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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  
Tenth session  
New York, 6-17 January 1997  
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

DESIGNATION OF A PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUNCTIONING:  
PHYSICAL LOCATION

Note by the Secretariat

Compilation of information from potential host Governments

1. INCD decision 9/2, adopted at the Committee's ninth session, noted with gratitude the offers of Canada, Germany and Spain, contained in documents A/AC.241/54/Add.1, Add.2 and Add.3, to host the Permanent secretariat at Montreal, Bonn and Murcia, respectively. It also requested the Chairman of the Committee to establish a contact group, with appropriate participation by the Governments of Canada, Germany and Spain, to clarify these offers as necessary and to discuss appropriate procedures enabling the first session of the Conference of the Parties to take a decision on this matter. It further requested the Secretariat to present, in consultation with the three Governments concerned, for consideration at the tenth session of the Committee, a document comparing the major elements of the three offers. The Committee decided to consider this item further in plenary meetings at its tenth session on the basis of the deliberations of the contact group established in accordance with paragraph 1 and the document requested in paragraph 2 of the decision.

2. On 4 October 1996, the Secretariat met in Geneva with representatives of the three Governments to consult with them on the format and contents of the present document. At that meeting, the Secretariat presented an initial draft of this document for their review. It was agreed that a summary of the three submissions would be presented in a comparative table prepared by the Secretariat. After receiving inputs and clarifications from the three Governments, the Secretariat revised the document accordingly.

3. The comparative table containing the major elements of the three offers is contained in Annex I to the present note. The structure of the table closely follows the criteria contained in Annex A of document A/AC.241/54.

ANNEX I

Comparison of Major Features of Offers from Canada, Germany  
and Spain to Host Permanent Secretariat in  
Montreal, Bonn and Murcia, Respectively

(According to criteria in Document A/AC.241/54, Annex A)

A. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Criteria	Canada/Montreal	Germany/Bonn	Spain/Murcia
1(a). Privileges/ immunities of Secretariat	Similar to those of existing international organizations in Montreal <sup>1</sup> (such as Biodiversity Secretariat, ICAO, Montreal Protocol Multilateral Fund)	Same as Climate Change Secretariat and UN Volunteers Programme, both now in Bonn	Similar to those of diplomatic missions and international organizations based in Spain (such as World Tourism Organization, International Olive Oil Council, European Union Bureau of Patents)
1(b). Privileges/ immunities of staff members	Same as accorded to staff of Biodiversity Secretariat and other UN organisations <sup>1</sup> ; all staff members, regardless of their nationality exempt from taxation on salaries and allowances paid by Secretariat	Same as accorded to staff of Climate Change secretariat and UN Volunteers Programme; all staff members, regardless of their nationality, exempt from taxation on salaries and allowance paid by Secretariat	Similar to those of non-Spanish staff members of other international organizations indicated above

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<sup>1</sup> Details contained in Appendix C of Canada offer.

Criteria	Canada/Montreal	Germany/Bonn	Spain/Murcia
1(c). Privileges/immunities of attendees at meetings and experts	No entry restrictions for representatives and experts to meetings; visas for press/observers, as required. Facilitation of entry/exit/stay of representatives and experts <sup>2</sup>	No entry restrictions; facilitation of visas: right of unimpeded entry into, exit from, and free movement and sojourn within Germany; visas, entry permits or licenses, where required, granted free of charge and as promptly as possible <sup>3</sup>	Facilitation of entry/exit/stay of Parties' representatives and experts; see page 6 and 8 of Spanish offer; observers and media would be accorded same facilities
2. Rules regarding employment of staff members' dependents	Authorization to accept employment in Canada for spouses and children living at home (as defined in Appendix C of Canadian offer); assistance for spouses of senior officers seeking employment	Access to labour market, without work permit, for spouses and children living at home as well as assistance seeking employment	Access to labour market for spouses of management or administrative officials defined on pages 7-8 of Spanish offer; active institutional support to dependents seeking employment
3. Nature of headquarters agreement	Modeled on agreements with existing UN organizations in Canada such as Biodiversity Secretariat and UN University	Secretariat to be included in agreement with UN for the UN Volunteers Programme	Headquarters agreement would be concluded as in case of other international organizations in Spain

<sup>2</sup> Visas granted free of charge and as promptly as possible; privileges and immunities similar to those granted to participants in Biodiversity, ICAO and UN University; experts will enjoy the privileges and immunities provided for in Article 6 of the UN Convention on privileges and immunities. For more details see Appendix C of Canada offer.

