

CSD 17 HIGHLIGHTS: MONDAY, 11 MAY 2009

On the first day of the second week of CSD 17, delegates met in a morning Plenary session, during which Chair Verburg informed them that arrangements had been made to convene night sessions. The two Working Groups then continued negotiating their assigned sections of the text, meeting into the night.

PLENARY

During the morning Plenary, Chair Verburg noted the need to reduce the Chair's Negotiating Text from a 70-page document to a 20-page one. She invited delegates to complete the second reading of the text by Tuesday and urged them to consolidate it by eliminating duplication. She noted that arrangements had been made to allow for negotiations to continue past 6:00 pm in an informal setting. Delegates also agreed to the request of the Nordic Council of Ministers for accreditation to the CSD (E/CN.17/2009/L.1).

WORKING GROUP 1

AGRICULTURE: Indonesia on behalf of the G-77/CHINA said text proposed by the EU does not reflect properly the role of sustainable forest management in eradicating hunger and poverty. The EU disagreed and the US proposed bracketing "eradication," noting that eradication is about extreme poverty and reduction about poverty. EGYPT highlighted the role of forests in maintaining biodiversity.

SWITZERLAND, supported by NORWAY, added to the paragraph on plant genetic resources reference to the FAO Global Plan of Action on Animal Genetic Resources. The G-77/CHINA also proposed referencing equitable sharing of benefits in harmony with the CBD, as an important objective of the treaty on plant genetic resources in addition to conservation and sustainable use. CANADA cautioned against expanding the text and, joined by the EU, US and NORWAY, suggested stressing merely the "full implementation" of the treaty. The G-77/China noted that not all countries are members of the treaty, so to "recognize its importance" would be sufficient.

The US suggested a separate paragraph on support for the Global Plan of Action on Animal Genetic Resources, but said it was open to merging it with the paragraph on plants. In the paragraph on the use of biodiversity, the US added mention of international obligations, and the G-77/CHINA proposed a reference to benefit sharing. The Chair asked Norway to convene a consultation to reconcile different proposals on biodiversity,

and NORWAY reported on agreed language in the afternoon. The EU, supported by SWITZERLAND, proposed relocating references to ecosystem services to the introductory paragraph, but the G-77/CHINA said ecosystem services is a concept that is not yet agreed. The US, with CANADA, insisted on referencing women.

On pest management, the G-77/CHINA expressed concern about focus on limiting risks in enhancing productivity rather than the effects of such management on productivity. The EU noted that pesticides affect the whole chain of production. CANADA stressed that production must be sustainable. The US, CANADA, G-77/CHINA and RUSSIAN FEDERATION agreed on the deletion of the EU-proposed text, supported by SWITZERLAND, on developing international guidelines for sustainable agriculture.

In the paragraph on enhancing the quality of food, the RUSSIAN FEDERATION inserted "where appropriate" before "nutritional fortification," and the G-77/CHINA proposed beginning the paragraph with "support."

The EU proposed reference to ecosystem services in the paragraph on agricultural landscapes. On credit and other financial facilities, the US proposed deleting G-77/CHINA-proposals for "loan subsidies" and "low interest rates." The G-77/CHINA insisted on mentioning "accessible" credit.

The US proposed replacing "provide support to" the capacity of developing countries to develop agro-industry with "to enhance," but the G-77/CHINA insisted on retaining "support." Delegates agreed on the paragraph on enhancing coordination, with its placement to be decided later. The EU suggested removing the paragraph on intellectual property rights, as pertaining to the WTO, but the G-77/CHINA said it wished to retain it.

The US proposed replacing the G-77/CHINA language on disasters with wording on "encouraging development of risk-management systems for agriculture," including crop insurance policies, but the subparagraph remains bracketed.

AUSTRALIA suggested deleting text on mitigating environmental externalities because of duplication. The US supported language on the loss of pollinators. CANADA proposed text on ecosystem services, which the G-77/CHINA objected to and AUSTRALIA expressed reservation about. The US and EU said the discussion on removal of obstacles affecting people living under foreign occupation is not appropriate for this section. The US said land and tenure rights and rural development are captured in three different sections and suggested consolidating the references. JAPAN proposed

replacing “efficient” with “sustainable” agricultural production. The G-77/CHINA, supported by the EU, said the reference to the Maputo Declaration should be moved to the Africa section. The US said the discussion on ODA should be moved to the means of implementation section. Delegates agreed on text on direct investment to support sustainable agricultural production. The US said the CSD does not make decisions about food security, and emphasized the focus on sustainability and its criteria.

At the beginning of the evening session, Co-Chair Raguz announced that the Bureau had proposed assigning the section on Rural Development to Working Group 2. The EU, supported by the US, suggested that the section on interlinkages, cross-cutting issues and means of implementation should be assigned to Working Group 2 instead.

