



Annual General Meeting April 2000

Activities since foundation till present:

Chairman's Report:

The idea of founding the CA3C, first as a simple committee, then as a proper association with a registered name, arose when the Secretary of the national Committee for the Struggle against Desertification, set up by the Ministry for the Environment and working under ENEA, contacted me in order to establish a working agreement with FIDAF.

So it was that, in July 1998, the first group of members met at FIDAF and began to consider the fundamental importance not only of the Convention on Desertification, but also the other two on Biodiversity and Climate Change, which represent a point of reference to give greater efficacy to efforts undertaken to combat global environmental degradation - a unique phenomenon manifested by the three sectors covered by the Conventions.

First, ENEA asked FIDAF to:

- a) present a report on environmental conditions in Italy, the various factors of degradation, the danger and speed of evolution of the phenomenon, and the need for urgent and suitable interventions.
- b) present a statement on the importance of undertaking relations with LDCs (especially those in the Mediterranean basin and the Sahel) with stricter and more efficient bases than used so far, paying more attention to socio-environmental factors.
- c) make a critical collection of the laws promulgated up to the present by Italy in order to combat desertification.

Point (a) was followed up especially by Ugo Fraddosio, together with other CA3C members, who produced the *Rapporto ai tre Poteri dello Stato* (Report to the three Heads of State). 100 copies were printed; then during 1999 another 800 copies were printed free by DeAgostini, through the good offices of Fernando De Nigris, the CA3C member for financial and economic questions. This Report was sent to leading figures in the Italian Government and also to other politicians, religious leaders, civil servants and other personalities. Its widespread distribution has resulted in CA3C being given not only national and international visibility but explicit support through letters from institutions and the public in general.

Point (b) the statement on relations with LDCs was edited by Pietro Antinori to the satisfaction of ENEA. It was included in the Report referred to in (a) and has therefore benefited from the same distribution.

Point (c) collection of laws, was undertaken by Emanuele Davia assisted by Stefania Stemperini. This undertaking took much longer since it soon became evident that very little, or nothing at all, legal had been promulgated by Italy on the subject of "desertification". Therefore other similar phenomena (e.g. soil degradation, hydrogeological factors, deforestation, forest fires, land pollution etc.) had to be taken into account. It was then realized that, with the establishment of the Italian regions, much of the State's relative legislative powers had been handed over to them, therefore it was decided to select a few of these regions as samples. Neither could the EEC directives on the subject be ignored. Considering also that environmental phenomena are found in overlapping areas, the research was extended to include where possible information on laws in countries round the Mediterranean Basin. The collection, duly provided with annotations, comments and conclusions, constitutes a sufficiently clear picture of the legislative situation in Italy and in the Mediterranean Basin, and was praised by ENEA.

The rapid affirmation of CA3C and its capacities encouraged the founder members to proceed, at the end of 1998 (14 December) with the constitution of the association with the required notarial deed.

Among the measures most necessary for giving a clear and precise picture of the phenomena affecting degradation and its rapid spread, CA3C immediately singled out the lack of a network of scientific observatories round the Mediterranean Basin and the Sahel which would link up, evaluate and give homogeneous criteria to all institutes, analytical laboratories and individuals in the area. To this end, a first Round Table was organized in February 1999 at the headquarters of IsIAO in Rome (Italian Institute for Africa and the Middle East) in which Giorgio Lenzi collaborated. Ambassadors of the countries in Appendix IV of the Convention, the Under-Secretariat for Desertification from the Ministry of the Environment, representatives from FAO and *Sylva mediterranea*, as well as other personalities and experts, were invited. The interesting debate was recorded, and a copy of the complete proceedings was sent to all the embassies of northern and southern Mediterranean countries and all participants. Of particular significance was the statement of Giuseppe Enne, the CA3C member with responsibility for the technical and scientific coordination of this initiative, who explained clearly the existing and future possibilities for CA3C to obtain EEC funding to implement the proposed network.

A second Round Table, again at IsIAO headquarters, was organized in June 1999 specifically for the embassies of countries in the southern Mediterranean Basin and the Sahel. Among the participants were Hama Arba Diallo, the worldwide Secretary for the UN CCD Convention, Per Ryden, the Director of Project Mechanisms, IFAD, as well as scholars and experts. Again, the statements made underlined the need for a network of observatories, and the concrete possibility of setting up such a network - provided that every interested country expressed the political will to do so. The minutes of the meeting were then sent, in French and English, to all the embassies involved.

Both these Round Tables, although not so far reaching the desired conclusion (i.e. the setting up of the network) nevertheless gave rise to the popularisation of the subject at national and regional level and to a renewed international visibility for CA3C and also to the urgent need to implement the application of the formula "natura contro debito" for LCDs.

As a result, the Under-Secretary of State for the Environment, Hon. Calzolaio, brought to the attention of all countries in Appendix IV, at Under-Secretary of State level, at their meeting in Lisbon, and to the Recife meeting of the III Conference of the Parties of all signatories of the Convention, both these subjects (the network of observatories and the for which he openly acknowledged the contribution of CA3C.

