



ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 16-27 SEPTEMBER 2013

The Eleventh Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 11) to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) opens today in Windhoek, Namibia, under the theme "A stronger UNCCD for a Land-Degradation Neutral World." The meeting takes place at the halfway point of the 10-Year Strategy of the UNCCD (2008-2018) (the Strategy) and will review progress made in the implementation of the Strategy.

Delegates will also consider the outcome of the second, and preparations for the third, UNCCD Scientific Conferences and reports of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). Other agenda items include, *inter alia*: follow-up to the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) outcome on desertification, land degradation, and drought (DLDD); improving mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention; programme and budget for the biennium 2014-2015; progress in the implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy; revised procedures for the accreditation of civil society organizations and private sector representatives in meetings and processes of the UNCCD; and maintenance of the roster of experts. Under institutional arrangements, delegates will discuss, among other issues, new housing arrangements for the Global Mechanism (GM) and collaboration with the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

COP 11 will also feature interactive dialogue sessions with high-ranking officials, as well as two open dialogue sessions with civil society.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNCCD

The UNCCD is the centerpiece in the international community's efforts to combat desertification and land degradation in the drylands. It was adopted on 17 June 1994, entered into force on 26 December 1996, and currently has 195 parties. The UNCCD recognizes the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of desertification, the importance of redirecting technology transfer to be demand-driven, and of the involvement of local communities in combating desertification and land degradation. The core of the UNCCD is the development of national, subregional and regional action programmes by national governments, in cooperation with UN agencies, donors, local communities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION: In 1992, the UN General Assembly (UNGA), as requested by the UN Conference on Environment and Development, adopted

resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of a convention to combat desertification (INCD) in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. The INCD met five times between May 1993 and June 1994 and drafted the UNCCD and four regional implementation annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean.

COPs 1-10: The first five COPs met annually from 1997-2001. During these meetings, delegates, *inter alia*: selected Bonn, Germany, as the location for the UNCCD's Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as the organization to administer the GM; approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding the GM; established an *ad hoc* working group to review and analyze the reports on national, subregional and regional action programmes; adopted a fifth regional annex for Central and Eastern Europe; established the CRIC; and supported a proposal by the GEF to designate land degradation as another focal area for funding.

COP 6 met in 2003 in Havana, Cuba. Delegates, *inter alia*, designated the GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD, decided that a comprehensive review of the Secretariat's activities would be undertaken by the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), and requested the Secretariat to facilitate a costed feasibility study on all aspects of regional coordination. COP 7 took place in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2005. Delegates reviewed the implementation of the Convention and developed an MoU between the UNCCD and the GEF. An intergovernmental intersessional working group was established to review the JIU report and to develop a draft 10 year strategic plan to enhance the implementation of the Convention.

COP 8 convened in Madrid, Spain, in 2007 and, *inter alia*, adopted a decision on the Strategy. Delegates also requested the JIU to conduct an assessment of the GM for presentation to COP 9. Delegates did not reach agreement on the programme and budget, and an Extraordinary Session of the COP convened at UN Headquarters in New York on 26 November 2007 to conclude this item.

COP 9 convened in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2009. Delegates focused on a number of items called for by the Strategy and adopted 36 decisions, which addressed topics including: four-year work plans and two-year work programmes of the CRIC, CST, GM and the Secretariat; the JIU assessment of the GM; the terms of reference of the CRIC; arrangements for regional coordination mechanisms; the communication strategy; and the programme and budget.



COP 10 convened in 2011, in Changwon City, Republic of Korea. Delegates adopted 40 decisions, addressing, *inter alia*, the governance structure for the GM, by which parties agreed that the accountability and legal representation of the GM shall be transferred from IFAD to the UNCCD Secretariat.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (CST):

The CST has convened parallel meetings to each COP. At CST 1's recommendation, the COP established an *ad hoc* panel to oversee the process of surveying benchmarks and indicators, and decided that CST 2 should consider linkages between traditional and modern knowledge. CST 3 recommended that the COP appoint *ad hoc* panels on traditional knowledge and on early warning systems. CST 4 submitted proposals to improve the CST's work, and CST 5 adopted modalities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, namely through the creation of a Group of Experts. CST 6 continued discussions on improving its efficiency and effectiveness, among other agenda items. CST 7 considered land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation, among other issues. And CST 8 decided to convene future sessions in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format, which led to the convening of the first UNCCD Scientific Conference at CST 9.

The first Special Session of the CST (CST S-1) (2008) considered preparations for CST 9, elements of the Strategy related to the CST, the CST's four-year work plan and two-year costed work programme, and advice to the CRIC on measuring progress on the Strategy's Strategic Objectives.

CST 9 met concurrently with COP 9, during which the 1st Scientific Conference convened to consider the theme "Biophysical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water management." CST 9 also developed decisions to review the experience of the 1st Scientific Conference and to organize a 2nd Scientific Conference on the theme "Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas." In addition, the CST recommended two indicators—the proportion of the population in affected areas living above the poverty line and land cover status—as the minimum required subset of impact indicators for reporting by affected countries beginning in 2012.

CST S-2 (2011) considered the status of work on methodologies and baselines for the effective use of the subset of impact indicators, among other matters. CST 10 established two *ad hoc* working groups: one to continue the iterative participatory process on impact-indicator refinement and monitoring and assessment of impacts; and one to further discuss options for the provision of scientific advice to the UNCCD. CST S-3 (9-12 April 2013, Bonn, Germany) met concurrently with the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, which discussed research and best practices in the face of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) and proposed methodologies for evaluating the costs and benefits of sustainable land management.

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION (CRIC): The CRIC held its first session in Rome, Italy, in 2002, during which delegates considered presentations from the five UNCCD regions, and considered information on financial mechanisms in support of the UNCCD's implementation and advice provided by the CST and the GM.

CRIC 2 (2003) reviewed implementation of the UNCCD, its institutional arrangements, and financing of UNCCD implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions. CRIC 3 (2005) reviewed the implementation of the Convention in Africa and considered issues relating to Convention implementation at the global level. CRIC 4 (2005) considered strengthening

Convention implementation in Africa, improving communication and reporting procedures, mobilization of resources for implementation, and collaboration with the GEF.

CRIC 5 (2007) reviewed implementation of the Convention in regions other than Africa, how to improve information communication and national reporting, and the 2006 International Year for Deserts and Desertification. CRIC 6 (2007) reviewed the roles developed and developing country parties should play in resource mobilization, and collaboration with the GEF. CRIC 7 (2008) considered: the work plans and programmes for the Convention's bodies; the format of future meetings of the CRIC; and indicators and monitoring of the Strategy, and principles for improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and format of reports submitted to the COP.

CRIC 8 (2009) reviewed the workplans of the institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention and reporting guidelines and indicators. Delegates also recommended adoption of the proposal for an online Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS). CRIC 9 (2011) considered, among other items, preliminary analyses of information contained in the PRAIS reports.

CRIC 10 (2011) discussed the strategic orientation of the Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies, adopted four operational objectives to assess the implementation of the Convention against performance indicators, and approved an iterative process on reporting procedures and the refinement of methodologies for the review and compilation of best practices. CRIC 11 (2013) reviewed progress in alignment of national action programmes with the Strategy. Delegates also considered input from the Intersessional Working Group for the Mid-term Evaluation of the Strategy (IWG) and *ad hoc* Advisory Group of Technical Experts on "operationally delineating affected areas."

INTERSESSIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF EXPERTS ON A LAND-DEGRADATION NEUTRAL WORLD:

Hosted by the government of the Republic of Korea and facilitated by the UNCCD Secretariat, this meeting took place on 26-27 June 2013 in Seoul, Republic of Korea. Participants proposed the establishment of an intersessional expert group to provide parties with further advice and recommendations for formulating and operationalizing a "Zero Net Land Degradation" target under the UNCCD.

INTERSESSIONAL WORKING GROUP FOR THE MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY (IWG): Established at COP 10 in 2011, the IWG met four times between March 2012 and June 2013. Among other tasks, the IWG reviewed the methodology of the evaluation and coordinated a consultative process for acquiring feedback from parties and other stakeholders. At its final meeting, the IWG prepared a final report of documentary inputs, conclusions and recommendations, taking into account the outcomes of CST S-3 and CRIC 11, as well as the initial feedback received from the regional and interest groups, for submission to COP 11.

THIRD SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY OPEN WORKING GROUP ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs):

This meeting took place from 22-24 May 2013, at UN Headquarters in New York. Among other topics, the meeting addressed two thematic clusters: food security and nutrition, sustainable agriculture and DLDD; and water and sanitation. The discussions underlined the need for SDGs that are human-centered and transformative, and that build on and go beyond the millennium development goals (MDGs). The meeting recognized the inter-linkages between food, land and water and noted the need for land restoration and a land-degradation neutral world.

UNCCD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2013

The eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 11) opened on Monday afternoon, 16 September 2013, in Windhoek, Namibia.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

Opening the session, Don Koo Lee, former Minister of Korea Forest Service and COP 10 President, highlighted the Rio+20 outcome on a land degradation neutral world (LDNW) as a significant achievement. Noting this illustrates the international community's recognition that urgent action is needed, he expressed optimism that COP 11 would make progress on a target-setting approach within an institutional setting.

Delegates then elected Uahekua Herunga, Minister of Environment and Tourism of Namibia, as President of COP 11.

President Herunga observed that COP 11 will benefit from being hosted in a country committed to addressing desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD), underscoring that a target-setting and science-based approach is essential to finding lasting solutions.

UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja welcomed participants and noted that Namibia's current drought exemplifies the challenges the UNCCD must address moving forward. Reflecting on his tenure, Gnacadja noted the UNCCD's progress on mobilizing science for policy development on DLDD; advancing of measurability and monitoring; enhancing of advocacy and outreach; improving the dialogue between science and policy; and improving the UNCCD's institutional setup. He reiterated that achieving a land degradation-neutral world is key to achieving progress on a host of other issues, including the water-energy-food nexus and eradication of extreme poverty. He expressed hope for guidance to enhance the scientific base of the Convention, a target-setting approach, and monitoring action programmes at all levels.

Ireland, on behalf of the EUROPEAN UNION, noted that one third of Namibia's population is currently food-insecure, in part because of the current prolonged drought, and described EU development assistance to help address this problem. He explained the EU expected progress in three key areas: achieving a land degradation-neutral world; strengthening the science on DLDD issues by reforming and strengthening the CST; and strengthening the Convention in a cost-effective manner to achieve maximum impact. He further indicated that monitoring and reporting frameworks should be simplified to facilitate their use.

Burkina Faso, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, said the UNCCD is at a critical juncture, citing as reasons: a shrinking financial base; the completion of the current Executive Secretary's term; Canada's withdrawal from the Convention; poor progress towards the target of having 80% of national action programmes (NAPs) completed by 2014; and the low level of support from developed countries for NAP preparation.

India, for the ASIA-PACIFIC GROUP, emphasized, *inter alia*, the need to strengthen the regional coordination mechanism for an effective implementation of the Convention, as well as financial and capacity building support to country parties for the alignment of their NAPs by December 2014. He expressed concern about the low allocation of funds to the land degradation focal area under the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) vis-à-vis the other two Rio Conventions, as well as the limited funding for the Asia Pacific region. While acknowledging progress made in raising the profile of DLDD issues in various fora, he underlined the need to seize the momentum and take the necessary steps towards land degradation neutrality, and expressed his support for the Changwon Initiative in this regard.

Antigua and Barbuda, for the Latin America and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), expressed concerns about the appointment of the new UNCCD Executive Secretary and requested an explanation from the UN Secretary General on the reasons for reconsidering the appointment of Paula Caballero. He said GRULAC opposed the alleged arguments of geographical

imbalance in the leadership of the three Rio Conventions and a supposed lack of transparency during the selection process. He stressed that there are neither rules nor precedents in the UN system forbidding one region from holding the position of Executive Secretary in multiple conventions simultaneously. He also lamented: insufficient attention to his region's needs and priorities in the UNCCD context; the timeliness and availability of translations of UNCCD documents; and the need for more streamlined and concise texts for national level discussions. He urged the UNCCD to focus on making the case for the economic feasibility of the use and value of drylands, in order to attract new and additional resources.

Emphasizing the role of global monitoring in reaching the goals of Rio+20, Armenia on behalf of the CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES, voiced concern about recommendations on some indicators that do not allow for differentiation of land degradation characteristics among countries, and said this should be addressed by strengthening scientific research across regions.

The Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa on behalf of civil society organizations (CSOs), lamenting the escalation of land degradation, called for greater financial support of CSOs to enhance their role in raising awareness and capacity building, and to halt the decrease in the number of participating CSOs. Citing drivers of land degradation, including land grabbing, agribusiness and mining, she called on a significant increase of GEF funding to facilitate greater CSO involvement in the UNCCD.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ELECTION OF OFFICERS OTHER THAN THE PRESIDENT

COP 11 President Herunga invited delegates to consider the document on adoption of the provisional agenda and organization of work (ICCD/COP(11)/1). COP 11 adopted the provisional agenda with minor amendments. He then invited delegates to elect the vice presidents of the COP 11 Bureau. The COP elected: Mamadou Honadia (Burkina Faso) and Uahekua Herunga (Namibia) for the Group of African States; Choi Young Tae (Republic of Korea) and Heimata Louisa Karika (Cook Islands) for the Group of Asian States; Ashot Vardevanyan (Armenia) and Dalia Gudaitiene Holiman (Lithuania) for the Group of Central and Eastern European States; Thiago Cavalcanti (Brazil) and Mariano Espinoza (Costa Rica) for GRULAC; and Thomas Tichelmann (Ireland) and Christine Dawson (USA) for the Group of Western European and Other States. Christine Dawson (USA) was also elected as Vice President of COP 11.

The COP then established a Committee of the Whole (COW) and elected Chenchu Norbu (Bhutan) as chair. The COP allocated several COP agenda items to the COW, including: review of the Strategy; programme and budget; governance

and institutional arrangements; follow-up on the outcomes of Rio+20; and the UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010-2020).

Delegates also adopted the document on accreditation of intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and admissions of observers (CCD/COP(11)/20rev.1) without comments.

IN THE CORRIDORS

COP 11 opened on a note of cautious optimism with several delegates observing that difficult decisions with regard to institutional arrangements had been settled at COP 10, offering delegates a chance to focus on important substantive issues. That was in the morning however, before opening statements by some member states who were concerned over the selection process of the new UNCCD Executive Secretary. As presaged in GRULAC's remarks, regional divisions over the selection of the Executive Secretary, among other issues, resulted in the inability of the G-77 to agree on a common opening statement.

Highlighting the mid-term evaluation's observations that progress on aligning NAPs to the Strategy has been slow, some called for further refinement of progress and impact indicators, while others cautioned against overlooking efforts already made by some countries to adapt the existing monitoring framework to better fit their unique local contexts. In particular, it was noted that serious efforts are needed to bridge the UNCCD's persistent financial deficit, which was compounded by Canada's withdrawal from the multi-year workplan for 2014-17, without creating additional strains on countries' budgets.

On the status of discussions on the science-policy interface within the CRIC and CST, one participant expressed hope that a new proposal by the Ad Hoc Working Group to further discuss the options for the provision of Scientific Advice (AGSA) would enable the COP to reach agreement on a science-policy interface geared to the knowledge needs of the UNCCD.

However, the day ended where it began, with delegates discussing the formal announcement from UN Headquarters in New York that Monique Barbut (France), former Chief Executive Officer of the Global Environment Facility, had been named the new UNCCD Executive Secretary.



UNCCD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS TUESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

Delegates in Windhoek, Namibia, began consideration of the UNCCD COP 11 agenda on Tuesday morning, convening in three sessions during the day. The COW and CST began their deliberations in the morning, while the CRIC met in the afternoon.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

Chair Chenchu Norbu opened the COW and parties adopted the COW agenda (ICCD/COP(11)/1). Parties also established contact groups on programme and budget facilitated by Sem Shikongo (Namibia) and other COW-related matters facilitated by Makku Aho (Finland).

Antigua and Barbuda, speaking for the LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC) tabled the region's objection to the UN Secretary-General's appointment of Monique Barbut (France) as the new UNCCD Executive Secretary and reiterated its request for an explanation for reversing the nomination of Paula Caballero (Colombia). Chair Norbu explained this issue would be taken up by the COP Bureau in the evening. PANAMA, COLOMBIA, MEXICO, PERU, COSTA RICA, ARGENTINA, HONDURAS, BRAZIL, GUATEMALA and ECUADOR stressed they could not adopt the agenda until further information on the selection process had been provided. COLOMBIA cautioned that the UNCCD risks setting a precedent for the UN system as a whole.

SWAZILAND, supported by ALGERIA and MOROCCO urged GRULAC not to "hold the COW to ransom."

INDEPENDENT MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY:

Introducing the report by the Intersessional Working Group (IWG), (ICCD/COP(11)/21), Barbara Da Rosa-Joyn (US) highlighted the IWG's recommendations that, *inter alia*: the Convention's strategic objectives should be maintained but impact indicators should be revised; operational objectives should be updated to represent the results expected by 2018; and the Secretariat should continue to actively participate in the consultations related to the post-2015 development agenda. On the CST, she highlighted the report's call for improved use of scientific knowledge in UNCCD decision-making. On the CRIC, she stressed the need for improved data and information flows.

Several parties supported the recommendations. VIETNAM expressed hope they would lead to new indicators for monitoring DLD. JORDAN said progress in the implementation of the Convention requires more financial resources. CUBA stressed each of the report's recommendations should be reflected in COP 11 decisions. She drew attention to recommendation 17, that COP 13 reach agreement on a revised strategy.

The EU emphasized his understanding that the purpose of the evaluation was not to modify but enhance the Strategy. The REPUBLIC OF KOREA said the evaluation implies possible discussions on the next phase of the Strategy.

MOROCCO said parties need time to internalize and implement recommendations. SWITZERLAND favored a pragmatic approach including: considering best practices; accounting for countries' respective economic situations; and increasing the Convention's visibility.

INDONESIA underlined a lack of financing, technological support and capacity building, while CHINA advocated intergovernmental cooperation and involvement of the private sector.

Algeria, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, called for clear definition of reporting responsibilities. INDIA said impact indicators need to be context specific. Seychelles, on behalf of SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES (SIDS), called for the COP to consider SIDS in particular when addressing the recommendations.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE GLOBAL MECHANISM

Lindle Lyndow, UNCCD Secretariat, introduced the Secretariat report (ICCD/COP(11)/3).

In the ensuing interventions, many parties urged for a decision on the new housing arrangements of the GM to be reached at COP 11.

Proposing to continue housing the GM in Rome, ITALY stressed the GM's mandate to mobilize funding, he said resource mobilization would be more efficient if the GM is located in the UN agricultural hub, and offered an additional €100,000 housing contribution.

Stressing that a fully operational GM is its primary interest, GERMANY highlighted arguments for a relocation of the GM to Bonn, including: cost-effectiveness; increased synergies between the GM and the Secretariat; and fostered cooperation between the UNCCD and the UNFCCC.

Many parties agreed with the recommendation to locate the GM with the Secretariat in Bonn, including: Uganda on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, COLOMBIA, GUATEMALA, SWITZERLAND, COOK ISLANDS and CUBA. While welcoming the report, ALGERIA, supported by HONDURAS, said some aspects need to be reviewed in light of commitments expressed by Italy. Emphasizing the GM should be housed in the most effective location to facilitate its work, PANAMA supported either IFAD or the World Bank.

SWITZERLAND opposed the way the evaluation had been carried out, saying it reflected the UNCCD Secretariat's preferences.

PROGRAMME AND BUDGET

Chair Norbu invited parties to consider the programme and budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (ICCD/COP(11)/6 and Corr.1, ICCD/COP(11)/7 and Corr.1, ICCD/CRIC(12)/2-ICCD/COP(11)/CST/9) and the financial performance for the Convention trust funds (ICCD/COP(11)/8, ICCD/COP(11)/9),



ICCD/COP(11)/10, ICCD/COP(11)/11, ICCD/COP(11)/12, ICCD/COP(11)/13), which members of the Secretariat introduced.

On financial performance of the Convention trust funds (ICCD/COP(11)/6 and Corr.1, ICCD/COP(11)/7 and Corr.1) the Secretariat reported a lag in contributions, calling on parties to honor their commitments. Regarding the report on unaudited financial statements for the Convention trust funds for the GM, he said due to disputed expenses and unforeseen costs during appeals from employees, the Secretariat could not reach an agreement.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

After introductory remarks by CST Chair Antônio Rocha Magalhães (Brazil), delegates adopted the provisional agenda and organization of work (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/1) with the understanding that it may be adjusted.

Chair Magalhães proposed the establishment of a contact group facilitated by Nicholas Hanley (Ireland) and suggested joint meetings between the CRIC, CST and the *Ad Hoc* Group of Technical Experts (AGTE) on best practices and knowledge sharing. The Committee then adopted the final report of the CST (ICCD/CST(S-3)/7).

THE ROSTER OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS

The Secretariat introduced the roster of independent experts contained in ICCD/COP(11)/15, and invited comments on the proposal to revise and update details of existing national experts, and to propose new candidates to ensure representation of all relevant disciplines, including local and traditional knowledge, women and geographical regions.

JAPAN and ARGENTINA voiced concerns regarding the rosters' length and its accessibility for remote users. CUBA, NIGER, PAKISTAN, and SWITZERLAND supported initializing a study by the Secretariat to analyze the roster's usefulness. The US expressed doubts on the roster's benefits.

Chair Magalhães referred the matter to a contact group for further discussion.

ORGANIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL, INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC ADVICE

The Secretariat introduced the relevant documents (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/3, ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.1 and ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.2) and invited Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group to further discuss the options for the provision of Scientific Advice (AGSA) to present its recommendations. Akhtar-Schuster highlighted recommendations for a modular approach to building an integrated science-policy interface (SPI). She explained the proposed approach could include a science-policy platform, regional science and technology hubs, and an Independent Group of Scientists (IGS).

On modalities for the proposed SPI approach, Akhtar-Schuster stated it could be co-governed by the CST and IGS, with administrative support of the UNCCD Secretariat, under overall COP oversight.

While welcoming the AGSA's proposals for strengthening scientific advice for the COP, the EU stressed the need to enhance synergies among existing science-policy platforms including the CST, the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

MOROCCO, SWITZERLAND, IRAN, CAMEROON, ARGENTINA, CUBA and others said adopting AGSA's recommendations could undermine and duplicate work of existing UNCCD advisory bodies, including the roster of independent experts and regional coordinating units. SWITZERLAND expressed concern that the proposed SPI's strong administrative links to the UNCCD would make it difficult to offer independent advice. She suggested merging the SPI and IGS to form a permanent working group under the CST.

ARGENTINA noted that an IGS drawn on the UNCCD Scientific Conferences would not be a representative forum for policy-making. While supporting the proposed regional approach, BRAZIL noted it would be expensive, complex, and result in additional bureaucracy. JAPAN regretted the AGSA report did not address financial implications.

ITALY described the AGSA report as an important step forward in defining the functions of the SPI and proposed further work to refine proposals. ISRAEL called for emphasis on the "P" in the SPI, through enhanced links to IPBES.

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE UNCCD FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

The Secretariat presented the report on the progress of the fellowship programme (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/8). The Democratic Republic of the Congo, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, said the topic was not "ripe enough" for a decision. Chair Magalhães indicated the CST could return to the item later.

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Calling on delegates to focus on developing decisions providing clear direction to the Secretariat, the GM and others, CRIC Chair Rowen (US) opened CRIC 12. Parties adopted the CRIC agenda (ICCD/CRIC(12)/1), established a contact group facilitated by Luis Estuardo Rios González (Guatemala) and planned two joint CST/CRIC contact group meetings for Wednesday and Thursday.

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AND THE STRATEGY

The Secretariat introduced documents on the multi-year work plans, the performance of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies, and the CRIC 11 report (ICCD/CRIC(12)/2, ICCD/CRIC(12)/3, ICCD/CRIC(11)/19 and ICCD/CRIC(11)/19/Add.1).

Côte d'Ivoire, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, JORDAN and SENEGAL, called for increased resource mobilization to enable the implementation of the Convention. KIRIBATI highlighted the complexity of the GEF funding process.

On resource mobilization strategies, CHINA called on the CST to increase cooperation with FAO, while MEXICO encouraged the Secretariat and GM to participate in regional ministerial meetings on environment, food and agriculture.

JAPAN underlined that agreeing to the activities presented does not mean endorsement of a budget increase.

CHINA expressed concern about the limited reporting by parties and called for improved impact indicators and assessments at global and national levels.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Although attention was divided between proceedings in the COW and CST, delegates' conversations mainly focused on the CST's discussion of the establishment of a scientific body to inform on scientific and technical matters of the Convention. Some delegates felt taking this step would once again suggest superiority of UNFCCC by "copy-catting" the IPCC's establishment. Other delegates suggested a body other than IPBES would be a "waste of money," while one delegate was overheard saying that "scientists are too often scared of policy-makers." One seasoned delegate felt that participants did not understand the distinction between politics and science, and another commented that it is ironic that talks on bringing in scientific advice to the process focused so much on cost, stating that the "process to bring these suggestions to the table cost much more than the estimated costs of operationalizing them!"

Looking forward to the fresh approach of joint CST-CRIC contact group meetings scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday, one delegate recited CRIC chair Rowen's motivating words that "our job here is to ensure that we support increased effectiveness and our decisions should support implementing our strategy and beyond."

UNCCD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS: WEDNESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

On Wednesday, COP 11 convened in two parallel sessions. The CRIC completed a first reading of reports on communication and reporting, and collaboration with other conventions and international organizations, including the GEF. The CST discussed proposals for improving knowledge management through the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal.

In the afternoon and evening, CRIC, COW and CRIC-CST contact groups met.

