

Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa. It directed the Secretariat to initiate preparation of studies on the proposed International Convention to Combat Desertification.

Following that directive, the Secretariat prepared a Brief which contained a review of the progress made at the first substantive session of the INC-D held in Nairobi from 23 May to 3 June 1993 with a view to assist the Member Governments in preparation for the INC-D Second Session, which was held in Geneva from 13 to 24 September 1993. Subsequent to the Geneva Session, the Secretariat updated its Brief and also prepared a draft text of a Convention on Combating Desertification and Mitigation of Drought. This brief was widely circulated among the AALCC Member States and the concerned international organizations including the Secretariat of the INC-D. It was also placed before the AALCC Legal Adviser's Meeting held in New York on 27th October 1993.

The AALCC Secretariat had been closely co-operating with the OAU in preparation of its proposals to the OAU Member States. The Secretary-General was invited to an Expert Group Meeting Convened by the OAU in Nairobi from 14 to 18 December 1993. The meeting reviewed the consolidated text prepared by the Secretariat of the INC-D taking into consideration the AALCC text. The report of the Expert Group Meeting which also contained draft text of Implementation Annex for Africa was Submitted for discussion to the Ministerial meeting of the OAU in Algeria in January 1994 and thereafter it would be placed before the INC-D third Session Scheduled to be held in New York from 17 to 28 January 1994. He observed that since the negotiations on the Convention were entering into a very crucial phase and had to be completed by June 1994, as mandated by the General Assembly, it would be very useful if the Member States of the AALCC would make their contributions particularly on crucial issues such as the commitments, financial mechanism and the regional annexes.

He noted that the Convention on Biodiversity had just come into force. The Framework Convention on Climate Change was expected to come into force during 1994. The first meeting of the Conference of parties of which convention had already been scheduled to be held in Berlin from 28 March to 7 April 1995 after the Convention achieved the necessary 50 ratifications to enable it to come into force in 1994. The brief prepared by the Secretariat contained an overview of the developments in regard to these two Conventions during the year 1993. The Secretariat was of the view that in the implementation of these two Conventions, the AALCC Member States have vital stakes. Whether they were parties or not, it would affect their future developments and they should not remain silent spectators. In his view, the Tokoyo Session provided a good opportunity to reflect

on the crucial issues and the importance of participation by the Member States in these two Conventions.

Another significant development during 1993 as a follow-up to the Rio Summit was the establishment of the Commission on sustainable Development. The Commission held its first substantive session in New York from 14 to 25 June 1993. At that Session, it adopted a multi-year thematic programme of work, as a concrete step to implement Agenda 21. He invited views of the Member Governments in regard to specific issues which deserved their prior consideration.

The Delegate of the Islamic Republic of Iran while appreciating active participation of the AALCC Secretariat in the UNCED deliberations spoke about the achievements of the Rio Conference. He Commended the Secretariat studies, prepared to assist the delegations participating at the negotiating sessions of the Climate Change and the Biodiversity Conventions. The delegate stated that it was expected that the Secretariat would also participate in the process of the drafting of the Convention on Desertification and keep the Member States informed.

(ii) **Decisions of the Thirty-third Session**
Agenda item: "The United Nations Conference on
Environment and Development—Follow-up"

(Adopted on January 21, 1994)

The Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee at its Thirty-third Session

Having considered the Document No. AALCC/XIII/Tokyo/94/7A on matters concerning the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio in June 1992.

Noting the contribution of the Secretariat in evaluating the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to combat Desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification particularly in Africa at its first and second substantive session;

Noting with appreciation the close co-operation that has been established between the AALCC and the Organisation of African Unity in connection with the elaboration of an International Convention to combat Desertification;

Recognizing the need to monitor the ongoing work in relation to the Convention on Biodiversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change;

Recognizing also the importance of the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development towards the implementation of Agenda 21 programmes;

1. *Invites* the United Nations Environment Programme to collaborate with the AALCC in the follow-up to the United Nations Conference on Environment

- and Development and to continue to participate actively in the work of the AALCC in the future;
2. *Underscores* the need to participate actively in the relevant meetings on Environment;
 3. *Appreciates* the voluntary contributions made by the Governments of Saudi Arabia and Myanmar to the AALCC's Special Fund on Environment as well as the promise by Turkey to make such contribution;
 4. *Urges* Member Governments to make similar voluntary contributions to the Fund.
 5. *Directs* the Secretariat to continue to monitor the progress in environmental matters, particularly towards the implementation of Agenda 21 and submit a report at the Thirty-fourth Session of the AALCC.

