

eeco



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Everyone to the ODS

The Open Dialogue Session (ODS) that takes place next Tuesday the 11th of September is intended to be a tool for NGOs to have their moment of greatest protagonist in the COP. Thanks to this meeting NGOs organize the subjects to be debated and underlined the aspects they want to deal with.

Both agree that the ODS is a perfect opportunity to meet Governments and to put forward worries and proposals of NGOs. That is why it is imperative that all Governmental representatives participate in this session, in order to show their interest in collaborating with NGOs. If Governments didn't attend the ODS, it wouldn't be credible that the Convention supports public participation and it wouldn't be possible to put together all the subjects the social organizations are interested in the most, they couldn't listen to all views and carry on a common thinking on these issues.

NGOs hope that the ODS helps them to be listened to and that all together could work to improve the efficiency of combating desertification. To get that, the ODS of this COP8 should be more useful than the previous ones, in which the energy used in debates and conferences without getting any improvement was frustrating.

Besides, some NGOs consider that the concentration of the two traditional sessions of open dialogue in one day as a reversal, what could hinder the Convention results, since the NGOs are closer to the peoples feelings and know better their problems.

Even so, the NGOs still hope and trust in reach more and more importance in these COPs and not being a mere decoration. To keep hope it is mandatory that all delegations participate actively tomorrow in the ODS. There are no excuses. □

Open Dialogue Session

The objectives of the ODS is to present and discuss the three proposals to promote a quality dialogue with the delegates and the institutions that are present at the COP8.

Climate change

The civil society considers the strategies to tackle the challenge of the global warming and the impacts of the climate change as very fragile. It is to be taken into consideration that the areas contemplated at the CCD could be seriously affected, becoming arider, transforming semi-arid zones into arid ones and the dry sub-humid into a semi-arid.

Concerned about this scenario, the NGOs participating in the CCD wish Parts to hear their voices and offer a final solution to these questions.

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It is important to emphasize the importance of the social development, environmentally and economically sustainable, combating poverty and prioritizing the world alimentary security rather than the energy demand.

Participation

The participation is one of the most innovative and differential element of the text and the spirit of the CCD, determining the efficiency of different politics implementation and incrementing the possibilities of success.

The active participation of the civil society involves basic questions on power, transparency and democracy, all very relevant for the countries Parts of the CCD.

The participation implies diver types of investment:

Power share: Indicates listening, discussing, reaching agreements and renouncing if necessary, in order to achieve a better implementation of the process, mainly in the decision making process and information.

Social investment: Increases the responsibility of the involved groups and guaranties the credibility of information

sharing.

Financial investment: To consider all the costs and the benefits and to distribute rationally the available resources using social control.

Personal investment: The dedication of the people implies a reformulation of its priorities.

The NGO networking could signify a substantial and positive difference in the direction of work in the affected fields. The effective participation comprehends an educative process and creation of the conditions to insure information access for wide population sectors. This is one of the essential topics for the articulation of the civil society.

The NGOs understand traditional cultures and the knowledge they bear should be valued and considered as the base on which different CST topics should be included.

Concerning the participation process, NGOs express an enormous gratitude to the official delegations which supported the proposal aiming at approving a decision in the COP8 which would involve more the civil society in the participation of the decision making processes. What we

propose is not a formalization, but and effective participation.

Genre

50% of participation in these summit and in the social live in general is done for women but the political participation of women is not very strong when they must take decisions and it is at the civil society level where they can participate more. In each continent women's participation and their traditional knowledge and, in general in the management of natural resources, it is very important in order to developpe the rural communities. The desertification is a subject that has change the fragile life equilibrium for these communities and it has a big impact in the life of women. It is hope that woman finish having the principals benefits from the decisions of this summit.

From this COP8 immediate decisions and actions have to come out.

Our Convention has questions about the climat change and biodiversity and that is why it shouldn't be promoted a contradictory synergy against the CCD.

Synergy in the actions and not in the mix of the Conventions; this is our idea. □

Talking About Money? What For?

One of the main topics in COP8 is the 10 year strategic plan as key issue to allow the budget discussion. This issue was also clearly expressed as a concern for affected Parties under their statements in the plenary session on the Strategic Plan including the questions of RCUs and GM.

There seems to be a wide range of expectations on the size of the budget from 0 to 20 %. Some suggest increasing efficiency of the Secretariat while cutting the budget in the same time. Others suggest increasing the budget, may be by ten percent.

A weak understanding of the level of investments and results may be one cause for the lack of commitment of some Parties to the Convention. This may cause unwillingness to invest in the same time in the budget of the Secretariat and in the implementation of the objectives and activities of the convention.