CRIC

IMPROVING THE PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AS WELL AS THE QUALITY AND FORMAT OF REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COP: Chair Rowen invited parties to consider the sub-item on "Consideration of the overall report on the fourth reporting and review process" (ICCD/CRIC(12)/7). Introducing the report, Anja Thust, UNCCD Secretariat, highlighted that improvements in methodology, user-friendliness and reporting guidelines are necessary for maintaining internal consistency in the reporting process, noting it is essential to assess progress against comparable datasets.

Many parties, including ALGERIA, JORDAN, BRAZIL, ARGENTINA and COLUMBIA, noted the difficulty of measuring progress given the low number of submissions. SOUTH AFRICA, PANAMA, COSTA RICA, TANZANIA, MOROCCO and THAILAND attributed poor reporting to, among other reasons, the complexity of the PRAIS system and difficulties in collecting data. Many emphasized the need for more human, technological and financial capacity to allow countries to provide information in a timely manner.

GUINEA-BISSAU and BENIN stressed the need for involvement of regional bodies to assist with disaggregated statistics. GUATEMALA underlined the need to adjust PRAIS to enable policy-relevant analyses.

Massimo Candelori, UNCCD Secretariat, introduced reports on: "Promoting the analysis and dissemination of best practices" and "Accessibility of best practices," (ICCD/CRIC(12)/4-ICCD/COP(11)/CST/7 and ICCD/CRIC(12)/5).

CHINA shared his country's experience through the Kubuqi International Desert Forum, saying it provides a high-level dialogue platform for an integrated approach to dealing with DLDD, sand industry development, and development of new energy sources. MONGOLIA stressed its importance as an innovative way of implementing the Convention.

BHUTAN proposed regional experience-sharing workshops on PRAIS reporting. ARGENTINA warned about property rights risks in storing information on best practices and SLM on the PRAIS portal. EGYPT urged parties to translate recommendations into action on the ground. SENEGAL urged

regions to enhance dissemination of best practices. CAMBODIA emphasized capacity building and financial support for national reporting.

SWITZERLAND called for the Secretariat to assign responsibility for managing the SLM best practice database to the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT).

PROMOTION AND STRENGTHENING OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER RELEVANT CONVENTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES:

Sergio Zelaya, UNCCD Secretariat, provided an overview of the relevant documents under this agenda item (ICCD/CRIC(11)/19 and Add.1, ICCD/CRIC(12)/INF.1 and ICCD/CRIC(12)/CRP.1).

Parties welcomed efforts to promote synergies among the three Rio Conventions and emphasized focusing on: increasing efficiency and resource mobilization; ensuring national implementation efforts for each convention are complementary; and harmonizing reporting formats. JORDAN proposed assigning a liaison officer to coordinate relationships among all the Conventions' organs.

ARGENTINA cautioned against the Secretariat's "non-conventional" approach in elaborating its multidisciplinary documents, referred to as advocacy papers. On advocacy, awareness raising and promotion of the Convention, ZIMBABWE proposed the establishment of an "open and non-political" global platform allowing stakeholders to have a say on DLDD issues and the implementation of the Convention.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) emphasized targets for land degradation neutrality should include safeguards against potential environmental risks. UNDP drew attention to policy recommendations in the Global Drylands Report and called for support for a proposed action plan on drylands.

COLLABORATION WITH THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY: In the morning, delegates considered two sub-items: the GEF report on strategies, programmes and projects for financing the agreed incremental costs of activities concerning desertification; and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the UNCCD and the GEF (ICCD/CRIC(12)/6). The Secretariat reported a draft proposal of amendments to the MoU will be submitted to the GEF Council and the Secretariat for consideration at COP 12. Several parties called for expanding resource allocations to UNCCD focal points and improving direct accessibility to funds at all levels. COSTA RICA said an alliance with the GEF allowed his country to transfer funds directly to farmers. GUATEMALA asked for a reassessment of co-financing required under the GEF and increased technical support and, with TUNISIA, called for streamlining the bureaucratic process.



CST

IMPROVEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE, BEST PRACTICES AND SUCCESS STORIES: Opening consideration of the sub-item on the “Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal”, Chair Magalhães invited comments on document ICCD/COP(11)/CST/6 and its progress report (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.4). Elysabeth David, UNCCD Secretariat, reported its aim to develop a “portal of portals” by aggregating knowledge from existing repositories. She reported the current pilot phase aims to: target knowledge users; avoid reinventing the wheel; maximize strengths of partners and networks among repositories; and minimize initial investments through building on existing knowledge sources.

During the ensuing discussion, many parties, including MOROCCO, ARGENTINA, the DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO, ECUADOR, COSTA RICA and YEMEN raised concerns regarding: internet access at the local level; providing content in all UN languages; and capturing traditional knowledge and local practices. TUNISIA said the objective of the undertaking cannot be achieved without commitment at the national level, and NAMIBIA suggested extending the scope to include mobile applications, which would increase local accessibility. TURKEY suggested countries carry the responsibility of local language translations, and HONDURAS urged greater synergies among existing portals of the UN Conventions. MEXICO, with ITALY and CHINA, called for greater knowledge sharing and synergies at the regional level.

Chair Magalhães introduced the sub-item on “Promoting the analysis and dissemination of best practices,” based on decisions 21/COP.10 and 15/COP.10, and relevant documents (ICCD/CRIC(12)/4 - ICCD/COP(11)/CST/7 and Corr.1 and ICCD/COP(11)/CST/6), and invited CRIC Vice-Chair Hussein Nasrallah (Lebanon) to facilitate the discussion.

MOROCCO welcomed collaboration between CRIC and CST, which he said represents the beginning of an internal SPI. BRAZIL requested elaboration on the CST’s work to recommend relevant topics on which advice would be particularly relevant.

JAPAN called for the UNCCD to build partnerships with relevant decentralized organizations to facilitate knowledge transfer to the lowest level.

ARGENTINA supported calls for increased collaboration with WOCAT but voiced concerns that intellectual property rights regarding best practices of indigenous peoples presented online must be ensured. The US recalled that ownership and control of intellectual property remains in the hands of the countries hosting the information, not with any UNCCD database.

ADVICE ON HOW BEST TO MEASURE PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 1, 2 AND 3 OF THE STRATEGY: After an introduction by the Secretariat, Gunilla Bjorklund (Sweden), Chair of the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Group of Technical Experts (AGTE) and AGTE member Juan Puigdefabregas (Spain) presented the AGTE’s final recommendations (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/2). They highlighted: operational delineation of affected areas; global, national and local indicators; a conceptual indicator-integration framework; monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; linking across scales; and technical and resource requirements for current and future work.

In the ensuing discussion, the EU suggested using global indicators in the absence of national data. The US called for further clarification of indicators before adoption, saying “details do matter.” JAPAN urged refining definitions and methodologies to exclude arbitrariness, and ensuring the reliability of storyline sources.

ALGERIA suggested looking at other existing indicators such as those used by the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS). INDIA complimented the AGTE’s work on creating a “nuanced, differentiated approach to global, national and local indicators,” and opined that low levels of reporting are due to a lack of appropriate datasets and of understanding of affected areas.

SUDAN, MOROCCO, CUBA and EGYPT indicated that definitions of affected areas should be broad, and all components of recommendation 1 on operational delineation of affected areas be mandatory. ARGENTINA warned that these suggestions would include categories outside the mandate of the UNCCD.

The PHILIPPINES proposed defining and considering seasonal aridity, which his country suffers from.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) described its efforts to combat drought. FAO indicated the importance of the AGTE’s discussion of multilevel indicators and requested more work be undertaken on this topic.

RESHAPING THE OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN LINE WITH

THE STRATEGY: Chair Magalhães then introduced Richard Escadafal, speaking on behalf of the Scientific and Traditional Knowledge for Sustainable Development consortium, who presented on preparations for the UNCCD’s 3rd Scientific Conference on “Combating DLDD for poverty reduction and sustainable development: the contribution of science, technology, traditional knowledge and practices” (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/5).

Escadafal indicated that most of the consortium’s work to date has been undertaken without UNCCD funding and due to this lack of funding, the consortium currently cannot continue work on preparing the conference, which will now likely be delayed until April 2015.

In response to an inquiry from YEMEN, the Secretariat explained the scientific conferences and the consortium are funded by extra budgetary funds, and that there is currently no sustainable source of funding for them.

CONTACT GROUPS

The COW contact group on housing arrangements for the GM convened in the afternoon. After ITALY presented a list of questions on the Secretariat’s report, Facilitator Aho informed parties that the Secretariat’s response would be discussed in the contact group session on Thursday. In the COW contact group on budget matters, delegates began consideration of draft text on means of financing.

In the afternoon, the CRIC contact group drafted preambular language on strengthening and enhancing alignment and implementation of action programmes with the Strategy. Parties reiterated the difficulty of accessing financing for NAPs, with some stressing the need to simplify the process. Among issues raised were: whether specific funding agencies should be named; whether to specify predictable financing; and how to address shared responsibility or interest in the alignment process.

The CST contact group met during the evening where discussions continued on ways of enabling UNCCD to become the leading authority on DLDD scientific research. Facilitator Hanley expressed hope that participants will come to an agreement on the basics of creating a platform to distil current research and knowledge, a topic that formed the main focus of discussion.

The joint CRIC-CST contact group also met in the evening to discuss methods to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the Strategy.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While many participants spoke of a promising start to CST discussions on improving international collaboration to strengthen links between science, policy and practice, the mood in the CRIC tent was reported to be more contentious. One observer there noted that the initial focus on opportunities for mobilizing additional resources through enhanced synergies among the Rio Conventions had shifted to a focus on the imbalances among them, and many pondered India’s observation that his country received 63% of total GEF funds for climate change and less than 1% for DLDD-related activities.

Meanwhile in the COW contact groups, some commented on the appearance of a bidding race to host the GM.

UNCCD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS: THURSDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2013

On Thursday, COP 11 convened in two parallel sessions. The COW discussed GM housing arrangements, programme and budget, the Rio+20 outcome on LDNW, the Strategy, the UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (UNDD), CSO participation and rules of procedure. The CST reviewed reports on the organization and outcomes of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, and began consideration of the draft multi-year work plan.

Throughout the day and in the evening contact group sessions took place on: budget and GM matters, a science-policy interface and best practices.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The COW resumed discussions on new housing arrangements for the GM. Many parties, including JAPAN, the US, the PHILIPPINES, and the AFRICAN GROUP, restated their support for the Secretariat report and called for a final decision on this issue in Windhoek.

Reiterating the “controversial and sometimes incorrect figures” in the report, ITALY asserted his country’s financial contribution results in annual savings for the GM. EGYPT requested an explanation on the “true reasons” behind the proposed relocation to Bonn, while TAJIKISTAN sought clarification on paragraph 46 of the report on the GM’s costs. The DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO expressed concern about proposals being “kept under the table.” MOROCCO and TUNISIA questioned whether the GM staff was consulted regarding relocation to Bonn.

PANAMA, with PERU, stressed the importance of considering the operational aspects of the GM’s resource mobilization mandate in deciding its location. BELGIUM drew attention to issues not fully addressed in the Secretariat’s report, including: legal modalities; the position of GM staff; and impacts on the functioning and independence of the GM vis-à-vis the Secretariat.

PROGRAMME AND BUDGET: Noting additional funding does not guarantee effective implementation, BRAZIL opposed a budget increase, calling for improvements in cost efficiency and use of teleconference facilities. He also questioned the added value of new bureaucratic structures proposed by AGSA, describing the additional cost as “irresponsible.”

The US, with TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, called for a 3% decrease in the budget and urged fiscal discipline, saying her country is unable to increase financial support. Swaziland, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, opposed any budget reduction and urged parties to pay their arrears.

CUBA, ARGENTINA, MEXICO, ALGERIA, CUBA, PERU and COLOMBIA urged strengthening regional coordination mechanisms, and reflecting regional annexes’ needs in workplan

and budget allocations. THAILAND urged synergies with other Rio Conventions, while INDIA regretted the budgetary increase of less than 4.9% over the last biennium.

Recalling the budget shortfall since COP 10, Luc Gnacadja, UNCCD Executive Secretary, reported that regional meetings had only been made possible with voluntary funding.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOMES OF THE UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (RIO+20): Melchiae Bukuru, UNCCD Secretariat, introduced this item (ICCD/COP(11)/5 and Corr.1), explaining its contribution to the work of the UN Task Team assisting the Co-Chairs of the General Assembly Open Working Group (OWG).

Algeria, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, with the EU, advocated establishing an intersessional expert group. The EU and INDIA suggested the group consider options for integrating the Rio+20 outcome in a new UNCCD strategy at COP 13.

CHINA suggested target setting must be based on consensus, scientific evaluation and effective institutional guarantees. NAMIBIA, supported by ALGERIA and ARMENIA, said paragraph 17 of the Rio+20 outcome provides a clear mandate for the UNCCD to take action. He said he would table a draft decision for a specific protocol or annex to come out of COP 11.

Emphasizing lack of clarity and scientific agreement on LDNW and ZNLD, the US proposed deletion of references to these concepts. CUBA, ARGENTINA, PERU, MEXICO and BRAZIL cautioned against prejudging the outcome of the post-2015 development agenda process, with BRAZIL also opposing expanding UNCCD’s mandate on land issues beyond drylands.

