benchmarks and indicators. The proposal to address the linkages between climate change and desertification received wide support. Cuba suggested adding the vulnerability of small island developing states. Points raised were incorporated in the decision on the programme of work of the CST (ICCD/COP(7)/L.11/Rev.2).

**OTHER MATTERS:** The CST considered "Other Matters" on Thursday, 20 October. Two issues were addressed: the Secretariat's initiative to establish the CCD Fellowship Programme (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/INF.1); and consideration of ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought, as well as promoting experience sharing and information exchange among parties and interested institutions and organizations (ICCD/COP(7)/CST/INF.1).

Regarding the Fellowship Programme, delegates from developing countries underscored the need for capacity building in specific areas related to the implementation of the Convention, and commended the Secretariat's initiative to establish a Fellowship Programme. The EU and Norway sought clarification whether a draft decision can be developed based on an information document.

No decisions were adopted on the above issues. Text relating to the CCD Fellowship Programme was incorporated in the decision on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST (ICCD/COP(7)/L.14/Rev.2).



## COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Chair Mohamed Mahmud Ould El Ghaouth (Mauritania) opened the session on Tuesday, 18 October. The Committee adopted the agenda and organization of work (ICCD/CRIC(4)/1) without amendment. The following delegates were nominated and elected by acclamation as Vice-Chairs of the CRIC: Bongani Masuku (Swaziland) for the African Group; Bulat Bekniyazov (Kazakhstan) for the Asian Group; Evgeny Gorshkov (Russian Federation) for CEE; and Giselle Beja (Uruguay) for GRULAC.

The CRIC met from Tuesday, 18 October to Thursday, 27 October, to consider: review of the implementation of the CCD; the GM; review of available information regarding financing of the CCD; and programme of work for CRIC-5. A contact group on review of implementation of the convention was established on Tuesday, 18 October. On Thursday, 27 October, the CRIC approved its draft decisions, which were adopted by the plenary on Friday, 28 October.

### REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCD:

The CRIC addressed the review of the implementation of the Convention on Tuesday and Wednesday, 18 and 19 October, and Thursday, 27 October.

On Tuesday 18 October, CRIC Chair El Ghaouth introduced document ICCD/CRIC(4)/3, containing the report on enhanced implementation. He suggested, and delegates agreed, that the agenda item on the overall review of the activities of the Secretariat and of progress made by affected country parties in implementing the Convention (ICCD/CRIC(4)/2) be deferred to the COW. Chair El Ghaouth established a contact group to discuss draft decisions on the review of implementation and appointed Ositadinma Anaedu (Nigeria) as its Chair.

The contact group met regularly from 18 to 27 October 2005 to discuss the item and developed the following five draft decisions.

**Strengthening Convention implementation in Africa:** The debate in the contact group centered around whether developed country parties would be requested to make available “all information” or just “information” on CCD-related financial expenditures, and whether to “request” or merely “invite” the GEF to provide support to national action programmes. The resulting compromise text favors the latter option. The draft decision was adopted by the CRIC without amendments.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.1/Rev.1), the COP calls on African country parties to adopt a range of suggestions related to capacity building and implementation of the Convention, while encouraging developed countries to better respond to requests for funding efforts to combat desertification in this region.

**Consideration of necessary adjustments to the elaboration process:** The contact group negotiated whether the CST should play a role in directing resources towards targets associated with combating land degradation. The resulting compromise text calls upon the GM to play this role, and to prepare a document summarizing options for financing the pursuit of such targets.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.2/Rev.1), the COP encourage NAP development, and also encourages the CST to continue efforts on benchmarks and indicators.

**Improving communication and reporting procedures:** The discussion revolved around the terms of reference proposed for a working group to be created to develop standardized national reporting procedures, and whether the creation of this group would be subject to the provision of supplementary funds. It was proposed that in order to cut costs the group should use electronic communication to facilitate discussion. However, developing countries indicated this would be problematic due to lack of capacity.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.3/Rev.2), the COP calls for the creation of an *ad hoc* working group to discuss the standardization of national reporting procedures. The group will communicate primarily by electronic means and meet in conjunction with other pre-existing meetings, unless supplementary funding is made available.

**Mobilization of resources for implementation:** A key concern brought up by developing countries was the inclusion of a call for pilot projects to be continued, where found to be successful (ICCD/COP(7)/L.4/Rev.2). Informal negotiations resolved this and other issues, and the draft decision was adopted by the CRIC.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.4/Rev.1), the COP invites affected developing country parties, and other parties covered by Regional Implementation Annexes, and their multilateral partners, to ensure clear links between mainstreaming NAPs, efforts to combat desertification, and funding.