However, before discussing the size of the budget, it must be clarified what the investments should be used for. Specifically, the budget of the Secretariat should be negotiated separately from the budget

of the investments in activities. Surprising enough, in the debates the distinction is rarely made introducing a lot of confusion on what "cost of implementation" means.

Additionally, there has been some discussion on whether the Global Mechanism should be controlled by the Secretariat. In any case, funds needed to run the Secretariat should be kept separate from those used to finance projects.

Only some of the investments in the activities flow through the UNCCD.

All Parties should clearly keep in mind, that the level and efficient use of investments at ground level and their success is the most important benchmark for accomplishing the objectives of the Convention.

Currently, the level of investments in landdegradation and relates socio-economic activities is not known both in absolute terms and relative to investments for preserving biodiversity and preventing climate change.

The GM should be given a clear mission to develop guidelines and bench-

marks on how to measure investments in activities and their results. It should also collect information from the Parties according those guidelines and benchmarks.

Any collected information should be made publicly available on the Internet for access by the research community and civil society. The information can be used to measure the levels and trends of the level of investments and their impact. The published information should go down to the level of individual investments. This enables tracking of global money flows and avoid confusion.

In conclusion, the Convention should concentrate on the amount of investments in activities, keep the funds used to operate Secretariat separate from the investments in activities, and set up processes to collect and disseminate information on the level of investments in activities worldwide. While the budget of a single COP is around 1.5 million of dollars and more, its efficiency should be the first objective in order to save money for investment in drylands. A revolution? □

A “revolution” is needed in the COP8

George Bright Awudi, representative of Friends of the Earth-Ghana, give us his opinion about the usefulness and efficiency of CST (Committee of Science and Technology).

Friends of the Earth, represented in more than 70 countries all over the world and about 10 countries in Africa, has a pessimistic view of COP achievements in the last 10 years. He agrees with the claim expressed by NGOs the first day of Convention: “A Convention without action causes desertification”.

The CST was created to generate scientific information about the situation of desertification in different parts of the planet. This information must be processed so that policies of affected countries can combat desertification at a local level. This so important second part seems to be “omitted”.

One of the mechanisms created by CST to achieve a great diffusion of its information among all the agents involved in this Convention is the “roster of experts” or experts database. It was created to encourage participation and facilitate communication among experts and others agents involved, leaders of affected countries, leaders of donor countries, local communities, NGOs, cattle-raisers, farmers, women associations, etc. But actually this database is not being used at all. This mechanism has fallen into disuse. On the one hand it is obsolete since 1998, when it was created, and on the other hand it is not useful because many agents lack the necessary communication means, because they are poor. NGOs have asked for an immediate review of this issue, although they had already done it in previous Conventions.

George Bright Awudi has a different idea: centralising the processes of participation and information exchange in each country. In this way, exchange is possible making individual efforts (in each country) to reach all levels (this

is a priority), and then, if experts want, they can get in touch with each other, using their modern communication channels.

Another NGOs’ proposal is the creation of a participation indicator that will show to which extent information is arriving to its targets, from local levels to CST (from traditional to scientific knowledge), and vice versa. Parties are not still sure of what they consider “participation”, how they want it to be, or who they exactly want to participate. As long as they do not clarify and assess this issues, they will not achieve anything, they will not be observing the duties to which they have committed.

Having a look at conclusions of previous COPs, it is obvious that they have not changed too much with time. After 10 years of Convention, NGOs are losing hope on countries’s abilities to attain objectives and obtaining a local representation in making-decision processes. And this is, in George’s opinion, “killing the COP”.

COP8 is already presented as a new era. “Parties must not maintain the attitude of previous years”; “they must listen to necessities at a local level”; “despite their commitments, funding from donor countries does not appear”,.... These are recurrent complaints heard for years after Conventions. This COP8 must be revolutionary in this sense.

When we think about the other two Conventions derived from Rio de Janeiro Summit, Conventions on Biodiversity and Climate Change, we appreciate that they also hold COPs that achieve their objectives more easily. Attaining objectives is not an easy task but, at least, they make progresses. We are aware that the Convention to Combat Desertification is once more “the poorest Convention”: the Convention on Biological Diversity has a strong relation to economic interests connected with intellectual property rights,



patents, drugs, and private companies linked to these interests. In the case of the Convention on Climate Change, the interest and private companies are focused above all on the political sphere and the energy market. To sum up, the “two rich Conventions” are related to a more immediate wealth, whereas the Convention to Combat Desertification is related to resources that offer local communities in developing countries quality of life. This is a matter of equality, not so profitable and interesting in terms of politics and economy. We should not forget that developed countries have historically been based on the same resources (agriculture, cattle raising and forestry). Nevertheless their main current activity is the creation of companies whose interests are totally opposite to the objectives and attempts of the poorest to survive, as well as, hindering their access to the resources on which they depend. We also cannot forget the real and close relations among Conventions and among problems, although Parties do not seem to see it this way.