THE 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION (2008-2018) (THE STRATEGY):

The Secretariat introduced the report under the sub-item on “Review of progress in the implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy” (ICCD/COP(11)/2). Zimbabwe, for the AFRICAN GROUP, suggested adopting an outreach programme on DLDD and developing a communication strategy to catalyze investment. A CSO representative urged support for participatory rural communication and education activities in local languages.

The Secretariat then introduced the sub-item on “Improving mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention” (ICCD/COP(11)/14). South Africa, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, requested placement of the regional coordinating unit (RCU) at the UN Economic Commission for Africa. GEORGIA noted interest by countries in Central and Eastern Europe to develop a regional coordination mechanism.

The Secretariat introduced the sub-item on activities under the UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification (UNDD) for 2010-2020 (ICCD/COP(11)/19) and reported on its work to prepare a policy review paper at the request of the OWG Co-Chairs. INDIA, GHANA, ALGERIA, and TAJIKISTAN



highlighted national observance activities in their countries. ALGERIA lamented that the non-dynamic nature of the UNDD website hinders awareness raising. Zimbabwe, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, called for mainstreaming UNDD activities with World Environment Day.

RULE 47 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE: Gerardo Gunero-Lazzaroni, UNCCD Secretariat, noted this agenda item has been outstanding since COP 2, and presented options for moving forward on COP decision-making processes as outlined in document ICCD/COP(11)/16. ALGERIA, joined by ARGENTINA, said consensus should be the norm for the COP.

CRITERIA FOR ACCREDITATION OF CSOs AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR:

The Secretariat then introduced this sub-item (ICCD/COP(11)/4). CSOs lamented that since COP 10, only annex region CSOs and private sector representatives are allowed to register, and suggested stricter accreditation requirements, including on sustainability.

CST

RESHAPING THE OPERATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN LINE WITH THE STRATEGY: In the morning the CST reconvened to consider the outcome of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, held in April 2013, in Bonn, Germany. Jonathan Davis, Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), recalled the Conference's objective of strengthening best practices and producing sound research. Referring to the preliminary outcome contained in document ICCD/COP(11)/CST/4, he presented the recommendations contained in the final outcome document (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.3 and Corr.1).

During the ensuing discussion, YEMEN called for a unified definition of DLDD. The EU highlighted inaccessible research outputs due to language barriers. MOROCCO lamented the low survey response rate. SOUTH AFRICA, with ITALY, called for efforts to publish the white papers and research presented at the Conferences to enhance outreach.

ISRAEL distinguished between academic conferences and scientific assessments that generate policy-relevant recommendations. TUNISIA remarked that the first two Conferences have not provided compelling evidence to decision makers and funding entities about the role of scientific research on DLDD and, with MALI, suggested this be the focus of the 3rd Scientific Conference. A CSO representative stressed the need for greater focus on agro-ecology.

SAC Chair Davis observed that lessons had been learned from the first Conference. He acknowledged the use of white papers had contributed to a "formulaic" structure, noting science is not a negotiating process, and suggesting a SPI could help improve the conversation between science and policy makers.

The Secretariat further noted the need to clarify responsibility for scientific assessments and ensure that the 3rd Scientific Conference builds on the COP decision on the AGSA.

Chair Magalhães opened the discussion on the sub-item on independent assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.5 and ICCD/COP(11)/CST/4). Rachel Schutte, Consultant, provided an overview of the assessment methodology. Among recommendations, she highlighted the need for, *inter alia*: gender and regional balance; early confirmation of the Conference date and venue; and inviting renowned scientists. She suggested "decoupling" the Conferences from the CST process to free up resources for implementation and the post-conference phase.

Commenting on the report, JAPAN said the UNCCD must undertake more and better communication of Conference results to improve voluntary funding contributions. ETHIOPIA and UGANDA indicated side events should be better organized. ARGENTINA stressed the need for clear selection criteria for the SAC, including regional balance.

In the afternoon, Chair Magalhães presented the assessment of UNCCD Scientific Conferences (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/4) and recommended that future Conferences be held during CST intersessionals, and the CST determine a date, venue, and theme for the 5th and 6th Special Sessions of the CST and the 4th and 5th Scientific Conferences. On how to maintain momentum achieved during the second Conference, the CST Bureau and the Global Risk Forum Davos proposed to, *inter alia*: encourage lead participating scientists to publish outcomes to stakeholders; find ways of including scientists in the roster of independent experts; widely disseminate papers; and enhance multidisciplinarity.

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT MULTI-YEAR (FOUR-YEAR) WORKPLAN FOR THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (2014–2017): Elysabeth David, UNCCD Secretariat, introduced document ICCD/CRIC(12)/2-ICCD/COP(11)/CST/9 to be considered in its totality by the CRIC, noting the CST is only responsible for discussing the objective on science, technology and knowledge.

ARGENTINA observed that while RCUs are mentioned in the workplan, they do not have the capacity to implement the outlined activities, and, supported by the US and BRAZIL, questioned why the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal (SKBP) was not specifically referenced in the workplan. MOROCCO suggested adding capacity building to the operational objective on advocacy, awareness raising and education.

BRAZIL suggested strengthening the conceptual framework of UNCCD on drylands and asked how CSOs would be brought into the work.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Chair Magalhães referred this agenda item to the CST contact group meeting on Friday morning.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY: Chair Magalhães referred this agenda item to the CST contact group meeting on Friday morning.

CONTACT GROUPS

On the organization of work going forward, Chair González said the CRIC contact group will meet Friday morning and early afternoon. He said that information on when the COW contact group on budget will discuss the multi-year plan will be communicated. During the COW contact group in the afternoon, Facilitator Aho submitted a draft decision containing bracketed text on the various housing options for the GM, for parties' consideration.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As the first week of UNCCD COP 11 nears its end, delegates noted that divisions on a number of agenda items had come into focus. Although some had thought that the COP 10 decisions on the GM would mean that this COP would spend less time on it, participants noted that discussions in the COW on the GM's location revealed that COP 11 is still engaged "in a game of lobbying" on this issue. On the planned CST decision on institutional options for providing scientific advice to the UNCCD, parties remain divided on the options. One delegate stated that there are "three camps."

One delegate expressed his opinion that Friday's contact group sessions would be "the long day before a long night of work."

UNCCD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS: FRIDAY, 20 SEPTEMBER 2013

On Friday, the COP convened an open dialogue session with CSOs on the theme: resource mobilization to support the implementation of the UNCCD through building effective partnerships between national and international actors.

Throughout the day and evening, COW, CRIC and CST contact groups continued work on draft decisions. In the evening the CST convened for its closing session where parties adopted nine decisions. In the early hours of Saturday morning, the COP reconvened to consider the preliminary report of the COW, and adopted the CST's recommendations with one minor revision.

INCLUSION OF ACTIVITIES OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE OFFICIAL PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COP: OPEN DIALOGUE SESSION

Thomas Tichelmann (EU) opened the interactive dialogue session.

Describing CSOs as important engineers and promoters of participatory approaches, UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja welcomed CSOs, stating their messages should be heard by decision makers.

COP President Uahekua Herunga introduced moderator Patrice Burger, Centre d'Action et de Réalisations Internationales (CARI), and opened the panel discussion.

PANEL DISCUSSION 1: ADDRESSING RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL: Marioldy Sanchez Santivañez, Asociación para la Investigación y el Desarrollo Integral (AIDER), Peru, lamented that the dryland forests of Peru fall outside of remit of the UNFCCC because of a definitional issue, and therefore are not eligible for REDD+ projects. Santivañez noted the need to exercise caution when exploring opportunities to work with the private sector.

Fatima Ahmed, Zenab for Women in Development, Sudan, said empowering rural women helps alleviate poverty, improve food security, and enhance SLM. She lamented difficulties NGOs face in accessing GEF funding.

Eileen de Ravin, UNDP's Equator Initiative, said mobilizing resources is not only about funding, and that people on the ground contribute knowledge and human capacity. She recommended the Initiative's publication "The Power of Local Action," as a useful resource on scaling up successful local practices.

In the ensuing discussion, the GEF reported on joint programmes with CSOs, noting the Community Exchange and Train Program.

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the PHILIPPINES, EGYPT, SEYCHELLES, SUDAN and others reported their national experience with CSO partnerships working on land degradation and SLM issues, and highlighted the important role of women. PERU said governments and the UNCCD must harness CSOs to solve land management issues, and described her country's domestic efforts to improve cooperation with CSOs.

CHINA, while recognizing the significance of CSOs, underscored the importance of the private sector in DLDD, highlighting the creation of a fund to combat desertification by over 100 Chinese firms.

Stressing the importance of CSO involvement in grassroots activities, UNEP reported that CSOs play a lead role in 30% of UNEP/GEF projects on land degradation, biodiversity, and climate change, and an active role in 67% of projects.

PANEL DISCUSSION 2: ADDRESSING RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL: Lee Sung-gil, Future Forest, presented on combating desertification and dust storms. He said cooperation amongst Korean and Chinese NGOs and local governments helped create the "Korea-China Friendship Great Green Wall," a 16 km long and 0.6 km wide windbreak consisting of millions of trees in the Kubugi desert.

Christian Houdus, DRYNET, highlighted: the reduction of voluntary funding of civil society under the UNCCD over time; the need for adopting a cautious approach to private sector investment under the UNCCD; and ambiguity over the concept of ZNLD, which could be understood as a target for slowing down or halting land degradation, or as a type of compensation mechanism offering a "license" to degrade.

Jean-Marc Sinnassamy, GEF, explained the intellectual, data and financial resources, including the Small Grants Programme, available to CSOs via the GEF.

In the ensuing discussion, ISRAEL supported Houdus's call to clarify ZNLD. CHINA explained desert sand storms are a consequence of an imbalance between land capacity and economic development pressure, resulting in relocation of production and inhabitants.

SWITZERLAND pointed to the example of the Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA), which contributed to the formulation and acceptance of a Turkish soil law. TURKEY called on delegates to increase their voluntary contributions and noted other avenues to help CSOs, citing Turkey's organization



<http://enb.iisd.mobi/>

of workshops and training for CSOs on land issues. He also said parties should invite CSOs to be members of national coordination units.

Responding to a question from the US, Houdus said bringing CSOs into the discussions on funding guidelines could enable more organizations to qualify for financing.

CONTACT GROUPS

WORKPLANS AND BUDGET: As it awaited the outcome of decisions from other contact groups that may have budget implications, the group met in the afternoon to consider general questions relating to core budget requirements, special trust funds, indicative contributions, and implications of the core budget limitations.

IWG, GM AND ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS: On the IWG report, agreement was reached on requesting the Executive Secretary to propose for parties' consideration at COP 12 a process for developing a new strategy and plans to further improve the implementation of the Convention. Other recommendations from the IWG report were forwarded to the relevant contact groups for incorporation into decision texts.

With regard to text prepared by a drafting group on GM housing arrangements, the contact group faced major difficulties in coming to an agreement before the beginning of the COP.

ALIGNMENT OF ACTION PROGRAMMES WITH THE STRATEGY: In the afternoon, the CRIC contact group continued work on a draft decision on enhancing alignment and implementation of action programmes with the Strategy. Delegates asked the Secretariat to prepare clearer text on the relationship between NAPs and integrated financial strategy (IFS).

JOINT CRIC-CST CONTACT GROUP ON MEASURING STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 1, 2 AND 3: On Friday afternoon a joint CST/CRIC contact group continued discussing draft decisions on how to best measure progress on strategic objectives 1-3 of the Strategy, which included draft text on ways to implement the delineation of areas affected by DLDD, and revising the provisionally adopted set of impact indicators. On the delineation of areas, delegates expressed different views, and Chair Hanley referred the text to the CST plenary. The contact group successfully concluded negotiations on improvement of knowledge management including traditional knowledge best practices and success stories, and the SKBP.

CST CONTACT GROUP ON A SCIENCE-POLICY INTERFACE: In the morning, the group continued consideration of measures that would enable the UNCCD to become a global authority, negotiating modalities for the establishment and composition of a scientific body. While they failed to reach consensus on the exact model to use, delegates agreed to a limited SPI body, the form and function of which will be reviewed at COP 13. Discussions later in the day included re-shaping the operation of the CST in line with the Strategy, the organization of future UNCCD Scientific Conferences, and the work programme of CST.

EVENING PLENARIES

REVIEW OF CST RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COP: On Friday evening, the CST Plenary, led by Chair Magalhães, adopted nine draft decisions to forward to the COP for adoption (ICCD/ COP(11)/CST/L.1-9). On measures to enable the UNCCD to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification or land degradation, and mitigation of the effects of drought, BRAZIL, with ARGENTINA, COLOMBIA, PERU and MEXICO,

although supporting the need for a scientific interface with policy makers, said the mechanisms already exist, and merely require strengthening. He requested, opposed by the US, to include reference to the roster of independent experts as an additional source of scientific advice. After some debate, the US conceded to allow this inclusion.

Chair Magalhães reported on discussions of the CST workplan contained as part of document ICCD/CRIC(12)/2-ICCD/COP(11)/CST/9 and explained the related draft decision on the draft multi-year workplan of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies, will be tabled in the CRIC session.