WORKING GROUP 2

DESERTIFICATION: Text was agreed on supporting traditional practices and local knowledge concerning land use, water management and agriculture after MEXICO’s amendment to add “appropriate” to “traditional” and agreement by G-77/CHINA to drop its amendment on use of indigenous plantations. Also agreed was new G-77/CHINA text on harmonizing sectoral policies and programmes for arresting and reversing land degradation and building coordination through convergence after adding a US modification “at the national level.”

Text on promoting scientific research and strengthening the scientific base on desertification and drought was agreed with the G-77/CHINA’s addition of “monitoring” and the US’s re-wording of “to measure results and to monitor impacts” of programmes combating desertification. The EU bracketed the G-77/CHINA’s new proposal on supporting the efforts of developing countries to establish centers of excellence and monitoring to combat desertification.

Delegates agreed on text supporting the establishment and strengthening of disaster management capacities with the G-77/CHINA’s amendments referencing “at all levels,” and managing adverse impacts of climate change. The G-77/CHINA bracketed the EU’s proposed reference to contribute to the building of a global set of key indicators to the paragraph on expanding access to appropriate technologies to assess, analyze and quantify the nature, severity and impacts of land degradation and desertification.

The US opposed the G-77/CHINA’s addition to the paragraph on best practices and lessons learned to combat desertification with reference to supporting developing countries in the development, deployment and diffusion of technologies, and the G-77/CHINA objected to NORWAY’s proposed reference to conservation agriculture.

Delegates differed on placement of the paragraph on building the capacity of affected communities to deal with the impacts of desertification, with the G-77/CHINA asking for its deletion, MEXICO supporting moving it to the section on interlinkages, and the EU in favor of bracketing and leaving it in the same place. The Chair suggested and the delegates accepted moving the text to the chapeau of the section on desertification, while keeping it bracketed.

Delegates agreed to a US proposal to build the capacity of affected communities to “address” rather than “prevent and deal with” the impacts of desertification. They also agreed to a US proposal to specify that investment in sustainable land management should be, as it relates to combating desertification and land degradation “in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas.”

The EU, supported by the US, AUSTRALIA, JAPAN and NORWAY, proposed replacing five sub-paragraphs related to resources with a sub-paragraph calling for the mobilization

of “adequate, predictable and timely financial resources for the implementation of the Ten-year Strategic Plan of the UNCCD” as well as for support to the work of the UNCCD Secretariat, and inviting the GEF Council to take the Strategic Plan into account in the next replenishment period. The G-77/CHINA preferred to discuss the Chair’s draft sub-paragraphs on resources, so the EU proposal remains bracketed along with the existing sub-paragraph calling for scaled-up allocation of financial resources to the GEF Focal Area on Land Degradation. Delegates agreed to delete the sub-paragraph calling for mobilization of resources for the Global Mechanism and an EU-proposed alternative paragraph on mobilizing resources for the UNCCD.

In the sub-paragraph on regional cooperation, Mexico insisted on referencing the UNCCD regional implementation annexes, but the EU did not want to restrict cooperation to the annexes, given that they only include affected countries. Delegates agreed to call for enhanced regional cooperation, including through the five regional implementation annexes. The G-77/CHINA retained brackets on a US proposal specifying that this cooperation would need support at all levels.

AFRICA: An alternative text was agreed on taking note of the Madrid High Level Meeting on Food Security for All and CSD support for establishing a new Global Partnership on Agriculture and Food Security, and the need for the consultative process to actively involve African countries. Text regarding the Windhoek Declaration was agreed with modifications to “take note of” (CANADA) and noting the AfricaSan+5 Conference and the June 2008 African Union Heads of State meeting in Sharm El-Sheikh (G-77/CHINA). Text on NEPAD’s Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme was agreed with modifications to accelerate the realization of agricultural development in line with the Programme (JAPAN) and adding a reference to the Maputo Declaration target of allocating at least ten percent of national budgets to agricultural development (G-77/CHINA). A separate paragraph on the Maputo Declaration was deleted.

Delegates added a bracketed CANADIAN-proposed alternative text calling for stimulating private investments in agriculture while protecting small farmers’ and workers’ rights and ensuring gender equality. Delegates agreed to the EU’s proposal to implement IWRM and to add US-proposed text on improved soil conservation techniques into this sub-paragraph. The G-77/CHINA proposed that the text on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction should indicate that international support would be provided for these actions. The EU suggested that the text might be better placed in the cross-cutting section, and it remained in brackets.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Reactions varied to the texts Chair Verburg circulated to delegates on Sunday, providing a brief, coded list of duplicate references and draft compromise language for the Agriculture section’s chapeau. Several delegates privately indicated they had expected more draft compromise text. Some said the reference list offered “a good start,” others thought it was incomplete, and some indicated they needed guidance on how to use it. One delegate argued that absent a strong action from the Bureau on the addition of new amendments, delegations will not rein them in, since “everyone else is adding them, so why shouldn’t we?” Nonetheless, Monday saw a slight increase in the tempo of negotiation. Some “heavyweights” from national delegations were seen moving from their backseats to the microphones, taking over the search for compromise language, and a few key delegates started sending the first distinct signals of desire to streamline the text.