(iii) Secretariat Briefs :
**A. Institutional Arrangements to Follow-up
the United Nations Conference on
Environment and Development**

The General Assembly, at its forty-seventh session held in 1992 adopted a lengthy resolution running through eight pages setting out in a comprehensive manner the follow-up to the Rio Conference and the Institutional arrangements to implement Agenda 21 and other recommendations adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio in June 1992. The Resolution 47/191 adopted on 22 December 1992 was based on the set of recommendations contained in Agenda 21, Chapter 38 entitled "International Institutional Arrangements."

The Commission on Sustainable Development is the principal institution which has been established by the Economic and Social Council in accordance with Article 68 of the Charter of the United Nations. The Commission has been entrusted with the task of ensuring effective follow-up of the UNCED, to enhance international co-operation and to co-ordinate activities relating to the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national, regional and international levels taking into consideration the Principles of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and the objective of achieving sustainable development in all countries.

Paragraphs 3,4 and 5 of the General Assembly Resolution 47/191 set out in details the functions of the Commission. This is in line with paragraphs 38.13, 33.13, and 33.21 of Agenda 21. One of the important functions of the Commission as envisaged is to "monitor progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and

activities related to the integration of environmental and developmental goals throughout the United Nations System through analysis and evaluation of reports from all relevant organs, organisations, programmes and institutions of the United Nations System dealing with various issues of environment and development, including those related to finance" (Paragraph 3(a) of the Res. 47/191). Further, in the fulfilment of its functions, the Commission would also:

- a) Monitor progress in promoting, facilitating and financing, as appropriate, the access to and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies and corresponding know-how, in particular to developing countries, on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, taking into account the need to protect intellectual property rights as well as the special needs of developing countries for the implementation of Agenda 21;
- b) Consider issues related to the provision of financial resources from all available funding sources and mechanisms, as contained in paragraphs 33.13 to 33.16 of Agenda 21.

The General Assembly decided that the membership of the Commission would consist of representatives of 53 states elected by the Economic and Social Council from among the Member States of the United Nations and its Specialised agencies for three-year terms, keeping in view equitable geographical distribution. The Commission would meet once a year for a period of two to three weeks. The details in regard to the holding of an organisational session and the first substantive session were spelt out in paragraphs 11 and 12 of the resolution.

In addition to the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development, the General Assembly Resolution 47/191 mandated the Secretary-General to constitute a High Level Advisory Board consisting of eminent persons broadly representing all regions of the world and having expertise in various disciplines relating to environment and development. The main task of the Board would be to consider issues related to implementation of Agenda 21, taking into account the thematic multi-year programme of work of the Commission and to provide expert advice on those matters to the Secretary-General and through him to the Commission, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

The resolution also dealt with another important issue concerning co-ordination within the United Nations System. It urged all United Nations specialised agencies and related organisations of the United Nations system to strengthen and adjust their activities, programmes and plans taking into account the recommendations stipulated in Agenda 21. It requested the Secretary-General to consider restructuring and revitalizing the United Nations in the economic,

social and related fields with a view to optimising the work of the Commission and other related intergovernmental bodies dealing with matters concerning environment and development.

With regard to the work programme of the Commission, the General Assembly recommended that at its first substantive session, the Commission should adopt a multi-year thematic programme of work which would provide "a framework to assess progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 and ensure an integrated approach to all of its environment and development components as well as linkages between sectoral and cross sectoral issues." (Paragraph 12). It also recommended that a high level meeting, with ministerial level participation could be held in conjunction with the sessions of the Commission. Such a meeting would provide necessary political impetus to the implementation of the decisions of the Rio Conference. It was recognised that the Commission, in discharging its functions, would submit its consolidated recommendations for consideration to the Economic and Social Council and, through it, to the General Assembly. It called upon the Secretary-General to establish a clearly identifiable, highly qualified and competent secretariat to provide support for the Commission, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development and the High Level Advisory Board. It also noted that the establishment of Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development was significant initiative to enhance inter-agencies co-ordination among the United Nations Agencies.