Expressing concern that there are still ongoing discussions on the concept of land degradation neutrality and the Rio+20 outcomes, BRAZIL requested, and parties agreed to, the deletion of reference to this topic in draft decision ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.5.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS OTHER THAN THE PRESIDENT: The CST then elected four vice-chairs on the Bureau of CST 12: Fouad Chehat (Algeria), Allaadeen Mohammed Al Sharjabi (Yemen), Hamid Custovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Sonia Gonzalez (Peru).

COP

CONSIDERATION OF THE PRELIMINARY REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE: On behalf of COP President Uahekua Herunga, Neville Gertze (Namibia), welcomed delegates and introduced Chencho Norbu (Bhutan) to report on the outcomes of the COW. Norbu explained that no draft decisions had been made available.

REVIEW OF CST RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COP: CST Chair Magalhães presented the recommendations of the CST to the COP, and indicated that the decisions would be included in the CST's report to the COP. On reshaping the operation of the CST, Brazil suggested, and parties agreed to, removing reference to degradation neutrality in the title of the 4th Scientific Conference as found in the ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.7. All other CST recommended decisions were adopted without amendment.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS OTHER THAN THE PRESIDENT: The COP elected Heimata Louisa Karika (Cook Islands) as Rapporteur of the COP 11, and nominated Uriel Safriel (Israel) for election as CST Chair at its last session on 27 September 2013.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Friday began with the first-ever civil society protest on the grounds of a UNCCD COP. The CSOs "closing in" on the UNCCD, after years of rather reserved participation, may have set an important precedent for future COPs.

Observing the demonstration, a rather bemused delegate, nevertheless welcomed this "sign of new life," as he put it, noting it could be a start towards rebalancing the top-down nature of the SPI discussions. After all, as many parties expressed during the process of adopting the SKBP, the portal aims to create space for fresh perspectives by facilitating the sharing of best practices at the international level.

Later, as delegates hashed out compromises in the contact groups, it seemed to warm up the desert chill that had descended out of nowhere, presaging convergence on what had seemed to be intractable differences on some issues, notably the GM housing arrangements, and the form a SPI would take. Indeed, by the time the COP plenary convened at 12:40am on Saturday, the atmosphere was positively cordial as parties swiftly adopted the draft decisions. Perhaps the prospect of spending the weekend on a dune adventure, as was evident by the many scenes of delegates scanning glossy brochures in the afternoon sun, might not have been so far fetched after all.

UNCCD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS MONDAY, 23 SEPTEMBER 2013

The High-Level segment at UNCCD COP 11 opened on 23 September, with welcoming statements from the host government, the UNCCD Executive Secretary and a representative of the UN Secretary-General, as well as special statements from regional and interest groups. Two Ministerial round tables then considered: "The role of the UNCCD in achieving a LDNW in the context of sustainable development;" and "Overcoming the hurdles of scaling up and disseminating good practices in the context of the UNCCD implementation process." Throughout the day, COW contact groups on budget and non-budgetary matters and the CRIC contact group on strengthening relationships with relevant Conventions and international organizations, continued work on draft decisions. In the evening, the UNCCD Secretariat hosted a high-level dinner during which awards were presented to three winners of the second Land for Life Award and five recipients of the Drylands Champions award.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

COP President Uahekua Herunga welcomed delegates and introduced Namibian Deputy Prime Minister, Marco Hausiku, to deliver statements by the Prime Minister, Hage Geingob, and the President, Hifikepunye Pohamba. Hausiku commended outgoing UNCCD Executive Secretary, Luc Gnacadja, for his efforts to integrate DLDD and soil issues in the Rio+20 outcome and pledged Namibia's support under the incoming leadership of Monique Barbut.

UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja expressed the COP's solidarity with Kenya during the ongoing terrorist attack. He highlighted the unique opportunity for the Convention to establish a new paradigm to achieve the vision of a LDNW, welcoming the dialogue on how to move forward.

Veerle Vandeweerd, Director, Environment and Energy Group, UNDP, on behalf of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, commended outgoing Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja and underscored that healthy land is a prerequisite for food and water security, and averting political instability.

SPECIAL STATEMENTS AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL ON BEHALF OF REGIONAL AND INTEREST GROUPS: Fiji, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, expressed hope that COP 11 would take care of outstanding housekeeping issues, enabling parties to focus on implementation of the Convention. Highlighting that critical information gaps and reporting difficulties have hampered the Strategy's objectives, he called, inter alia, for: empowering the RCU; maintaining current budget levels and improving the UNCCD's cost efficiency; and ensuring a robust replenishment of DLDD funding in the next GEF replenishment. He further stressed that developing country parties need a strong and effective GM that will support their specific financial needs.

Lithuania, on behalf of the EU, said science and technology issues should be prioritized if the UNCCD is to become a global authority on DLDD. He noted that IPBES could promote a global and integrated approach, with land degradation as a major issue, and stated that all COP decisions must contain a cost assessment.

Burkina Faso, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, called on the COP to produce efficient, operational strategies with measurable targets. He said the incoming Executive Secretary should prioritize cooperation with the GEF to increase the allocation for land and supported the GM's transfer to the Secretariat, stating it would result in cost savings and enhance governance.

India, on behalf of ASIA-PACIFIC STATES, indicated support for a mechanism that can invigorate and streamline scientific efforts, and for the Changwon Initiative. He said recommendations of the mid-term evaluation should guide formation of a roadmap with specific timeframes to address DLDD.

Panama, on behalf of GRULAC, underscored the need for predictable and adequate resources to strengthen his region's RCU. He called for reducing inefficiencies and overspending, and for being precise when using the term land degradation. He reiterated GRULAC's concern over the selection process for the UNCCD Executive Secretary, and underscored that improved dissemination of best practices is key to moving forward on DLDD.

Belarus, on behalf of the CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES, said his region is determined to transform political will at Rio+20 into action-oriented COP 11 decisions. He highlighted that the UNCCD brings together countries that deal with drylands as well as other land degradation issues, giving the Convention strength and complexity. He noted regional efforts, including a synergistic approach to implementing GEF projects under the Rio Conventions and efforts to align NAPs with the Strategy, and develop a regional strategy.

Israel, on behalf of the NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION, highlighted that this group includes developed and developing countries and therefore functions as a laboratory for implementation. He said the region has accepted the invitation of Turkey to establish a RCU and looks forward to cooperation with the UNCCD Secretariat in this regard.

Both Ends, on behalf of CSOs, lamented that COP discussions and documents seldom reference specific DLDD drivers, which she said are related to unsustainable practices of large agribusiness. She urged parties to secure the UNCCD's independence by ensuring accredited observers are committed to sustainable development of drylands, also noting that land tenure insecurity hinders investment and SLM.



The National Youth Council of Namibia, on behalf of YOUTH, said young people aim to ensure “those who come after us will find our world in the best condition to farm, live and make a living,” noting youth are already involved and must be listened to.

The UNCCD Secretariat screened a short film highlighting global activities to combat DLDD.

ROUND TABLE I: THE ROLE OF THE UNCCD IN ACHIEVING A LAND DEGRADATION-NEUTRAL WORLD IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: COP President Herunga introduced the session, which was co-chaired by Bernice Adiku Heloo, Deputy Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Ghana, and Susheel Kumar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, India. The session was moderated by Clare Short, former Secretary of State for International Development, UK.

Co-Chair Heloo reiterated the Rio+20 objective of taking leadership in monitoring DLDD globally and restoring degraded areas in different climatic zones.

Reminding that 78% of degraded areas are not in drylands, Moderator Short said inaction has consequences for food security and biodiversity loss.

Keynote speaker Uriel Safriel, Blaustein Institute for Desert Research, Israel, elaborated on the meaning of LDNW, distinguishing between: having a state of land degradation; and land that is in the process of being degraded. Warning that 25% of the world's land is currently in a state of degradation, he described the vicious circle of biophysical processes driven by land users through persistent productivity loss, that lead to poverty and cause social, economic and political problems. He underscored that awareness raising should start at the community level.

Timo Mäkelä, European Commission, emphasized that 60% of lands required to meet future food, feed and fiber needs are already degraded or under threat. He said COP 11 is a “make or break” meeting and called on the UNCCD to: solve its institutional issues; build a framework for gathering and sharing scientific knowledge; and better mobilize resources and civil society and other stakeholders.

Edna Molewa, South African Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, expressed concern about the impact of DLDD on ecosystems services. She stressed that concerted international effort is needed to implement a LDNW by 2030, and said other Conventions must involve themselves in DLDD issues to facilitate real progress.

During panel presentations, IRAN emphasized ensuring a greater synergistic approach, and said the Changwon Initiative brings new hope for implementing the Convention. SENEGAL highlighted the relationship between SLM and economic growth, and called for a better understanding of the drivers of land degradation. UNDP suggested that: national governments should work through and with the One UN country teams; local level efforts could focus on scaling up a few successful projects; and delegates should consider ways to incorporate LDNW objectives into SDG targets on water, food security and poverty.

In the ensuing discussion, speakers highlighted their countries' efforts to implement integrated approaches to combat DLDD and poverty.

CHINA, BRAZIL and the US cautioned against using the Rio+20 outcome to expand the UNCCD's mandate beyond drylands. The US stressed the need for better science, and, with CSOs expressed concern that the concept of land degradation neutrality could encourage off-setting and exacerbate DLDD.

LESOTHO underscored the continuing relevance of Strategic Objectives 1 and 2 of the Convention. GAMBIA, ERITREA, MALAWI and ZAMBIA stressed DLDD is manifested at the local level, requiring formulation of local targets and actions, while MALAWI underlined the UNCCD's role to facilitate assessments and inventories.

The REPUBLIC OF KOREA urged consensus building on target-setting, and highlighted the Changwon Initiative. ANGOLA stressed the need to create capacities to reduce food insecurity and enhance SLM and called for integrating DLDD and climate change strategies. Noting the Convention is an instrument for international solidarity for people living in drylands, a CSO representative said cooperation with other Rio Conventions will foster action on SLM.

ROUND TABLE II: OVERCOMING HURDLES OF SCALING UP AND DISSEMINATING GOOD PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UNCCD IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS: Neville Gertze, Namibian Ambassador to Germany, and Michel Mordasini, Assistant Director-General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, co-chaired this session.

Moderator Dennis Garrity, UNCCD Drylands Ambassador, said scaling up is “where this Convention should come alive.” He presented the Great Green Wall in the Sahel as a key example of a successful DLDD-combating partnership.

Keynote speaker Chris Reij, World Resources Institute, said scaling up drylands re-greening projects entails: identifying and analyzing re-greening successes; working at the grassroots; ensuring top-down meets bottom-up; developing a good communications strategy; and developing agroforestry value chains. Yacouba Sawadogo, a farmer from the Sahel, Burkina Faso, described his efforts in combating desertification by developing sapling- and dung-filled planting holes which conserve water, protect saplings, and promote biodiversity. He further described efforts to bring birds, and with them a greater diversity of seeds and trees, to his lands. He closed by describing the film about his life: “The Man who Stopped the Desert.”

Salif Ouédraogo, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Burkina Faso, noted that hurdles to SLM include weak capacity, illiteracy, financial constraints, poor monitoring and oversight systems, lack of investment in SLM mechanisms, and land insecurity.

The Round Table will continue on Tuesday morning.

CONTACT GROUPS

During CRIC contact group discussions, parties advanced on the formulation of advocacy policy frameworks, clarifying their views on adequate guidance to the Secretariat and discussing the GM's role in promoting resource mobilization. The group also discussed national monitoring systems, including issues of: establishment, maintenance and use of existing systems; use of synergies among national natural resource monitoring systems; and need for flexibility in monitoring.

During discussions in the COW contact group on non-budget matters that addressed, *inter alia*: regional coordination mechanisms; the comprehensive communication strategy; and accreditation of CSOs and the private sector, some parties highlighted budgetary implications.

The COW contact group on programme and budget matters continued discussions on issues related to the budget, with parties seeking clarity on several budgetary concerns.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As negotiations in the COW contact groups moved into their second week, a number of delegates noted they were “holding their breath” on some issues because outcomes of several contact groups were tied to discussions in others. Participants particularly pointed to the interconnection between decisions on the location of the GM and the budgetary implications that would be considered in the programme and budget contact group. As the High-level segment began its discussion of the goal of a LDNW, some participants noted discussions related to the post-2015 development agenda were set to begin several hours later in conjunction with the opening of the UN General Assembly in New York. While some thought the two events would involve different audiences, others suggested that the overlap had resulted in a “low level, high-level event” in Windhoek.



UNCCD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS

TUESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2013

The High-Level Segment continued on Tuesday morning, and concluded with a final interactive dialogue. Negotiations on draft decisions continued in three contact groups on programme and budget, non-budgetary matters, and CRIC-related matters. During the closing session in the afternoon, Hanifi Avci, Turkey, offered to host COP 12 in 2015.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

ROUND TABLE II: OVERCOMING HURDLES OF SCALING UP AND DISSEMINATING GOOD PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UNCCD IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS: Co-Chair Gertze introduced the session and moderator Garrity summarized key messages from the previous day, notably how farmer-led land regeneration in the Sahel is spurring partnerships at the regional and global level to protect critical dryland ecosystems.