**Collaboration with the GEF:** The deliberations on this issue proved to be more contentious than the other CRIC-related decisions. Requests by several groups to negotiate terms of the MoU between the CCD and the GEF, annexed to this decision, were denied on the basis that the agreement had already been approved by the GEF. Debate then turned to the language to be used with regard to the GEF. Differences of opinion stemmed from varying conceptions of the relationship between the two institutions, and whether it was appropriate to “request” or “invite” it to perform actions. The resulting compromise draft favored the latter option, urged by the EU, US and others, for most of the operational paragraphs, and further qualified the invitation to donors to strive for a successful GEF replenishment with the words “where possible.” The draft decision was tabled before the CRIC on Thursday, 27 October. The G-77/China appealed for more directive language. However, the draft decision was approved by the CRIC as is.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.5/Rev.1), the COP establishes its relationship with its designated financial mechanism via the adoption of an MoU with the GEF, and invites both parties to implement it. The decision also invites the GEF to take “duly” into account relevant decisions taken by the COP when financing activities, and inviting donors to strive for a successful GEF replenishment “where possible.”

**GLOBAL MECHANISM:** The item (ICCD/CRIC(4)/3) was discussed in the CRIC on Tuesday and Wednesday, 18 and 19 October. On Tuesday, a report on the activities of the GM was delivered by GM Managing Director Christian Mersmann. The report stressed that in order to secure resources, the CCD must



adapt to a changing international financing framework, and called on financing institutions to mainstream funding for CCD activities.

In the ensuing discussion, most delegates were supportive of the document and for the GM in general, and several developing countries suggested that it should be more active in its efforts.

On Wednesday, delegates continued the discussion on this item. While many countries affected by desertification noted activities that had been enabled by the GM, several others mentioned that they had yet to benefit from it. Several countries mentioned the need to communicate the importance of desertification as a global problem, and the potential for the CCD to address it.

Chair El Ghaouth suggested, and delegates agreed, to refer this agenda item to informal consultations. No specific draft decision was developed on this item, although the GM was mentioned frequently in the decisions on the review of the Convention, most notably in the decision on the mobilization of resources (ICCD/COP(7)/L.4/Rev.2). In this decision, the COP requests the GM to intensify its interactions with international financial institutions.

**REVIEW OF AVAILABLE INFORMATION REGARDING FINANCING OF THE CCD:** The CRIC considered this item (ICCD/CRIC(4)/5) on Wednesday, 19 October. The Secretariat noted that a draft Memorandum of Understanding between the GEF and the CCD has been submitted to COP-7 for consideration, and stressed that relations between the CCD and GEF have improved.

Some delegates stressed the difficulty that many countries experience in accessing GEF funding for CCD-related activities, and that there were many calls to remove conditionality in funding projects and to provide greater allocation of funds for OP 15. In response to the points raised, the GEF urged applicant countries to make clear links to NAPs in their project proposals.

The outcomes of the deliberations were reflected in the decision on the collaboration with the GEF (ICCD/COP(7)/L.5/Rev.2).

**PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR CRIC-5:** The CRIC considered the item on Thursday, 27 October, and informally during contact group sessions on the review of the Convention.

**Final Decision:** In the final decision (ICCD/COP(7)/L.16), the COP decides to include the following items: review of the implementation of the Convention and of its institutional arrangements; consideration of necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of action programmes; review of available information regarding mobilization and use of financial resources; and consideration of ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer; and improving procedures for communication of information.

#### **AD HOC GROUP OF EXPERTS**

An open-ended *Ad Hoc* Group of Experts was established to discuss the procedures and institutional mechanisms for the resolution of questions that may arise with regard to the implementation of the Convention, and arbitration and conciliation procedures in accordance with Articles 27 and 28 of the Convention (ICCD/COP(7)/9). The group convened on

Wednesday and Thursday, 26 and 27 October. However, due to the limited numbers of experts in attendance, the group did not conclude its work.

A draft decision was elaborated to the effect that the open-ended *Ad Hoc* Group of Experts will reconvene. The decision was adopted by the plenary at 10:00 am, Saturday, 29 October (ICCD/COP(7)/L.21).

**Final Decision:** In the final decision, the COP decides, for purposes of fulfilling Articles 27 and 28 of the Convention, to reconvene, during its eighth session, the open-ended *Ad Hoc* Group of Experts to examine further institutional mechanisms for the resolution of questions on implementation, and on annexes on arbitration and conciliation procedures, and make recommendations. It requests the Secretariat to prepare new working documents on these issues.

