

**THIRD LATIN-AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE
CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION**

RAPPORTEUR'S REPORT

The Third Latin-American and Caribbean Regional Conference on the Convention to Combat Desertification was held from 10 to 12 March 1997 with the participation of 49 delegates from 24 countries. Twenty-five representatives from 3 countries, 15 organizations, international bodies, and non-governmental organizations attended as observers. (III CRD//DOC.9).

In the opening ceremony, Mrs. Rosa Elena Simeón Negrín, Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment of the Republic of Cuba, and Ambassador Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary of the Convention, welcomed the participants. (III CRD//DOC.7 and III/CRD//DOC.8).

At the proposal of the countries, adopted by acclamation, the Executive Bureau was elected as follows: Cuba as Chairman, Argentina and Haiti as Vice-Chairmen, and Ecuador as Rapporteur.

The agenda of the Conference was adopted by consensus as amended. (III CRD//DOC.1).

The representatives of Germany, Canada and Spain addressed the Conference on their respective offers to host the headquarters of the Permanent Secretariat of the Convention.

The Regional Coordinator of the International Non-governmental Organizations Network on Desertification (RIOD) read the Declaration of the Second Regional NGO's Conference held on 7-8 March in Havana.

The Conference welcomed the speeches delivered by the representative of the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the UN General Secretariat, the resident Representative of UNDP in Havana, the representative of UNEP Regional Office in Havana, the representative of FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, and the representative of IFAD for the Latin American and Caribbean Region, who summarized the work carried out by their respective institutions and the ample and diverse co-operation possibilities.

Also of utmost interest were the papers on the Unified Methodology for Desertification Assessment and Follow-up presented by Chile, to be examined by the countries for its final adoption, and on the Vulnerability of Island Ecosystems presented by Cuba, showing the urgent need to address the phenomena in the Caribbean islands.

The Plenary of the Third Regional Conference addressed issues related to:

Regional Action Programme
Regional Coordinating Mechanism
LAC position for the COP

Regional Action Programme.

Upon the introduction of the Regional Action Programme and the discussion of its substantive parts, the plenary adopted the following decisions: See (III CRD/I/DOC.4/REV.2). To adopt resolution No.1 containing: (1) The adoption of the Regional Action Programme; (2) To entrust the Executive Committee and the Secretariat of the Convention the implementation and follow-up of priority actions of the Regional Action Programme.

Regional Coordinating Mechanism.

Upon the introduction and discussion of the terms of reference of the regional coordinating mechanism of the focal points, the plenary adopted Resolution No. 3 containing: (1) To adopt the establishment of a Regional Coordinating Mechanism; (2) To submit to the First Conference of the Parties the appointment of a representative of the Secretariat as the Regional Secretary General; (3) The participation of RIOD as an observer representing the NGOs in the Executive Committee of the Coordinating Committee.

Latin American and Caribbean position for the First Conference of the Parties.

The Cuban representative made a presentation on the progress achieved at the Tenth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in preparation of the First Conference of the Parties, particularly on issues related to the Global Mechanism and the Committee on Science and Technology. The Plenary decided to adopt Resolution No. 2 containing the substantial issues on the Global Mechanism and the Committee on Science and Technology.

Finally, to conclude the session, the participating delegates discussed the venue of the Fourth Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference on the Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought deciding to hold it in Antigua and Barbuda, and the Executive Bureau, elected by acclamation was formed by Cuba as Chairman, and the other four members were Honduras, Argentina, Peru and Antigua and Barbudas.

The report was finally adopted as ammended.

The following basic documents were circulated:

1. Rapporteur's Report (III CRD//DOC.10)
2. Programme of Activities (III CRD//DOC.1) (S/E)
3. Regional Coordinating Mechanism for the Implementation of the Convention in Latin America and the Caribbean (III CRD//DOC.3/REV.2) (S/E).
4. Draft Decision submitted by the delegations of Mexico, Brazil and Cuba. (RES.1/REV.1)
5. Global Mechanism (RES.2/REV.1)
6. RES.2/ANNEX 1
7. Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RES.3/REV.2)
8. Speech delivered by Dr. Rosa Elena Simeón Negrín, Minister of Science, Technology and the Environment of the Republic of Cuba (III CRD//DOC.8) (S/E)
9. Speech delivered by Ambassador Hama Arba Diallo, Executive Secretary of the Convention (III CRD//DOC.7) (S/E)
10. List of participants (III CRD//DOC.9)
11. Subregional Statement of Commitment of the Subregional Action Programme for the Sustainable Development of the Puna Americana (high plateau).

**STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT
SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME FOR
THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUNA AMERICANA**

On the occasion of the Third Latin American and Caribbean Regional Conference on Desertification held in Havana, Cuba, on the 12 March 1997, the delegates from Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru, with the support and sponsorship of UNDP/UNSO agreed to establish a SAP (Subregional Action Programme) process called Sustainable Development of the Puna Americana, including the region of Paramo de Ecuador.

The programme is established within the framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD) that provides for Subregional Action Programmes to harmonize, supplement and enhance the effectiveness of National Action Programmes. In general, the aim of Action Programmes is to find coherent solutions to desertification problems by identifying their causes and adopting practical actions.

The delegates of the five countries participating in the Programme for the Sustainable Development of the Puna Americana (High Plateau) identified the following objective:

Improvement of the quality of life of the people living in the Puna Americana by combating poverty, implementing alternative economic activities, and preserving ecosystems.

To this end, it was agreed to recommend to the relevant national authorities the organization of a meeting of CCD national focal points in the five countries to identify the basic guidelines of the Programme, namely the specific objectives, institutionalization of the Programme and the elaboration of a working plan. The meeting of the five National Focal Points will be held in the city of Tarija, Bolivia, from April 30 to May 1st, 1997, on the occasion of the round table on Bolivia's National Action Programme and the first meeting of the Interim Committee for the Subregional Action Programme for the Gran Chaco. In order to prepare the meeting of the Subregional Action Programme of the Puna Americana, it was agreed to send the available information on the region, including the relevant information on National Action Programmes.

The UNDP/UNSO representative offered support and assistance for the institutionalization process.

City of Havana, Cuba, 12 March 1997.

Octavio Pérez Pardo, Argentina

Florencio Zambrana, Bolivia

Guido Soto, Chile

Elsa Molina Flores, Ecuador

Guillermo Idrogo Vasquez, Peru