Igor Kachanovsky, Deputy Minister, National Resources and Environmental Protection, Belarus, discussed national policy initiatives on SLM, highlighting integrated approaches to agricultural and industrial development, and support for SLM and sharing of best practices.

Mudiyanselage Uthpala Dayananda Basnayake, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy, Sri Lanka, said additional research and development is critical for SLM, and called on the UNCCD Secretariat to help mobilize innovative financing.

Ambassador Carlos Manuel Rojas Lago, Ministry of Agricultural Affairs, Cuba, highlighted national efforts to integrate SLM-relevant policies and legislation, and noted the potential of the Latin American Initiative on Science and Technology to promote regional cooperation in applied sciences for SLM.

Responding to presentations, Franklin Moore, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Africa, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), underscored the paradigm shift in international support for drylands from humanitarian assistance to strengthening capacity for resilience. Describing national policy-making as "the place where bottom-up and top-down meet," he stressed the value of "codifying" good practices, such as farmer-managed regeneration in the Sahel, but warned that for extremely poor farmers' initial financial support may be needed to encourage investments in SLM and innovation.

During discussions, MALI suggested a three-pronged approach, including dissemination of successful practices, addressing contradictions between customary and modern law, and nurturing development of products suitable to all.

SWAZILAND said food security is the common denominator across the Rio Conventions, and urged an integrated approach in moving forward. UZBEKISTAN, highlighting the loss of productive land through the Aral Sea disaster, called for support of regional approaches, and warned that, with the exorbitant cost of reclamation, prevention is crucial.

SWITZERLAND urged rapid analysis and dissemination of best SLM practices using existing knowledge platforms such as WOCAT, and called for building the SKBP by incorporating existing content repositories to provide access for UNCCD stakeholders to various types of knowledge on DLDD. EGYPT emphasized the need for supporting farmers as stakeholders in the chain of ecosystem services provision, not merely as food producers.

ROUND TABLE III: ECONOMICS OF DESERTIFICATION, LAND DEGRADATION AND RESTORATION: Onno Adalbert Hückmann, Ambassador of Germany to Namibia, and Lahcene Kaid-Slimane, Ambassador of Algeria to Namibia, co-chaired this session. Hückmann introduced the session and the international Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) initiative.

Keynote speaker and Moderator Richard Thomas, ELD scientific coordinator, UN University, presented the initiative's findings. He said recommendations included: establishing Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes; encouraging voluntary payments for conservation; creating micro-finance schemes; establishment of research, policy and stakeholder platforms; and improving data availability through education, communication and collaborations.

In her keynote speech, Naoko Ishii, Chief Executive Officer and Chairperson, GEF, lamented that most experts and international organizations are still working in silos. She noted that land is the meeting point for environmental issues, and said the GEF wants to work together with the UNCCD to catalyze action and break down silos.

Maria Teresa Kralikas, Minister for General Direction of Environmental Matters, Ministry of Foreign Relations, Argentina, drew attention to the heavy social and ecosystem services costs of DLDD. She said development of value-added products for smallholders has been policy-driven in the case of Argentina, via the dissemination of best practices. She concluded that purely profit-oriented firms operating in drylands will not achieve true SLM without government intervention.

Jean-Pierre Thebault, Ambassador for the Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France, urged breaking silos, including among conventions, mind-sets, and governmental departments, and applauded the proposed establishment of a SPI. He urged responsible housekeeping, avoiding debates



of principle that prevent effective mobilization under the Convention, and addressing questions such as indicators development.

Respondent Michael Mack, WBCSD and CEO, Sygenta, noted that subsistence farmers are “small businesses-in-waiting.” Welcoming the ELD report, he said its focus on fact-based analysis would contribute to more cost-benefit assessments of land degradation, which is a prerequisite for sound agronomy and policy-making.

CHINA highlighted opportunities for improving livelihoods and increasing wealth in his country through controlling desertification, and elaborated on some methods used. ZIMBABWE recalled achievements of the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in using participatory community involvement to improve SLM. ZAMBIA noted the UNCCD’s role in facilitating assistance to national focal points on ELD analyses. MOROCCO emphasized taking time and space into account when determining costs of rehabilitation and reclamation. INDIA, citing the extent of land degradation in his country, discussed the complexity of land tenure and its role in land rehabilitation.

Underlining the gravity of land degradation, ETHIOPIA, NIGER and ALGERIA, stressed that developing countries’ limited resources impose a responsibility on the international community to provide support through Conventions such as the UNCCD. The PHILLIPINES and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA emphasized global partnerships to create awareness, with the latter citing urbanization and alternative land uses as major drivers of land degradation.

FINAL DISCUSSION BY MINISTERS ON THE WAY FORWARD: COP 11 President Herunga opened the final session of the High-Level Segment. Hanifi Avci, General Director, General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion, Ministry of Forests and Water Affairs, Turkey, presented his country’s national level activities and involvement in the UNCCD, and announced Turkey’s offer to host COP 12 in 2015.

Monique Barbut, incoming UNCCD Executive Secretary, called the UNCCD a key instrument for achieving sustainable development. She expressed support for synergies between conventions and said she would ensure the UNCCD’s indicators work together with those found in other Rio Conventions.

SUDAN, TIMOR-LESTE, INDONESIA and OMAN indicated the need for technology transfer and capacity building to, *inter alia*, raise political and public awareness on the impacts of DLDD. VIET NAM explained that, although successful re-greening programmes have begun in Viet Nam, his country is still searching for methods to improve local livelihoods.

EGYPT said his country is 96% desert, and urged translation of COP decisions into concrete actions and progress, and holding parties accountable for action or inaction. IRAQ and BANGLADESH described challenges in lowering salinity of soils. IRAQ further explained that, over the next 20 years, it may have to abandon some agricultural land due to a dearth of water.

MALAWI requested the UNCCD’s support for: developing monitoring and evaluation methodologies; identifying key drivers of, and quantifying the economic impact of DLDD; and identifying best practices. The PHILIPPINES said conservation, protection and rehabilitation programmes are needed to ensure livelihoods and SLM. KENYA explained his country’s policy framework to address DLDD. BRAZIL drew attention to the low cost of many best practices.

FAO highlighted its contributions to the UNCCD and declared FAO would consider hosting the GM if this were welcomed by parties and the Secretariat.

ENDA, for CSOs, said States are essential stakeholders in scaling up efforts, and a responsible private sector will also be critical. Zenab for Women in Development, Sudan, for

CSOs, said Parties should focus on drivers of land degradation, including discussing the mining industry, deforestation and large scale agriculture. She urged that the UNCCD only engage with businesses committed to sustainable livelihoods and healthy ecosystems.

SLM Business Forum Chair David Nuyoma outlined the Forum’s Declaration, which included commitments to: participate in the implementation of the Convention and Strategy; monitor, measure and communicate impacts of business activities on land; and incorporate SLM into business operations.

Concluding the session, COP President Herunga summarized discussions from the roundtables and highlighted that the Convention should, *inter alia*: continue enhancing the implementation of the Convention in line with the Strategy; emphasize recognition of land and soil as foundation of the food-security and poverty-reduction nexus and thus provide impetus for countries to mobilize resources and scale up SLM; and shift from a reactive to a more proactive stance to involve prevention and planning at national level.

Executive Secretary Gnacadja assured delegates that the outcome of the High-Level Segment would be presented to the COP for its consideration. Noting the Convention’s relevance for people living in drylands, he said this COP will be remembered for welcoming a farmer to give a keynote address at a high-level event.

CONTACT GROUPS

In the COW contact group on non-budget matters, which addressed the communication strategy and follow-up to Rio+20 outcomes, parties debated DLDD and LDNW terminology, and the UNCCD’s mandate regarding the Rio+20 outcomes. Discussions were deferred to bilateral consultations.

The CRIC contact group made progress in draft decisions on: strengthening relationships with other conventions and organizations; additional procedures or mechanisms to assist the COP in reviewing implementation; and assessment of the implementation of the Convention against the Strategy. Delegates discussed, *inter alia*: increasing access to existing data bases; appropriateness of references to the GEF and to the Global Drylands report; and best options to move forward with reporting procedures. In the evening, the group worked on a modified draft decision on the iterative process relating to the assessment of implementation, including performance and impact indicators, methodology and the reporting procedures.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As the second SLM Business Forum came to an end on the sidelines of COP 11, many conversations in the corridors focused on topics related to the increasing involvement of the private sector in the UNCCD. While some highlighted the value of developing private-public partnerships and were pleased that a number of private sector actors were attending their first UNCCD COP, including the WBCSD, others expressed concern that, just as the Convention has launched itself on a track to promote evidence-based policy and practice, the same standard may not be applied to all new partnerships. NGOs questioned whether the private sector would be expected to submit reports to the UNCCD in the same way that they have, and they recognized that their role as watchdogs for the Convention had been re-invigorated. Meanwhile, scrutiny of the possibilities and implications of the Soil Leadership Academy, which was launched on Tuesday by the UNCCD in partnership with the private sector, including WBCSD and “seed-funding” by Sygenta, was briefly put aside as delegates and local staff alike scurried to view a rain shower in drought-stricken Namibia.

**UNCCD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS:
WEDNESDAY, 25 SEPTEMBER 2013**

The second part of the COP 11 open dialogue session convened on Wednesday morning, on the theme of capacity building for CSOs. COW contact groups negotiating budget and non-budget matters, and the contact group on CRIC-related matters convened throughout the day and evening.

**INCLUSION OF ACTIVITIES OF NGOs WITHIN
THE OFFICIAL PROGRAMME OF THE COP: OPEN
DIALOGUE SESSION**

COP Vice-President Thomas Tichelmann (Ireland) welcomed delegates to the second and final open dialogue session at COP 11 on capacity building for CSOs for the implementation of the Convention, commenting that the onset of heavy rain could signal "a fresh start" of COP discussions.

UNCCD Executive Secretary Gnacadja highlighted key messages from the first open dialogue session, noting CSOs' strong call for capacity building for actors on the ground had informed the decision to devote a full session to this topic. He also highlighted the launch of UNCCD Capacity Building Marketplace as a milestone towards strengthening capacity for the implementation of the Strategy.

Tichelmann then welcomed Mary Seely, Desert Research Foundation of Namibia (DRFN), to moderate the session.

**PANEL DISCUSSION 1: CAPACITY BUILDING AT
THE NATIONAL LEVEL:** Moderator Seely introduced the session and welcomed the three panelists.

Kenneth Ganeb, DRFN, highlighted capacity-building activities through the Forum for Integrated Resources Management initiative. He described the Forum's aim to strengthen technical and management capacities of community-based organizations, such as women's groups and farmers associations, and encourage their involvement in decision-making processes for SLM.

Vivian Kinyaga, Director, DRFN, outlined activities of the Summer Land Care Programme, a capacity-building initiative undertaken in collaboration with national research and training institutions, and other local and international partners. She said the internship and mentoring programme aims to strengthen the capacity of young scientists and students to apply research for problem solving, and foster critical thinking.

Maria Tharacky Namupala, Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa, highlighted the network's efforts to increase political recognition and human rights for San communities in the sub-region, centered on inclusive education at all levels. While welcoming growing recognition of indigenous peoples' issues, she stressed the need for

full compliance in the sub-region with international legal frameworks such as the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. Concluding "anything for us without us is against us," she urged parties to involve indigenous peoples in UNCCD decision-making processes.

In the ensuing discussion, Settar Aslan, President, Trade Union of Turkish Agriculture and Forestry Laborers, said global warming, erosion and desertification are the results of "aggressive production methods," and stressed if global action is not undertaken, "we are doomed to fail." He urged countries to not only consider expenses to combat global challenges in terms of costs and benefits, because "you cannot put a price on the water we drink and the air we breathe."

The PHILIPPINES underscored the role of CSOs in nation-building but lamented that many lack necessary support and assistance to carry out their work. He requested the Secretariat insert this issue into the work programme of the COP.

BURKINA FASO said we need to think globally but act locally, and that the private sector, government and civil society must work in solidarity with one another. He said only through dialogues such as the CSO dialogue and similar ones at the national level can progress be made on sustainable development. He urged CSOs to ensure this dialogue expands to encompass those most vulnerable.

KENYA explained his country is opening up to more CSO involvement and that formulation and implementation of his country's NAP has been mostly driven by CSOs, producing benefits for general policy development as well.

**PANEL DISCUSSION 2: CAPACITY BUILDING
AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL:** Moderator Seely introduced the panelists. Nahideh Naghizadeh, CENESTA, Iran, highlighted activities to align Iran's NAP with the Strategy that included participatory capacity building workshops for key stakeholders at community level, enabling them to undertake critical analyses of their situation, envision a desirable future, and develop a road map and action plan towards this future. Naghizadeh noted the workshops had not only raised awareness among affected communities, they had also contributed to building sustainable relationships between community-based organizations, government officials and UNCCD focal points responsible for NAP alignment.