Following this, links with the Ministry of the Environment were strengthened. The Chairman and the Secretary of CA3C were received by Minister Ronchi, on the initiative of the then President Scalfaro. On that occasion the Minister had asked CA3C to prepare a report on both subjects for the Conference on Agriculture and the Environment - the Conference however was then cancelled.

Throughout 1999, meetings organized by the Secretariat of the UN-CCD took place to draw up guidelines for the national plan to which CA3C had provided a decisive contribution, replacing a preliminary inadequate document with outlines for a praiseworthy final document, which was then presented to CIPE for discussion. Collaboration continued with participation in the three-day event, 16/17/18 February 2000, promoted by Hon. Calzolaio to define the themes connecting the three global Conventions (biodiversity, climate change, desertification) as well as the most suitable measures to adopt in linking the countries of the northern and southern Mediterranean and the Sahel. CA3C's contribution was a series of reports put together by all the board members, and collected, edited and given a common format by the Secretary, aided by his junior colleagues, and presented to Hon. Calzolaio.

This undertaking received the explicit thanks of the Under-Secretary, expressed to me personally when a CA3C delegation was called to a meeting at the Ministry of the Environment.

CA3C then participated in the official ceremony on 17 February in the Sala della Protomoteca in the Campidoglio; other participants included foreign delegations, ministers and authorities and many members of the public. On this occasion too, Hon. Calzolaio in his central presentation, stressed CA3C's views regarding the need for a viable structure of scientific research specifically oriented towards environmental themes on a regional level, as well as the urgency of tackling with new methods the problem of wiping out the Third World debt, bearing

in mind the socio-environmental problems afflicting all these countries.

Work continued with the conference/debate at FAO on 18 February, during which CA3C's reports were distributed to all the delegations present. The final report reflected many of CA3C's concerns.

During 1999 other important relations were established with the Consiglio dei Ministri (Council of Ministers of the Government) on certain specific themes and in general on furthering awareness of our concerns. The Chairman and Secretary of CA3C were received by Dr. Botta, in charge of international relations. Later, the Secretary, the Coordinator and Cristina Venturini were received by the Advisor to the Prime Minister, Prof. Padoan.

After several months of preparation undertaken by E. Davia via correspondence, technical notes, participation in meetings and personal contacts, a CA3C delegation, headed by the Chairman, was received last February by the Director of the Office for Cooperation and Development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with whom an agreement was reached on collaboration not only over the presentation of projects and programmes for the LDCs but also over participation in the evaluation and monitoring of initiatives ex ante - durante - ex post.

During the last months of 1999 CA3C had an opportunity to examine the proposed law 6413, already approved by the Senate, supported by the Government, and presently under examination by the Chamber of Deputies, for the reform of the Office for Cooperation and Development of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This law, proposed nearly four years ago, contains an outstanding lacuna in that there is barely any mention of the environmental factor as a prime and decisive element in the implementation of projects and programmes in the LCDs.

Therefore a note was prepared by the Secretary in collaboration with CA3C board members and sent first to the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission, Hon. Ochetto and then to the proposer Hon. Pezzoni, pointing out the lacuna in the proposed law, underlining the real needs of the LDCs and the key points which must be included so as to avoid failure in implementation. Amendments were suggested. Following this, last March a CA3C delegation was received by the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Chamber of Deputies at Montecitorio. On this occasion I had the opportunity of introducing the delegation and their interventions. The proposer assured us that our interventions would be taken into account in amending the proposed law.

On October 1999 a meeting was held with the Forestry Division of FAO. Participants included the then Director, Mr. Clement and his colleagues, the Director of ICEF, Judge Postiglione, the Director of FIDAF and a delegation from CA3C. The meeting was called and presided over by Ugo Fraddosio; its aim was to create a basis for collaboration among the three organizations involved. Results were promising.

During the second half of last year, and the beginning of this year, Grigory Lazarev held a professional training course concerning the LCDs, in which the junior members of CA3C G. Fasciani, A. Rossi, S. Stemperini and C. Venturini participated. G. Lazarev also organized a

seminar last March at ENEA for technicians, scholars and experts on the systematic approach needed to deal with LCD problems .

From the moment of the establishment of CA3C, G.Lazarev and I have been working towards the realization of a website for CA3C on the Internet so that we can enjoy a continuous popularisation of our concerns and facilitate the "diaspora" of other CA3C associations abroad and thus create an international network. Such a network is slowly taking shape.

Throughout the period under review there have been continuous efforts to popularise our concerns at all levels, both national and international, to create a growing body of consensus and to found sister action committees for the three global Conventions of the United Nations and to create a federation.

I would consider, from what I have described, that the range of activities undertaken by CA3C in such a short time and in spite of scarce financial resources (just the members's subscriptions) is considerable and in some cases quite exceptional. This result has been possible thanks to the enthusiasm and total participation of most of its members, and to the valid collaboration at all times of the junior members of CA3C, G.Fasciani, A.Rossi, S.Stemperini and C. Venturini, and also to the hospitality and good offices of FIDAF. I now ask for your approval of the activities undertaken.