Following the recommendations of the General Assembly the Secretary General established a new Department for policy co-ordination and sustainable development, headed by an Under Secretary-General.

The Commission held a short organisational session in New York from 24th to 26th February 1993. At that Session, the Commission elected the Bureau of the Commission representing each of the regional groups, comprising a Chairperson, three Vice-chairpersons and Rapporteur. The bureau is composed of :

Chairman :

Mr. Razali Ismail (Malaysia)

Vice-Chairmen :

Mr. Rodney Williams (Antigua and Barbuda)

Mr. Hamadi Khouini (Tunisia)

Mr. Bedrich Moldan (Czech Republic)

Mr. Arthur Campaueu (Canada)

The Commission held its first substantive session in New York from 14th June to 25th June 1992. The high level meeting with Ministerial participation was held on 23rd and 24th June. The Session was attended by all 53 states members of the Commission. Observer delegations included member states of the United Nations, the United Nations Agencies and Inter-governmental Organisations and non-governmental organisations. The AALCC was represented by its Permanent Observer in New York. Apart from the organisational items on the agenda, other items for consideration included, exchange of information regarding the implementation of Agenda 21 at the national level, progress in incorporating of recommendations of UNCED in the activities of international organisations and the measures taken by the United Nations System, progress achieved in facilitating and promoting transfer of environmentally sound technology, co-operation and capacity building, initial financial commitments, financial flows from available funding sources and mechanisms and the adoption of a multi-year thematic work programme.

The Session while adopting a multi-year thematic programme of work, noted that it "would provide a framework to assess progress achieved in the implementation of Agenda 21 and ensure an integrated approach to all of its environment and development components as well as linkages between sectoral issues." The programme is based on certain chapters of Agenda 21 which are cross-sectoral in nature and includes the following clusters:

- (a) Critical elements of sustainability;
- (b) Financial resources and mechanisms;
- (c) Education, science, transfer of environmentally sound technologies, co-operation and capacity building;
- (d) Decision-making structures;
- (e) Roles of major groups.

The Commission decided to review the progress on these clusters at its annual sessions each year. In addition, it also agreed that certain programmes which are broadly sectoral in nature would be taken up for consideration within time-frames of three years. These include:

- (a) Health, human settlements and fresh water (1994)
- (b) Toxic chemicals and hazardous wastes (1994)
- (c) Land, desertification, forests and bio-diversity (1995)
- (d) Atmosphere, oceans and all kinds of sea (1996).

It is envisaged to complete a review of follow-up work of all the major programme activities set out in the Agenda 21 prior to 1997 Session of the Commission, so that a consolidated progress report could be considered at the Special Session of the General Assembly as envisaged in the General Assembly Resolution 47/191.

An important issue which the Commission addressed at its first substantive session was the transfer of environmentally sound technology, co-operation and capacity building. It had before it a report highlighting the progress made in this regard during the last one year. The report also contained a review of the emerging trends at the national and international levels and the initiatives taken by the non-governmental organisations and the private sectors. Some delegations, in their interventions, identified the specific measures undertaken by various United Nations Agencies such as the UNDP, UNCTAD, UNIDO and the Commission on Science and Technology for Development. The need for concrete initiatives in line with the recommendations laid down in Chapter 34 of the Agenda 21 was stressed particularly in the establishment of information networks and strengthening of national capacities. It was suggested that the Commission should consider establishing a focal point for technology assessment within the United Nations system, which would serve as a clearing house for information.

Issues concerning financial commitments, financial flows and arrangements to give effect to the decisions of the Rio Conference from all available funding sources and mechanisms were discussed at length. The Secretariat had submitted a detailed paper on the progress on this matter since the Rio Conference. Another paper contained update information provided by some Governments regarding their financial commitments. Not only the delegates from the developing countries but also from many developed countries expressed concern over the constraints posed by the lack of financial resources to implement the Agenda 21 programmes. It was stressed that the Commission should interact with the multilateral funding agencies to seek greater financial support for sustainable development programmes.