<sup>3</sup> Arrangements would also be made to ensure that visas, entry permits or licenses, where required for persons entering Germany on official business of the Convention, are delivered at the port of entry to the Federal Republic of Germany to those persons who were unable to obtain them elsewhere prior to their arrival. All persons invited to participate in the official business of the Convention would enjoy immunity from legal process in respect of words spoken or written and all acts performed by them in their official capacity. Such immunity would continue to be accorded after termination of their business. They would also be accorded inviolability for all papers and documents. Experts performing missions for the Convention Secretariat would be accorded such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the independent exercise of their functions (see Article VI and VII of the 1946 Convention on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations)

B. FEATURES OF OFFICE SITE AND RELATED FINANCIAL ISSUES

Criteria	Canada/Montreal	Germany/Bonn	Spain/Murcia
4(a). Features of office site: office space	Temporary housing of Secretariat, free of charge; assistance in negotiating suitable permanent quarters in preferred building in heart of city. Offer is analogous to that of Biodiversity Secretariat	Space available for unlimited time, with square meterage to be determined; offer is analogous to that of, and in same building as, the Secretariat of Climate Change Convention	Space totalling 1100 square meters, configured to Secretariat's needs in newly constructed building with advanced technology for environment efficiency and ten parking spaces; Secretariat could temporarily be housed at "Casa de las Aguas", located outside the city with sufficient useful space
4(b). Features of office site: conference facilities	Meeting rooms for ongoing needs of Secretariat; free access to facilities of Montreal International Conference Centre Corporation (MICCC) with conference rooms of various sizes, and, at nominal charge to new state-of-the-art ICAO facilities, with capacity of 1400; access to modern facilities of the Montreal Conference Centre accommodating up to 12,000 participants	Meeting rooms for ongoing needs of Secretariat; access to modern conference facilities, including new centre accommodating several thousand attendees; use of German Government guesthouse for special events (see point 10(a))	Meeting rooms for ongoing needs of Secretariat; access to modern conference centre with 1800 persons capacity
4(c). Features of office site: availability of general services	All services readily available	All services readily available	All services readily available
5(a). Ownership of office site	Landlord of building selected	Government of Germany	Government of Spain and Autonomous Government of Murcia Region

Criteria	Canada/Montreal	Germany/Bonn	Spain/Murcia
5(b). Rental arrangements for office site	Rent free for initial period (duration dependent on building selected, up to 5 years); possibility of review of these arrangements after initial 5 year period; \$CAN 700,000 (USD 500,000) contribution, for five years	Rent free for unlimited time	Rent free
6(a). Responsibility for major maintenance/repairs at office site	Landlord of building selected	German Government	Government of Spain and Autonomous Government of Murcia Region
6(b). Responsibility for normal maintenance/repairs at office site, utilities and other operating expenses	Landlord of building for rent-free period (see pages 4-5 of Canadian offer and sections 5 to 8 of "Details concerning the Montreal bid" distributed to delegations at INCD IX)	Secretariat	Secretariat
6(c). Responsibility for costs of installation at office site	Government agency (MICCC)	Government of Germany	Government of Spain and Autonomous Government of Murcia Region
7. Responsibility for furnishing/equipping office site	Contributions from Canada, Province of Quebec and City of Montreal available to pay these costs totally (see 10(a) below)	German Government responsible, including for communications/computer equipment	Government of Spain and Autonomous Government of Murcia Region responsible, including for computer systems/communications links
8. Duration of office site arrangements	Five or ten year lease with option to renew	Indefinite	Indefinite

C. LOCAL FACILITIES AND CONDITIONS

Criteria	Canada/Montreal	Germany/Bonn	Spain/Murcia
9(a). Diplomatic representation in host city	Significant representation; 85 consulates and 65 ICAO representatives in Montreal; over 120 diplomatic missions in Ottawa (2 hrs by train or car, 175 km); one hour by air to permanent missions to UN in New York	Significant representation, even after parts of German Government move to Berlin (1 hours flight). Brussels with EU headquarters, diplomatic missions of countries and representation of all types of organisations 2 hrs away by train or car.	Diplomatic representations of over 90 countries in Madrid, which is under an hour by air from Murcia and well connected by road and rail.
9(b). Presence of international and other organizations in host city	Presence of some 50 international organizations and NGOs, including ICAO, Multilateral Fund of the Montreal Protocol, Biodiversity Secretariat, North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation; also research organisations and relevant private sector entities	Presence of international organizations, including Climate Change Secretariat; also research organisations and relevant private sector entities; see pages 5-6 of German offer	Presence of relevant international programmes, research organisations and private sector entities specialized in the in the combat against desertification. European Union Bureau of Patents 60 kms away in Alicante <sup>4&amp;5</sup> .

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<sup>4</sup> See page 5 of Spanish offer and "Murcia, in the Midst of a Struggle Against Desertification and Drought" distributed to delegations at ninth session of INCD.

<sup>5</sup> Additional programmes include:

- (a) European Union MEDALUS project and the experimental station of the Superior Scientific Research Centre of Almeria, which also works on protection of species in the Sahara;
- (b) thematic centre on soils of the European Union, headquartered in Valencia;
- (c) European Union EFEDA project on the atmospheric components of desertification; and
- (d) LUCDEME project, developed by the Centre for the Management of Nature Conservation and Environment of Murcia.