#### **CLOSING PLENARY**

On Friday morning, 28 October, the plenary convened to consider the reports of the CST, the CRIC and the COW, and adopted decisions. Due to on-going negotiations on the issues of the programme and budget, the JIU report, and the RCUs, the closing plenary endured two lengthy suspensions from 1:00 pm to 11:00 pm on Friday, 28 October, and from 12:45 am to 9:00 am on Saturday.

In the evening plenary on Friday, 28 October, President Musyoka introduced a decision expressing gratitude to the Government and people of Kenya, which was adopted by acclamation (ICCD/COP(7)/L.33). A decision on the date and venue of COP-8 was introduced and adopted without amendment (ICCD/COP(7)/L.29). COP-8 will be held in the autumn of 2007 in Spain. Details on the exact dates and venue will be decided in consultation with the COP Bureau. Another decision on the date and venue of CRIC-5 was also introduced and adopted without amendment (ICCD/COP(7)/L.31). CRIC-5 will be held in September 2006 in Argentina.

The Report of the sixth Round Table of Members of Parliament containing the Declaration by Members of Parliament (ICCD/COP(7)/L.15/Rev.1), which took place in Nairobi from 25-26 October 2005, was introduced and adopted. As a result of the Round Table, the Nairobi Declaration (ICCD/COP(7)/L.32) was introduced. The plenary adopted the decision, with the annexed Declaration, without amendment. The report of the Credentials Committee was adopted (ICCD/COP(7)/12).

When the plenary reconvened on Saturday morning, 29 October, delegates adopted decisions on the programme and budget, the JIU's report, and the report of COP-7 (ICCD/COP(7)/L.28).

In his closing remarks, CCD Executive Secretary Diallo thanked delegates for their contribution to the process. The G-77/China expressed its dissatisfaction with the outcomes of COP-7, and cautioned against the serious global social and economic consequences that may result from inadequately addressing desertification. The African Group appealed for international cooperation and actions on the ground for CCD implementation. The EU highlighted the outcomes of the meeting, and called upon parties for follow-up actions.

Closing COP-7, President Musyoka thanked delegates, and called for further implementation of the Convention. He gavelled the meeting to a close at 10:45 am Saturday, 29 October.



## A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF COP-7

*“When elephants fight, it is the grass that loses.”*  
African proverb.

In their interventions throughout COP-7, many delegates evoked the last ten years of the Convention’s history, and urged all parties to make this particular Conference of the Parties a turning point. They argued that despite the long transition of the CCD from awareness raising to implementation, most of the building blocks crucial for success were now in place. These include the 81 national action programmes, the expanding dissemination of success stories for combating desertification, the synergy developed with the CCD’s sister conventions, the TerrAfrica initiative, the memorandum of understanding with the GEF – all can be viewed as accomplishments. The recent World Summit’s call for providing adequate and predictable financial resources for addressing desertification and land degradation was a welcome political signal. There seemed to be a growing understanding in the international community that the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without an all-out attack on the root causes of rural poverty, to a large extent brought on by the spreading ink stain of desertification and drought.

Thus, there was some basis for expecting COP-7 to provide fertile ground for a full-throttle thrust to reach the lofty goals set by the CCD’s founding fathers. Indeed, the theme of the conference – Combating desertification for sustainable livelihoods – offered hope that the 191 parties to the Convention are now braced to cross the watershed and proceed to implementation, capitalizing on the achievements of the CCD, and agreeing on specific time-bound objectives for the next period.

However, as bleary-eyed delegates staggered out from the meeting rooms on Saturday morning into the brilliant morning sun after a grueling all-night session, none felt elated. The feelings of gloom and even anger pervading the conference rooms on the session’s last day, proved impossible to dispel, as delegates fought over the CCD’s budget, the recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), and the regional coordination units. Even the last-minute Nairobi Declaration, proposed by the host country, Kenya, and adopted by acclamation, failed to buoy the spirit of the negotiators.

This brief analysis explores the underlying causes of the outcomes of COP-7, as they emerged from this often difficult, two-week session.

### A CONVENTION FOR LIFE?

“This is a convention for life!” a non-governmental participant exclaimed, with some passion. Indeed, the CCD is often seen as a people’s convention, the only one directly addressing the needs of the developing world’s rural poor, and a critical tool to fight global poverty. These are undoubtedly among the Convention’s strengths. They are also its weaknesses. Like a heavily-laden lorry winding its way up the final stretch of Limuru Road to Gigiri, the Convention, it seems, is meandering with its breaks still on, and with the driver’s eyes riveted on a sagging fuel gauge.