The two-day High Level Meeting at the Ministerial level was held on 23rd and 24th June. It was attended by more than 40 ministers. Participants at that meeting recognised the political importance of an effective follow-up to the Rio Conference. There was general agreement on the work schedule as outlined in the thematic programme. It was recognised that the Commission could play a dynamic role as a central political forum for the monitoring and review in an integrated manner the implementation of Agenda 21.

General Comments

The first substantive session of the Commission was held exactly after one year of the conclusion of the Rio Summit. The period of one year is too short to

make thorough assessment on the follow-up work. While the process of establishment of institutional arrangements as envisaged at the Rio Conference has been completed satisfactorily, there appears to be little progress on the two key issues, namely the financial commitments involving new and additional resources and the transfer of environmentally sound technology to the developing countries. It will be recalled that the successful adoption of Agenda 21 at the Rio Summit added a new dimension to the concept of partnership among the developed and the developing countries. The need of the hour is to sustain and strengthen this concept. Mr. Nitin Desai, Under Secretary-General for policy Co-ordination and Sustainable development rightly observed; "Agenda 21 was an expression of a North-South compact on development and environment, and that new spirit of co-operation must be maintained by commitment to action".¹ In a similar note, the Vice-president of the USA recognised, "if sustainable development were to become a reality, the principle of partnership must be followed"² It is a matter of concern to note the discouraging trends in the aftermath of the Rio Conference. The cut-back in the aid programmes, the reluctance to accept the 0.7% target towards official development assistance (ODA) and imposition of certain conditionality in the assistance programmes weakens the convictions and commitments.

Much emphasis is being placed on the need to mobilize domestic resources by the developing countries. It would be worth recalling that the principle of "Common but differentiated responsibility", recognised that in the implementation of Agenda 12, financing would be the major responsibility of the industrialized countries. No attempt should be made to undermine this basic understanding reached in Rio.

Issues concerning restructuring of Global Environment facility (GEF) have been under active consideration. It is hoped that there will be agreement on these issues prior to the beginning of the next phase of GEF in 1994. The GEF II, as it will be called envisages universal participation and a transparent and democratic system of decision-making process. The establishment of a Participating Assembly (PA) with no pre-set membership fee will ensure wider participation. However, on the crucial issue of decision-making and the voting system there appears to be divergence of views. Also, the modalities of linkage between the GEF II and the Commission on Sustainable Development are still in the evolutionary stage. Much would depend on whether the Commission on Sustainable Development will be entrusted with a marginal role to recommend certain proposals for financial grants or a central role to determine and implement the policy. It is not

1. UN Press Release ENV/DEV/192, 14 June 1993, p.3.

2. *Ibid* p.5.

the intention to suggest a predominant role for the Commission. However, being the apex institution of the United Nations System to implement the Agenda 21, the Commission must enjoy certain financial authority.

Agenda 21 contains more than 115 programmes. The first effective step towards implementation of these programmes should begin at the national level. Each Government should identify its environmental problems and establish its own priorities. The United Nations system and the regional organisations should supplement, co-ordinate and wherever necessary initiate measures to assist the governments in implementing those programmes. It is encouraging to note that in the aftermath of Rio Conference, more than 70 countries have already established national commissions to implement Agenda 21. It would be desirable that the Commission's priority should be to assist those governments who seek assistance to strengthen their national mechanism and institutions to implement Agenda 21.

One of the principal tasks undertaken by the Commissions is the preparation of guidelines and format for national reporting on the measures to implement achievements related to Agenda 21 on a yearly basis. It has been suggested that a standard format prepared by the Commission will be used to prepare national reports approximately of 50 pages. These reports will contain statistics, tables and other details. They will be reviewed and an analytical study will be prepared by the Commission for submission to member governments in an appropriate form. This is a gigantic task both for the Governments and the Commission. Moreover, Governments are expected to submit their national statistics on programmes like poverty alleviation, population control, consumption pattern etc. It would be difficult to quantify the measures and the achievements on an yearly basis. By the time, such statistics are collected, transmitted and evaluated, the data might be outdated. Lastly, it is envisaged that the submission of national reports will be on a voluntary basis. Consequently, omission to submit such reports ought not deprive any state of the opportunity to seek financial and technical assistance from the funding agencies.