To end with, we will think about the international market, in which countries that try to escape from poverty find very few opportunities to achieve it. This is a good option for the funding of donor countries to invest donations to which they committed in previous COPs.

All in all, COP achievements are more and more unattainable because no action is taken. Efforts made until now will become useless, if action is not taken. □

Le commerce et le développement durable à la COP8

Le Centre International pour le Commerce et le Développement Durable (l'ICTSD) a été fondé à Genève en septembre 1996 pour améliorer la connaissance sur les problèmes de développement et d'environnement dans le contexte du commerce international.

En tant qu'organisation non gouvernementale indépendante et sans but lucratif, l'ICTSD permet à une large série d'acteurs de prendre part aux débats sur le commerce et le développement durable. Avec un large réseau de partenaires gouvernementaux, non gouvernementaux et intergouvernementaux, l'ICTSD joue un rôle unique et neutre dans la mise à disposition de rapports d'information originaux et facilite le dialogue afin de contribuer à une meilleure compréhension des préoccupations en matière de développement et d'environnement dans le commerce international.

L'ICTSD facilite l'interaction entre les personnes qui définissent la politique et les autres acteurs dans le but de mieux intégrer la notion de développement durable dans la politique commerciale. En les aidant à augmenter leur capacité et à être mieux informés les uns des autres, l'ICTSD construit des ponts entre les groupes ayant des agendas apparemment disparates. Il cherche à permettre à ces acteurs de découvrir les nombreux domaines où leurs intérêts et priorités coïncident, puisqu'en définitive le développement durable représente leur objectif commun.

L'ICTSD a été présente à chacune des Conférences ministérielles de l'Organisation mondiale du commerce (OMC), où il a apporté des services de soutien à ses partenaires ainsi qu'au grand public.

On demande à Kamal Gueye et Marie Chamay, membres de l'ICTSD: "C'est la première fois que l'association assiste à une COP de la Convention de Désertification?"

L'objectif est clair: renforcer la flexibilité du commerce international, rappeler aux Etats membres le lien qui existe entre la dégradation du sol et le commerce international.

Comment éviter cette situation?

La solution se trouve dans les réformes des subventions agricoles, une réforme du commerce international- nous dit-il. L'OMC donne des différentes catégories de subvention. Il faut éliminer celles qui

dénaturent la production commerciale, celles qui ne font pas du bien à quelques pays, surtout les africains. D'autres subventions comme la "boîte verte" sont par contre positives

Sur le plan stratégique, Kamal nous dit:

Ce n'est pas concret donc il faut mettre en place la stratégie, intégrer le commerce dans les stratégies de chaque pays de façon soutenable, tenant en compte les particularités de chaque pays.

L'ICTSD travaille avec plusieurs ONGs (surtout au niveau local), organismes politiques, fondations, etc. Un exemple, le programme agriculture- Environnement avec l'ONG ENDA, du Sénégal.

En Afrique, il y a eu un "dialogue régional" avec des ONGs, comme ENDA comme partenaire. Ils identifient les acteurs et préparent des actions pour les pays participants.

Ces dialogues se font aussi en Asie, Amérique...

L'ICTSD apporte un financement pour ces dialogues régionaux, ce qui permet que les ONGs avec peu de ressources puissent participer.

Après la mise en marche du "dialogue" ils font une évaluation des programmes.

La mission la plus importante de l'ICTSD se centre principalement à niveau politique, en relation avec le commerce. Que l'équilibre entre environnement, économie et agriculture soit possible, nous disent-ils.

Ils nous parlent de la liste de produits spécifiques du programme agricole, dont on en parle ces jours-ci à la COP8.

Les pays en développement choisissent les produits qui seront mis dans la liste. Ces produits, sensibles dans ces pays (le coton par exemple) auront une taxe très faible afin d'être compétitif avec l'extérieur: une "libération du marché". Cela va passer par une diminution des taxes douanières des produits alimentaires.

Il faut concrétiser la date de la liste, mais il va falloir aussi que chaque pays fasse sa propre liste de produits. Maintenant cela sera la priorité pour continuer cette progression développement durable-commerce.

L'ICTSD a publié avec ENDA- Tiers-Monde " passerelles entre le commerce et le développement durable ". □



Side Event

IPADE that presents and shows the Mar del silencio Documentary Monday 10 at 18:00 in Room 9



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Please give your articles to eco@ecologistasenaccion.org

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