The question heard time and again in the conference halls was why is the CCD not moving ahead at a brisker pace? There are several reasons, which were reaffirmed by COP-7, in the view of the majority of participants. The simple truth is that the CCD is the only multilateral convention driven by developing countries, land degradation is not a priority issue for donor governments, and the scorching breath of the desert is not readily felt by the prosperous public of the rich North. This is compounded by the donors’ persistent distrust of the CCD Secretariat. By its very nature a poverty-focused instrument, the Convention has still not shed its culture of political confrontation. The constant clamoring for additional financial resources, according to some delegates, is unrealistic and counterproductive. They stress the stark fact that the world has changed, and official development assistance flows are giving way to bilateral partnership arrangements, which provide tighter control to the donors over the recipients. Nowhere is it felt as poignantly as within the CCD.

### “SORRY, NO GAS TODAY”

The dire warning issued by Jamaica, on behalf of the G-77/China, during the closing plenary – “What goes around, comes around!” – was not an overreaction. The Group put the blame for the COP’s failure squarely on the rich donor countries, principally the US and the EU. Developing country delegates pointed to an ominous pattern in the latter’s negotiating stance: of slashing projects, or downsizing them for obscure reasons, as with the Secretariat’s innocuous fellowship programme. The debilitating nocturnal fight over the Secretariat’s budget resulted in its 30% reduction in real terms. This was, according to one irate delegate, a glaring demonstration of the donors’ hidden desire “to bleed the convention to death.”

Indeed, some participants suspected that there was more than met the eye in the discussion of the JIU report on the activities of the Secretariat and its role for the future of the Convention. While the G-77/China regarded it as a clearly formulated programme for the CCD in the coming years, for most developed countries it was just a starting point to be used for slowly building a set of strategic directions for the next decade.

The consequences of withholding adequate funding from an instrument designed to lift millions from neglect and misery stretch over a wide arch, and are impacting affected countries other than the developing ones. Listening to some affected country members of Annex V (Central and Eastern Europe), one is tempted to draw the conclusion that they are also being sidestepped in the scramble for funds.

### THE SECRETARIAT

It is an open secret that criticism of the Secretariat’s performance was behind the Norwegian proposal, on behalf of several JUSSCANNZ members, to establish a procedure for selecting an Executive Secretary. Hama Arba Diallo, the head of the embattled CCD Secretariat, did not seem perturbed by the move, which was viewed with suspicion by the G-77/China as a far-reaching plot against the Convention, or even “revenge” for the politicized COP-6 in Havana. To be fair to the sponsors of the move, the call for more order and transparency in selecting the future chief officer (Diallo’s term does not expire before 2007) looked sensible. Whether such warnings were justified or not, the G-77/China’s refusal to even discuss the item was





not supported by convincing arguments. However, a nagging suspicion remained among some participants regarding the accusations flung at the Secretariat. They thought that talk of “overspending,” “lack of transparency,” or “engaging in implementation activities beyond its mandate,” were really a diversionary move, to cover a hidden agenda of denigrating the Convention. In their view, the selection proposal along with proposals to cut the CCD staff, were intended to show that the Secretariat, and not donor reluctance to adequately fund the Convention, was the main stumbling block for progress. This view was hotly contested by the donor governments, who insisted that prioritization, mainstreaming desertification into development plans, dissemination of success stories, better science and an efficient and transparent Secretariat are the levers that will make the CCD work.

**A ROLE FOR CIVIL SOCIETY**

Participants had mixed feelings about the NGO contribution to the COP. Low NGO involvement has been yet another weakness of the CCD. Clearly, the Convention is in need of much broader support from civil society, and most delegates thought that the Secretariat was right in promoting the participation of developing country NGOs. The dialogue with NGOs was intended to infuse additional energy to the process, and provide a much needed “peoples” perspective to the debate. Indeed, some statements did give the impression that the NGOs were ready to fill the vacuum offered by governments reluctant to put their heart into the problem of land degradation. Some of them went so far as to demand a role in the negotiations, and even engage “in alternative actions.”

However, the total number of NGOs present in Nairobi was meager, with most coming from the South. On the penultimate day of the conference, the civil society interventions during the much publicized “open dialogue” were addressed to a strangely empty conference room.