It is noticed that while serious attempt is being made to co-ordinate the activities of the United Nations system, the intergovernmental organisations and the non-governmental organisations in the field of environment, this on the contrary is resulting in proliferation of organisations, Ad hoc group meetings and programmes. Most of the developing countries lack material and human resources to actively participate and assimilate the outcome of these meetings on their national programmes and activities. This issue deserves serious consideration by the Commission.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION TO COMBAT
DESERTIFICATION IN COUNTRIES EXPERIENCING
SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR DESERTIFICATION,
PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA*

Background

The General Assembly, at its forty-seventh session in 1992, by its Resolution 47/188 established an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (hereinafter called INC-D) for the elaboration of an International Convention to combat desertification in those countries, experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. It decided that the INC-D, in addition to an organisational session in New York, should hold five substantive sessions. It laid down the guidelines for the work at the organisational and first substantive session. It requested the Secretary-General to establish an *ad hoc* Secretariat to assist the INC-D in its work. It also decided to constitute a multidisciplinary panel of experts to assist the *ad hoc* Secretariat and to provide necessary expertise in the scientific, technical, legal and other related fields, making full use of the resources and expertise within and available to Governments and/or organisations of the United Nations system dealing with drought and desertification. Finally, it provided for the establishment of a special voluntary fund to promote participation of developing countries in the INC-D meetings and a Trust Fund to meet the cost of the negotiating process.

The INC-D held its organisational session in New York from 26 to 29 January 1993. During that session, it adopted the rules of procedure and tentative schedule of five substantive sessions. It constituted two working groups and elected the members of the Bureau. Ambassador Bo Kjellen of Sweden was elected as Chairman.

The first substantive session of the INC-D was held in Nairobi from 24th May

to 3rd June 1993. The first half of the session was devoted to technical evaluation of the available information on causes, extent of desertification and drought and the experience with international, regional, sub-regional and national programmes to combat and mitigate these problems. During the Session, apart from the views expressed by the Experts statements were made by the representatives of the Governments, the United Nations Agencies, Intergovernmental Organizations and the Non-governmental Organizations.

During the second week of the Session, the discussion was focussed on the possible structure and essential elements of the proposed international Convention to combat desertification. The INC-D Secretariat, in consultation with the Panel of Experts established by the General Assembly Resolution and the international organisations engaged in this field prepared a document entitled "Format and Possible Elements of the Convention" (Doc. A/AC. 241/7). Discussion on these matters was general in nature. It was agreed that concrete proposals should be submitted to the INC-D Secretariat by 1st July 1993. The Secretariat was mandated to prepare a compilation of these proposals.

As many as 30 Governments and Organisations submitted written proposals. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) submitted a complete draft text of the proposed Convention. The INC-D Secretariat in consultation with the International Panel of Experts considered all these proposals and also taking into account the views of delegations expressed at the Nairobi Session, prepared a comprehensive compilation running into 85 pages and submitted it for consideration at the Second Session of INC-D. (Doc. A/AC. 241/12). This document was the basis of discussion at the Geneva Session.

The AALCC Secretariat has prepared an overview of the Geneva Session. The first part contains a brief summary of the discussions together with some general comments of the AALCC Secretariat. It is followed by a tentative text of the draft Convention. While preparing this text, it is not the intention to prejudge the work of the INC-D which has been requested to prepare a consolidated text in the light of the views expressed at the Geneva Session. It is also not the intention to undermine any proposals submitted so far. It is only an attempt to prepare a tentative text which might facilitate the discussions at the AALCC's Legal Adviser's Meeting in New York on 27th October 1993 and at the Thirty-third Session in Tokyo. The AALCC text is based on Agenda 21, Chapter 12, INC-D Compilation (A/AC. 241/12) the text of the Organisation of African Unity (Doc/CM/1781 LVIII, Rev. 4 Annex I) and the Document of Economic Commission for Africa (ECA/NRD/ENV. INC-D/1/Rev. 1, 28 July 1993).

* The Asian-African Legal Consultative Committee at its Thirty-second Session held in Kampala from 1 to 6 February 1993, at the conclusion of the discussion on the item entitled "United Nations Conference on Environment and Development — outcome and follow-up" directed the Secretariat to initiate preparation of studies on the proposed international Convention to combat desertification. The Secretariat prepared a Note containing a review of the progress made at the First Substantive Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Combating Desertification, held in Nairobi from 24th May to 3rd June 1993 with a view to assist the AALCC Member States in preparation for the INC-D's Second Session held in Geneva from 13th September to 24th September 1993. Following the Geneva Session, the Secretariat has prepared the present Note, which also sets out a tentative draft text on the Convention on Desertification and Mitigation of Drought. The views expressed in this Note and the AALCC draft text do not necessarily reflect the position of any of the Member States of the AALCC.