Fatima Kaba, ENDA-TM, Senegal, reviewed her organization's efforts to connect actors and actions at the local level with those at the international level, and described efforts to develop a platform through which CSOs could develop a common vision and build capacity to participate in political events, such as the COP. She said priorities of CSOs in the



region include food security, new and renewable energies, agroforestry and sustainable natural resource management. She also highlighted efforts to ensure that work on the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel (GGWSS) initiative takes local concerns into account, and noted local communities see it as both a development and environmental project.

Wang Wenbiao, CEO Elion, China, described his company's desertification-control activities in the Kubuqi Desert. He encouraged CSOs to combine public and market interests in their work. Based on his company's experiences, He recommended: encouraging migration from the desert to settlements offering employment opportunities in industries, allowing the desert to restore itself naturally; protecting the ecosystem through efforts to contain the desert; building roads so that machinery can be used to combat the desert more effectively; and introducing science and technology to combat desertification.

Nathalie van Haren, Both ENDS, the Netherlands, presented on DRYNET success stories, including the re-cultivation of saffron on previously cotton-dominated fields in Turkey, which had become salty and nutrient-poor, and that resulted in improved ecological, social and economic opportunities. She also described an organic roibos tea cooperative in South Africa that created quality standards that helped protect local ecology and promote premium prices. She offered recommendations for delegates on ways to facilitate CSO work to develop context-relevant projects and increase the capacities of communities and local CSOs.

In the ensuing discussion, the US suggested civil society dialogues often overly concentrate on relationships between delegations and CSOs, and lauded presenters for explaining the relationships between CSOs and local people and offering suggestions on how delegates can assist in this work. Beatriz Araíyo, Association Caatinga, described her association of 1,400 NGOs working on sustainable development in Brazil's semi-arid Caatinga region. She lauded parties and the Secretariat for encouraging CSOs and youth participation in the UNCCD process.

SENEGAL said Senegalese CSOs are involved at the highest levels and called for funding and capacity support to enhance multi-stakeholder partnerships, including with local communities. PERU noted that CSOs are important actors in combating desertification in her country, and are valuable in sharing experience and best practice, and ensuring planning is comprehensive and holistic.

Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) questioned how to make civil society activities more interdisciplinary, and suggested incorporating the post-2015 development agenda into UNCCD discussions. LIBYA highlighted initiatives to collaborate with CSOs in grassroots activities, noting his country's efforts to regenerate saffron production.

Patrice Burger, CARI, France, thanked panelists for the diverse perspectives shared, noting their experiences can be multiplied many times over in drylands. He cautioned that all good practices are context-specific and some models, such as the Kubuqi desert initiative, may be difficult to replicate at the global level as few countries are in a position to offer alternative livelihoods to communities affected by DLDD. INDIA highlighted his country's integrated watershed management programme, stating CSOs currently implement 25% of project activities.

CHINA outlined lessons from its national activities to combat DLDD, observing the experiences shared had provided much room for thought. He noted that the Elion experience is "one approach," but is typical of his government's efforts to prioritize and delineate development zones, informed by science, and

environmental and social cost-benefit analyses. In conclusion, he stressed the need to build on Confucian values when enacting policies for limiting or exploiting the desert, saying "we must not forget the culture and livelihoods of people living in the desert."

BRAZIL emphasized the need to help prepare young leaders for the future. KENYA suggested using tax waivers to assist local communities' efforts to launch new products.

In final responses by panelists Wang noted companies need to promote activities in the public interest as well as to make money, and reviewed projects that can provide farmers with revenue, such as creating favorable conditions for tourism and planting trees. Kaba noted problems in communicating the value of the GGWSS project at local level was overcome by holding meetings with grassroots organizations, and integrating the project in local development and investment planning. Naghizadeh said CSOs are working with local and national institutions to re-empower indigenous populations, especially in their role in combating DLDD.

Closing the session, Vice-President Tichelmann noted such dialogues offer opportunities for delegations to build their capacity as much as for CSOs to build theirs.

CONTACT GROUPS

Discussions in the COW contact group on non-budget matters considered how to incorporate the IWG's recommendations on regional coordination mechanisms (RCMs), with some parties expressing concern on the financial implications of extending the capacity of RCMs. The group reached agreement on a draft decision on the UN Decade for Deserts and the fight against Desertification (UNDDD), and continued negotiations on accreditation of CSOs and the private sector to the COP, discussing the participation of indigenous peoples, local communities and youth. In the evening, the contact group reconvened to discuss GM-related matters.

In the morning, the CRIC contact group resumed discussions on a draft decision regarding the iterative process for assessing implementation. Among other issues, delegates considered ways to simplify reporting and the Secretariat's role in addressing some parties' difficulties with continuous national data collection and processing. In the afternoon and evening, the contact group began reviewing a draft decision on financial flows for the implementation of the Convention. Delegates from the budget group joined the CRIC contact group to negotiate a draft decision on collaboration with the GEF.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As participants ran between raindrops and thunder claps for a second day, some at COP 11 suggested that one of the meeting's "outcomes" might be remembered as bringing rain to the Namibian desert. With participants also running between contact group meetings, some suggested it was too early to anticipate the outcomes for some of the key decisions. Some added that, on a few issues, discussions were focused on whether the topic should be addressed in a Friends of the Chair or full contact group. Other discussions were said to involve a review of the history of certain UNCCD decisions, assurances regarding the level of national commitment to the Convention, and proposals regarding whether to reference specific, national-level initiatives in the outcome documents. One delegate called the decision on the Rio+20 outcome the "elephant in the room," while others recalled that negotiations often "expand to fill the time available," and wondered what would trigger the final deadline.

**UNCCD COP 11 HIGHLIGHTS:
THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2013**

Contact group discussions continued throughout the day and evening to finalize decisions on CRIC, and budget and non-budget matters. In the afternoon, an informal open-ended drafting group met to consider text relating to Rio+20 outcomes.

In the evening, delegates convened for the plenaries of the CRIC and COW, following which the COP reconvened to consider draft recommendations from the two committees.

CONTACT GROUPS

The COW contact group on non-budget matters made progress in negotiations on RCMs, discussing, *inter alia*, the role of new initiatives for strengthening the implementation of the Convention and its Strategy at the regional level. The group reached agreement on draft decisions on RCMs and accreditation of CSOs and the private sector, while negotiations continued on GM-related matters. An informal open-ended drafting group established on Wednesday evening began consideration of Rio+20 follow-up.

In the CRIC contact group, delegates removed brackets in draft decisions on financial flows and the GEF. The group made progress on draft text inviting the GEF to: continue raising awareness on UNCCD issues; use financial resources with Rio+20 outcomes on DLDD in mind; and support capacity development on issues in line with the implementation of the Convention in the GEF's 6th replenishment.

The COW contact group on programme and budget also met to discuss budget related matters in other decisions.

CRIC

CRIC Chair Mary Rowen called the CRIC to order. She thanked members of the CRIC for their hard work and cooperation, and invited delegates to consider eight draft decisions.

Strengthening and enhancing the process of alignment and implementation of action programmes with the Strategy: The Secretariat noted that the financial implications for this decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.1) were estimated to be €1,049,000, and said the programme and budget contact group would consider it. The CRIC agreed to the draft decision without comment.

The draft decision addresses the need to: integrate NAPs into national development plans; facilitate and simplify access to financing, including through the GEF and climate financing; and include private sector and grassroots organizations in the alignment process. The draft decision also recommends that parties intensify efforts to, *inter alia*: formulate and/or align their NAPs to address gaps in SLM and ensure coherence with other sectoral policies; incorporate SLM monitoring into existing national monitoring systems; and consider the added value of the alignment process as an awareness-raising tool for policy

makers, and in light of the outcome of the mid-term evaluation of the Strategy, including possible incentive schemes for alignment. The decision further calls on the next CRIC session to agree on a clear understanding of the integrated financing strategy and integrated investment framework processes, and discuss a plan for the NAP alignment process in relation to overall SLM goals. It also invites various multilateral entities to continue their work on a coherent UN system-wide contribution to implementing the Convention and tackling land challenges.

Promoting and strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies: On this draft decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.2), the Secretariat said the financial implications are estimated to be €696,000. The CRIC agreed to the draft decision without comment.

Among its preambular paragraphs, this draft decision: takes note of the Rio+20 outcome document's call for further mainstreaming sustainable development; reaffirms that the impacts of DLDD on economic and social development and poverty eradication are global challenges; welcomes the proposed standard approach and process for the formulation of future advocacy policy frameworks; and recognizes joint initiatives such as Global Drylands. The decision makes recommendations for further strengthening international partnerships, following up the outcomes of the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy, and taking action on advocacy policy frameworks. The decision also requests the Secretariat to explore the possibility of creating a "Global UNCCD Platform," in partnership with key stakeholders.

Assessment of the implementation of the Convention against strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3: On this draft decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.3), the Secretariat said the financial implications of the decision would be absorbed within the existing budget. The CRIC agreed to the draft decision without comment.

The draft decision acknowledges work done by the CST to refine the set of impact indicators and methodologies for monitoring and reporting, and calls on affected country parties to, *inter alia*: make further efforts to increase coverage of spatially explicit data on affected areas; strengthen institutional coordination to improve data accessibility; build synergies with the other Rio Conventions; and consider establishing targets using progress indicators adopted by the COP. The decision also invites global and regional partners to support improving reporting and access to, or harmonization of, data.

Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention: On this draft decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.4), the Secretariat said the financial implications would be absorbed within the existing budget, and the CRIC agreed to adopt it without comment. The draft decision highlights the importance



of allocating sufficient time for parties to review implementation of the Strategy at intersessional meetings of the CRIC and makes recommendations for improving how reviews of performance indicators by the CRIC are communicated to, and implemented by, UNCCD entities and country parties.

Programme of work for the 13th session of the CRIC: The Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.5) are estimated to be €42,500. The CRIC agreed to the draft decision without comment.

Date and venue of the 13th session of the CRIC: the Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.6) will be considered further during the negotiations on the programme and budget. The CRIC agreed to the draft decision without comment.

Iterative process relating to the assessment of implementation, including performance and progress indicators, methodology and reporting procedures: On this draft decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.7), the Secretariat said the financial implications are estimated to be €96,000. The CRIC adopted it without comment.

Among key recommendations, this draft decision requests the Secretariat and GM to prepare revised guidelines and templates, and the Secretariat to simplify the PRAIS, including the requirements for financial reporting, and reduce the number of performance indicators to lower the reporting burden on parties and other entities. Other recommendations address, *inter alia*: providing targeted capacity building to improve reporting; and improving the functioning of PRAIS and implementing plans to establish a public interface that allows for dynamic and analytical online functions.

Assessment of the Convention against the operational objectives of the Strategy: On this decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.8), the Secretariat said the financial implications would be absorbed within the existing budget, and the CRIC adopted it without comment.

The draft decision acknowledges the work of the IWG and recommendations contained in its report (ICCD/COP(11)/21). With regard to operative objective 1 on advocacy, awareness raising and education, the draft decision encourages parties to: strengthen linkages among national stakeholders; explore ways to communicate “desertification” to the public while sending a positive message on SLM; promote integration of DLDD within school curricula; and enhance awareness raising at sub-regional and regional levels, among other actions. It also calls on the Secretariat to enhance the SKBP to increase access to databases on best practices and lessons learned.

With regard to operational objective 3 on science, technology and knowledge, the draft decision recommends, *inter alia*: strengthening national support for DLDD monitoring and evaluation systems, and bridging the gap between local and national monitoring; sharing lessons learned with regard to obstacles and challenges in supporting national environmental and DLDD monitoring; and strengthening coordination among Rio Convention focal points.

With regard to operational objective 4 on capacity building, the draft decision encourages affected country parties to further mainstream DLDD issues in national initiatives carried out by science, technology and research institutions.

COW

COW Chair Norbu opened the session and introduced CRIC Chair Rowen, who reported on matters relating to sub-items considered by the CRIC on the independent mid-term evaluation of the Strategy and alignment of action programmes with the Strategy.

Review of progress in the implementation of the comprehensive communications strategy: The Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.3),

are estimated at €1,580,300, and that it would be further considered in the contact group on programme and budget. The decision was recommended for adoption by the COP.

In this decision, the Committee welcomes progress in advancing operational objective 1 of the Strategy, in particular initiatives to promote best practices in SLM, and called for greater attention to awareness raising and educational activities on DLDD issues through the World Day to Combat Desertification, UNDDD, SKBP, Land for Life and Drylands Champions awards, and other public outreach tools.

Rule 47 of the rules of procedure: With regard to this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.1), the Secretariat said the financial implications would be absorbed within the existing budget. The decision was recommended for adoption by the COP. The decision recommends postponing consideration of this item to the next COP session, and including reporting on the status of similar rules of procedures under other multilateral environmental agreements.

United Nations Decade for Deserts and the fight against Desertification (UNDDD): The Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.2) would be absorbed within the existing budget and the decision was recommended for adoption by the COP. The decision recognizes the importance of the Decade in awareness raising on the value of deserts, and the need to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaboration among UN entities to scale up observance activities.

COW Chair Norbu closed the meeting and explained that five draft decisions remain for consideration at the final meeting of the COW.