**THE SISTERS’ SYNERGIES**

The CCD is often compared to the so-called “Rio conventions,” on climate change and biodiversity. The proposition that the UNFCCC, CBD and the CCD are inherently linked is conducive to their mutual reinforcement. However, while the former two, as a delegate remarked, “get money at the snap of your fingers,” financing the CCD only gets worse. The growing insistence by developing countries to address desertification in close connection with the other two conventions, might mean, according to one keen observer, that combating climate change and protecting biodiversity will have to depend forthwith on progress made by the CCD. In other words, they will stand or fall together.

**A TURNING POINT?**

Nairobi was a step down from COP-6 in Havana, both in terms of political profile, high-level attendance and concrete results. More importantly, COP-7 dealt a serious blow to hopes for an adequately funded poverty-focused programme of work. Many of the expected results from the new directions and themes chosen for the future depend on financing, and this disconnect will haunt those called upon to implement the COP-7 decisions.

According to some participants, the conference in Nairobi was one of the most confrontation-filled COPs they have ever attended. It certainly laid bare the differences, and brought the undercurrents of distrust, suspicion and frustration to the surface. Interestingly, no delegate felt satisfied with the COP’s outcome; even those whose positions prevailed in the end felt spent and frustrated.

It is in this sense that COP-7 may mark a turning point. The Convention is caught in the conflicting political currents of today’s world, and neither the Secretariat – the existing one or a refurbished one – nor an incisive scientific focus, nor thoughtful recommendations from the UN inspectors, nor success stories alone can turn the tide. The ambitious national action programmes and the modest gains made by COP-7 will not progress from the “paper stage,” unless all the CCD parties themselves exhibit political will, and come to terms with the frightening reality outside the negotiating rooms.

**UPCOMING MEETINGS**

**NINTH CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE RAMSAR CONVENTION:** The ninth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands will be held from 7-15 November 2005, in Kampala, Uganda. For more information, contact: Ramsar Secretariat; tel: +41-22-999-0170; fax +41-22-999-0169; e-mail: ramsar@ramsar.org; internet: [http://www.ramsar.org/index\\_cop9\\_e.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/index_cop9_e.htm)

**DIVERSITAS OPEN SCIENCE CONFERENCE:** This conference will be held from 9-12 November 2005, in Oaxaca, Mexico. The theme of the Conference is “Integrating Biodiversity Science for Human Well-being.” For more information, contact: DIVERSITAS Secretariat; tel: +33-1-45-25-95-25; fax: +33-1-42-88-94-31; e-mail: [info@diversitas-osc1.org](mailto:info@diversitas-osc1.org); internet: <http://www.diversitas-osc1.org/>

**INTERNATIONAL EXPERT MEETING ON “SCOPING FOR A FUTURE AGREEMENT ON FORESTS”:** This meeting will take place from 16-18 November 2005, in Berlin, Germany. The objective of this Country-Led Initiative in support of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) is to contribute to the preparations for UNFF-6. For more information, contact: Marika Schinkel-Kleinke, Capacity Building International (InWent); tel: +49-34202-845-401; fax: +49-34202-845-777; e-mail: [marika.schinkel-kleinke@inwent.org](mailto:marika.schinkel-kleinke@inwent.org); internet: [http://www.inwent.org/themen\\_reg/themen/umwelt/biodiversitaet/forests/index.en.shtml](http://www.inwent.org/themen_reg/themen/umwelt/biodiversitaet/forests/index.en.shtml)

**EIGHTH CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON MIGRATORY SPECIES (CMS):** The eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS will convene from 16-25 November 2005, in Nairobi, Kenya, with the theme “On the Move to 2010.” For more information, contact: UNEP/CMS Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2401; fax: +49-228-815-2449; e-mail: [secretariat@cms.int](mailto:secretariat@cms.int); internet: [http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop8/cop8\\_mainpage.htm](http://www.cms.int/bodies/COP/cop8/cop8_mainpage.htm)

**REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND NATIONAL RESEARCH PLANS OF ACTION FOR COMBATING DESERTIFICATION:** This workshop will take place from 22-24 November 2005, in Khartoum, Sudan. This meeting will review experiences and learn from the National



Action Research Programmes and actual experimental research work undertaken in desertification studies presented by the participating countries. For more information, contact: Mukhtar Ahmed Mustafa, University of Khartoum, Sudan; tel: +249-13-329232; fax: +249-11-780295; internet: [http://www.uofk.edu/con\\_work/desert2/desert2.htm](http://www.uofk.edu/con_work/desert2/desert2.htm)