Criteria	Canada/Montreal	Germany/Bonn	Spain/Murcia
9(c). International transport/travel facilities in host city	Good international connections from Montreal airports (Dorval - 15 minutes from downtown Montreal - and Mirabel - 45 minutes from downtown Montreal), served by over 60 airlines	Good international connections; see page 5 of German offer	Good national and international airline connections through airport of San Javier y Altet at Alicante, 60 kms from Murcia
9(d). Local transportation facilities in host city	Excellent, low-cost local transportation network (bus/metro/train)	Excellent local transportation network	Excellent local transportation in a medium-sized city without large urban agglomeration
9(e). Availability of relevant trained personnel in host city	Large pool of multilingual workers; assistance to Secretariat in finding staff locally	Qualified staff available; assistance to secretariat in finding staff locally	Availability of qualified personnel in regions affected by desertification, where important technological and research centres in the fields of environment and desertification are located
9(f). Access of staff members to health facilities in host city	Free access by Secretariat staff to high-quality facilities	High-quality facilities available	High-quality facilities available
9(g). Availability of suitable housing in host city	High-quality, affordable, centrally-located housing readily available	Housing readily available at reasonable rents	Good housing facilities at low-cost <sup>6</sup> ; appropriate housing provided for Executive Secretary
9(h). Availability of schools at all levels in host city	Excellent schooling at all levels in English and French; staff members treated like Quebec residents; free elementary and secondary education and private schooling in other languages as well; low fees for universities	Excellent schooling at all levels; staff members pay no fees at German state schools and universities; several foreign and bilingual schools available	Apart from education in Spanish, there are French and English schools in Murcia and Alicante; University of Murcia has more than 30,000 students in its different faculties

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<sup>6</sup> Touristic zone with 250 km of coast, 89 hotels, 123 hostels, 2167 apartments. The number of travellers in these facilities in 1995 was 439,999 and visitors to this region is around 2,000,000 annually

Criteria	Canada/Montreal	Germany/Bonn	Spain/Murcia
9(i). Facilities for funds transfer by Secretariat and staff members	No restrictions	No restrictions	No restrictions

D. OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Criteria	Canada/Montreal	Germany/Bonn	Spain/Murcia
10(a). Additional contributions by host government (beyond those covered above)	Grants to Secretariat totalling \$CAN 5.53 million (USD 3.95 million) over five year period from Governments of Montreal, Quebec and Canada; loan for five years of services of two professionals for management/administrative support at value of \$CAN 1.05 million (USD 750,000); provision of \$CAN 70,000 (USD 50,000) in services by MICCC to help organize international meetings in Montreal	Annual contribution of DM 1 million (USD 660,000) for Convention events; annual voluntary contribution of DM 1 million (USD 660,000) to Secretariat beyond commitments as Party, both for unlimited time	Spain offers more than USD 1 million annually for projects on desertification conducted by the Secretariat
10(b). Support to INCD process by host government	Significant support for INCD process and desertification control more generally; see Appendices A and B of Canadian offer	Significant support for INCD process and desertification control more generally; see pages 3-4 of German offer	Significant support for INCD process and desertification control more generally, consistent with Spain's location in Mediterranean region and its tradition of dealing with desertification, including migration issues, as an affected country and as a donor; see pages 1-3 of Spanish offer and page 21 of document "Murcia, in the Midst of a Struggle Against Desertification and Drought"

Criteria	Canada/Montreal	Germany/Bonn	Spain/Murcia
11(a). Support for relocation of Secretariat (beyond 6(i) above) and for removal and installation of staff members	Facilitation of installation of Secretariat and of access to essential services by non-Canadian staff members	German Government pays for Secretariat relocation, moving staff to Bonn, installation grants, German language courses; support also given in the form of practical assistance by special "UN-hot-line"	Government of Spain and Autonomous Government of Murcia Region contribute to relocation expenses of Secretariat
11(b). Cost of operations and living	Very favourable compared to major cities in Europe/North America, including the other candidate cities based on UN Cost of Living index <sup>7</sup> , according to Canadian offer	Favourable compared to major cities in Europe	Favourable compared to major cities in Europe
11(c). Quality of life and living conditions	Very favourable <sup>8</sup>	Very favourable; see pages 5-6 of German offer	Very favourable <sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> UN Consolidated Post Adjustment Calculation Effective 1 March 1996: Montreal = 113. See page 12 of Canadian offer for details.

<sup>8</sup> UNDP Human Development Report 1996 ranks Canada first in world. (Human Development Index measures a country's achievements in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income.)

<sup>9</sup> Climatic conditions, important elements in quality of life, are following: Mean annual temperature: 17.9°C, maximum mean temperature: 24.1°C, minimum mean temperature: 11.6°C, days of sun in the year: 103 and hours of sun in the year: 2,991. Information provided on tourism under paragraph 9(g) above is also relevant.