The Second Substantive Session of INC-D was held in Geneva from 13th to 24th September 1993. It was attended by a large number of States particularly from the African region, United Nations Agencies, Organisations and Non-governmental Organisations. The following thirty AALCC Member States attended the Session: Bangladesh, Botswana, China, Egypt, Gambia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Libya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda and Yemen. The AALCC was represented by the Director Mr. P.K. Jha.

The Chairman, in his opening address, informed the Meeting of the progress made since the INC-D Nairobi Session. He drew attention to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development at its first session held in New York in June, the Eighth Session of the INC Climate Change, particularly on "Prompt Start" arrangement and the Non-governmental Organisations Co-ordination Session held in Bamako in August 1993. He commended the compilation prepared by the Secretariat and suggested that the two Working Groups should complete first reading of that document during the Geneva Session. He expressed the hope that in the light of progress thus made, it would be possible for the Secretariat to elaborate a consolidated single negotiating document for consideration at the INC-D's third session in New York scheduled in January 1994. He expressed satisfaction over the consensus arrived on the mandates of the two Working Groups and proposed its formal adoption by the Plenary.

The Plenary approved the Chairman's proposal (A/48/226, decision 1/3). Accordingly, Working Group I was allocated sections on Preamble, Principles, Objectives, Commitments, National and Sub-regional Action Programmes, Capacity Building, Education and Public Awareness, Financial Resources and Mechanisms and Co-ordination and Co-operation. Working Group II was concerned with Definitions, Research and Development, Information Collection, Analysis and Exchange, Technology Transfer and Co-operation, Institutional and Procedural Arrangements and the Final Clauses.

The Chairman also introduced a non-paper which dealt with the preparation of regional instruments and "prompt start" arrangements. He suggested that as a first step work on the Convention together with the regional instrument for Africa could be concluded. It would be followed by the commencement of negotiations for the regional instruments for Asia and Latin America. He stressed that the Convention should not be a mere framework instrument but rather a text with substantive commitments, and the regional instruments should spell out concrete actions to implement the objectives of the Convention.

The Delegate of Brazil recognized that the issue of desertification gained importance because of the initiative taken by the African States. He, however, stressed that alongwith the Convention, instruments for all regions should be negotiated and the Convention should be brought into force when all the regional instruments were concluded.

The Executive Secretary of the INC-D explained the background of the preparation of the compilation and informed the meeting about the case studies which were under preparation or being planned.

Statements were made by a number of Ministers who were participating at the Geneva Session. The delegate of Japan and the representative of OAU also addressed the plenary on the opening day. On the following day, after a brief Plenary Meeting, the two working groups began consideration of the items allocated to them.

Discussions in Working Group I

On *Preamble*, the general view was that the text should be precise and relevant keeping in view the purpose of the Convention. It should recall the mandate given by the General Assembly resolution 47/188 and other relevant resolutions including the resolution 32/172 of 1977 concerning Action Plan to Combat Desertification. It should express the determination of the international community to deal with both desertification and drought in a concerted manner at the national, regional and international levels. The developing countries expressed the view that issues concerning eradication of poverty, mitigation of debt, removal of distortion in international trade should be mentioned in the Preamble as highlighting their concerns. Most of the developed countries however considered these issues as not relevant in the context of the Convention on combating desertification. There were also divergent views on whether desertification was a global issue or not. It was also stressed that there should be no duplication with Principles and Commitment Provisions.

With regard to *Principles* most of the delegations agreed that like Climate Change and Biodiversity Conventions there should be a separate article dealing with Principles. Some delegations from the developed countries considered the legal ambiguity of the Principles and preferred to include them, if necessary, either in the Preamble or in the section on Commitments. While there was no agreement on the list of Principles, it was generally agreed that the Rio Declaration could be the point of departure and the Principles which might be included should have links with the subject matter of the Convention.

As for the *Objectives*, the general view was that they should be focussed and