**FIRST MEETING OF PARTIES TO THE KYOTO PROTOCOL AND ELEVENTH CONFERENCE OF PARTIES TO THE UNFCCC:** Scheduled from 28 November - 9 December 2005, in Montreal, Canada, the first Meeting of Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (MOP-1) is taking place in conjunction with the eleventh session of the Conference of Parties (COP-11) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: [secretariat@unfccc.int](mailto:secretariat@unfccc.int); internet: [http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop\\_11/items/3394.php](http://unfccc.int/meetings/cop_11/items/3394.php)

**INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DESERTS & DESERTIFICATION:** The UN General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session, declared 2006 the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD). The General Assembly invited governments and other partners to support the celebration of this year and to raise public awareness of the issue to protect the biological diversity and the indigenous and local communities affected by this phenomenon. The General Assembly designated the Executive Secretary of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification as the focal point of the Year, in conjunction with the UN Environment Programme, UN Development Programme, International Fund for Agricultural Development and other relevant UN bodies. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: [secretariat@unccd.int](mailto:secretariat@unccd.int); internet: <http://www.unccd.int/>

**FOURTH MEETING OF THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY WORKING GROUPS ON ARTICLE 8(J) AND ABS-4:** The meeting of the CBD Working Group on Article 8(j) will take place from 23-27 January 2006, and the fourth meeting of the Working Group on Access and Benefit-Sharing will take place from 30 January - 3 February 2006, both in Granada, Spain. For more information, contact: CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@biodiv.org](mailto:secretariat@biodiv.org); internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/>

**SIXTH UN FORUM ON FORESTS (UNFF-6):** This meeting will be held from 13-24 February 2006, at UN headquarters in New York. This meeting will seek to reach conclusion on issues that were unresolved at UNFF-5. For more information, contact: Elisabeth Barsk-Rundquist, UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3262; fax: +1-917-367-3186; e-mail: [barsk-rundquist@un.org](mailto:barsk-rundquist@un.org); internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests>

**THIRD MEETING OF PARTIES TO THE BIOSAFETY PROTOCOL AND EIGHTH CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY (CBD):** The third meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will take place from 13-17 March 2006, in Curitiba, Brazil. This will be followed by the eighth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, scheduled from 20-31

March 2006, also in Curitiba. For more information, contact: the CBD Secretariat; tel: +1-514-288-2220; fax: +1-514-288-6588; e-mail: [secretariat@biodiv.org](mailto:secretariat@biodiv.org); internet: <http://www.biodiv.org/meetings/>

**FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:** This meeting will take place from 1-12 May 2006, at UN headquarters in New York. CSD-14 will begin the second cycle of the Commission's new work programme and will review progress on atmosphere/air pollution, climate change, energy and industrial development. For more information, contact: UN DSD; tel: +1-212-963-2803; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: [dsd@un.org](mailto:dsd@un.org); internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/>

**WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY:** World Environment Day will be celebrated this year on 5 June 2006 around the world. The theme for World Environment Day 2006 is Deserts and Desertification. For more information, contact: Elisabeth Guilbaud-Cox, UNEP; tel: +254-20-623401/623128; fax: +254-20-623692/623927; e-mail: [elisabeth.guilbaud-cox@unep.org](mailto:elisabeth.guilbaud-cox@unep.org); internet: [http://www.unep.org/wed/2005/english/About\\_WED\\_2005/](http://www.unep.org/wed/2005/english/About_WED_2005/)

**FIRST SESSION OF THE ITPGR GOVERNING BODY:** The first session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture is scheduled to take place from 12-16 June 2006, in Madrid, Spain. This meeting is organized by the FAO Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture acting as the Interim Committee for the International Treaty. For more information, contact: José Esquinas-Alcázar, CGRFA Secretary; tel: +39-6-570-54986; fax: +39-6-570-53057; e-mail: [Jose.Esquinas@fao.org](mailto:Jose.Esquinas@fao.org); internet: <http://www.fao.org/ag/cgrfa/>

**FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (CRIC-5):** CRIC-5 will be held in September 2006, in Buenos Aires, Argentina. For more information, please contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: [secretariat@unccd.int](mailto:secretariat@unccd.int); internet: <http://www.unccd.int>

**EIGHTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (COP-8):** COP-8 will be held in the autumn of 2007 in Spain. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: [secretariat@unccd.int](mailto:secretariat@unccd.int); internet: <http://www.unccd.int>