COP

COP Vice-President Honadia called the ninth meeting of COP 11 to order. He invited CRIC Chair Rowen to introduce the CRIC decisions that had just been adopted. CRIC Chair Rowen introduced the eight decisions and the Secretariat reported on the budget implications for each. The COP adopted each decision without comment.

COW Chair Norbu then introduced the three COW decisions that had just been adopted, and the Secretariat reported on the budget implications for each. The COP adopted each decision without comment.

COP Vice-President Honadia thanked delegates and informed them that the CRIC, COW and COP plenary would reconvene on Friday evening to consider further draft decisions. He adjourned the meeting at 9:30 pm.

IN THE CORRIDORS

On the penultimate day of COP 11, with negotiations on some issues reported to have picked up speed in contact groups, some observers remarked that this COP, more than the previous ten, involved the introduction of more private sector references in the language used by delegates as well as the topics of many side events. Some welcomed this change as a sign that all three key stakeholder groups – public, private sector and CSOs – are engaging in the search for solutions to combat DLDD. Others expressed concern with the trend towards “mainstreaming” concepts like the green economy in COP decisions, or with the possibility that, in public-private partnerships in drylands, affected communities’ interests could lose out.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The Earth Negotiations Bulletin summary and analysis of UNCCD COP 11 will be available on Monday, 30 September 2013 online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/desert/cop11/>

LAND POLICY & PRACTICE: A Knowledgebase of International Activities Addressing Sustainable Land: For weekly updates on follow-up to COP 11 and more, subscribe at: <http://land-l.iisd.org/about-the-land-l-mailing-list/>



SUMMARY OF THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 16-27 SEPTEMBER 2013

The eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 11) convened from 16-27 September 2013, in Windhoek, Namibia. The eleventh meeting of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST 11) and the twelfth meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 12) convened in parallel to the COP. Approximately 3,000 people from governments, UN agencies and other international organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society, participated in these meetings and associated events.

The COP also featured two half-day open dialogues with civil society organizations (CSOs) on 20 and 25 September, while a High-Level Segment, consisting of roundtable discussions among ministers and other officials, took place from 23-24 September. In addition, numerous side events, a meeting of Parliamentarians, the second Sustainable Land Management Business Forum and the Rio Conventions Pavilion (RCP) also convened over the two weeks. IISD coverage of the RCP can be found at: <http://www.iisd.ca/desert/cop11/pavilion/>

COP 11 delegates adopted 41 decisions. Among the nine decisions developed by the CST, delegates: agreed to establish a science-policy interface (SPI) to enhance the UNCCD as a global authority on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) and sustainable land management (SLM); endorsed the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal (SKBP) to enhance knowledge management, including on traditional knowledge, best practices and success stories; approved the roster of independent experts; established two *ad hoc* working groups, one on the iterative participatory process on impact-indicator refinement and monitoring, and another to discuss options for providing scientific advice to the UNCCD; and called for a multi-stakeholder partnership model for launching a fellowship programme.

Delegates approved 12 decisions recommended by the CRIC, including on: best practices in the implementation of the Convention; UNCCD's interaction with the Global Environment

Facility (GEF); multi-year workplans of the Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies; assessment of financial flows for implementation; assessing the implementation of the Convention against strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3, and against the operational objectives of the 10-year Strategy; performance and progress indicators, methodology, and reporting procedures; and ways of promoting and strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations.

The Committee of the Whole (COW), forwarded 20 decisions to the COP for adoption, including on: new housing arrangements of the Global Mechanism (GM); follow-up of the Rio+20 outcomes; improving mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention; implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy; and revised procedures for accreditation of CSOs and private sector representatives to the COP.

For the first time at a meeting of the COP, the Secretariat was required to present budget estimates for every decision prior to its approval. Due to uncertainty about the budget implications of many of the negotiated decisions, progress in the contact group on programme and budget was slow and agreement was only reached late in the evening of the last day of the meeting with

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the approved budget for 2014-15 that represents zero nominal growth over the previous biennium. Among the 41 decisions adopted by COP 11, participants highlighted the consensus reached on establishing SPI and SKBP as tools to help the Convention become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge, and launching an intersessional process to examine how to define the Convention's goals on combatting DLDD in relation to the Rio+20 outcome calling for effort to achieve a Land Degradation Neutral World (LDNW).

During closing statements delegates also highlighted that their decision to relocate the GM's headquarters to Bonn, Germany, with a liaison office remaining in Rome, Italy, was a long-sought resolution to institutional challenges. The closing of COP 11 also marked the conclusion of UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja's six-year tenure, and delegates thanked him for his contributions and welcomed his successor, Monique Barbut, former Chief Executive Officer and Chair of the GEF, as they looked forward to the directions that the COP 11 decisions and new leadership could take the Convention.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNCCD

The UNCCD is the centerpiece in the international community's efforts to combat desertification and land degradation in the drylands. It was adopted on 17 June 1994, entered into force on 26 December 1996, and currently has 195 parties. The UNCCD recognizes the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of desertification, the importance of redirecting technology transfer to be demand-driven, and the importance of involving local communities in combating DLDD. The core of the UNCCD is the development of national, subregional and regional action programmes by national governments, in cooperation with UN agencies, donors, local communities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION: In 1992, the UN General Assembly (UNGA), as requested by the UN Conference on Environment and Development, adopted resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of a convention to combat desertification (INCD) in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. The INCD met five times between May 1993 and June 1994 and drafted the UNCCD and four regional implementation annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean.

COPs 1-10: The COP met annually from 1997-2001. During these meetings, delegates, *inter alia*: selected Bonn, Germany, as the location for the UNCCD's Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as the organization to administer the GM; approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding the GM; established an *ad hoc* working group to review and analyze the reports on national, subregional and regional action programmes; adopted a fifth regional annex for Central and Eastern Europe; established the CRIC; and supported a proposal by the GEF to designate land degradation as another focal area for funding.

COP 6 met in 2003 in Havana, Cuba. Delegates, *inter alia*, designated the GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD, decided that a comprehensive review of the Secretariat's activities would be undertaken by the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), and requested the Secretariat to facilitate a costed feasibility study on all aspects of regional coordination. COP 7 took place in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2005. Delegates reviewed the implementation of the Convention and developed an MoU between the UNCCD and the GEF. An intergovernmental intersessional working group was established to review the JIU report and to develop a draft 10-year strategic plan to enhance the implementation of the Convention.

COP 8 convened in Madrid, Spain, in 2007 and, *inter alia*, adopted a decision on the Strategy. Delegates also requested the JIU to conduct an assessment of the GM for presentation to COP 9. Delegates did not reach agreement on the programme and budget, and an Extraordinary Session of the COP convened at UN Headquarters in New York on 26 November 2007 to conclude this item.

COP 9 convened in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2009. Delegates focused on a number of items called for by the Strategy and adopted 36 decisions, which addressed topics including: four-year work plans and two-year work programmes of the CRIC, CST, GM and the Secretariat; the JIU assessment of the GM; the terms of reference of the CRIC; arrangements for regional coordination mechanisms; the communication strategy; and the programme and budget.

COP 10 convened in 2011, in Changwon City, Republic of Korea. Delegates adopted 40 decisions, addressing, *inter alia*, the governance structure for the GM, by which parties agreed that the accountability and legal representation of the GM shall be transferred from IFAD to the UNCCD Secretariat.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

(CST): The CST has convened parallel meetings at each COP. At CST 1's recommendation, the COP established an *ad hoc* panel to oversee the process of surveying benchmarks and indicators, and decided that CST 2 should consider linkages between traditional and modern knowledge. CST 3 recommended that the COP appoint *ad hoc* panels on traditional knowledge and on early warning systems. CST 4 submitted proposals to improve the CST's work, and CST 5 adopted modalities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, namely through the creation of a Group of Experts. CST 6 continued discussions on improving its efficiency and effectiveness, among other agenda items. CST 7 considered land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation, among other issues. And CST 8 decided to convene future sessions in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format, which led to the convening of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference at CST 9.

The first Special Session of the CST (CST S-1) (2008) considered preparations for CST 9, elements of the Strategy related to the CST, the CST's four-year work plan and two-year costed work programme, and advice to the CRIC on measuring progress on the Strategy's Strategic Objectives.

CST 9 met concurrently with COP 9, during which the 1st Scientific Conference convened to consider the theme “Biophysical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision making in land and water management.” CST 9 also developed decisions to review the experience of the 1st Scientific Conference and to organize a 2nd Scientific Conference on the theme “Economic assessment of desertification, SLM and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas.” In addition, the CST recommended two indicators—the proportion of the population in affected areas living above the poverty line and land cover status—as the minimum required subset of impact indicators for reporting by affected countries beginning in 2012.

CST S-2 (2011) considered the status of work on methodologies and baselines for the effective use of the subset of impact indicators, among other matters. CST 10 established two *ad hoc* working groups: one to continue the iterative participatory process on impact-indicator refinement and monitoring and assessment of impacts; and one to further discuss options for the provision of scientific advice to the UNCCD. CST S-3 (9–12 April 2013, Bonn, Germany) met concurrently with the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, which discussed research and best practices in the face of DLDD and proposed methodologies for evaluating the costs and benefits of SLM.

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION (CRIC): The CRIC held its first session in Rome, Italy, in 2002, during which delegates considered presentations from the five UNCCD regions, and considered information on financial mechanisms in support of the UNCCD’s implementation and advice provided by the CST and the GM.

CRIC 2 (2003) reviewed implementation of the UNCCD, its institutional arrangements, and financing of UNCCD implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions. CRIC 3 (2005) reviewed the implementation of the Convention in Africa and considered issues relating to Convention implementation at the global level. CRIC 4 (2005) considered strengthening Convention implementation in Africa, improving communication and reporting procedures, mobilization of resources for implementation, and collaboration with the GEF.

CRIC 5 (2007) reviewed implementation of the Convention in regions other than Africa, how to improve information communication and national reporting, and the 2006 International Year for Deserts and Desertification. CRIC 6 (2007) reviewed the roles developed and developing country parties should play in resource mobilization, and collaboration with the GEF. CRIC 7 (2008) considered: the work plans and programmes for the Convention’s bodies; the format of future meetings of the CRIC; and indicators and monitoring of the Strategy, and principles for improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and format of reports submitted to the COP.

CRIC 8 (2009) reviewed the workplans of the institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention and reporting guidelines and indicators. Delegates also recommended adoption of the proposal for an online Performance Review and Assessment of

Implementation System (PRAIS). CRIC 9 (2011) considered, among other items, preliminary analyses of information contained in the PRAIS reports.

CRIC 10 (2011) discussed the strategic orientation of the Convention’s institutions and subsidiary bodies, adopted four operational objectives to assess the implementation of the Convention against performance indicators, and approved an iterative process on reporting procedures and the refinement of methodologies for the review and compilation of best practices. CRIC 11 (2013) reviewed progress in alignment of national action programmes with the Strategy. Delegates also considered input from the Intersessional Working Group for the Mid-term Evaluation of the Strategy (IWG) and the *Ad Hoc* Advisory Group of Technical Experts (AGTE) on “operationally delineating affected areas.”

COP 11 REPORT

UNCCD COP 11 opened Monday afternoon, 16 September 2013, in Windhoek, Namibia, and elected Uahenkua Herunga, Minister of Environment and Tourism, Namibia, as its President. Don Koo Lee, former Minister of Korea Forest Service and COP 10 President, highlighted the Rio+20 outcome on a land degradation-neutral world as a significant achievement, and expressed optimism that COP 11 would make progress on a target-setting approach within an institutional setting.

President Herunga observed that COP 11 will benefit from being hosted in a country committed to addressing DLDD, underscoring that a target-setting and science-based approach is essential to finding lasting solutions.

Welcoming participants, UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja noted the UNCCD’s progress on: mobilizing science for policy development on DLDD; advancing measurability and monitoring; enhancing advocacy and outreach; improving the dialogue between science and policy; and improving the UNCCD’s institutional framework. He reiterated that achieving a LDNW is key to achieving progress on other issues, including the water-energy-food nexus and eradication of extreme poverty. He expressed hope for guidance to enhance the scientific base of the Convention, a target-setting approach, and monitoring action programmes at all levels.

Ireland, on behalf of the European Union (EU), explained he expected progress in three key areas: achieving a LDNW; strengthening the science on DLDD issues by reforming and strengthening the CST; and strengthening the Convention in a cost-effective manner to achieve maximum impact. He further indicated that monitoring and reporting frameworks should be simplified to facilitate their use.

Burkina Faso, on behalf of the African Group, said the UNCCD is at a critical juncture, citing: a shrinking financial base; the completion of the current Executive Secretary’s term; Canada’s withdrawal from the Convention; poor progress towards the target of having 80% of national action programmes (NAPs) completed by 2014; and the low level of support from developed countries for NAP preparation.

India, for the Asia-Pacific Group, emphasized, *inter alia*, the need to strengthen the regional coordination mechanisms

(RCMs) for an effective implementation of the Convention, as well as financial and capacity-building support to country parties for the alignment of their NAPs by December 2014. He expressed concern about the low allocation of funds to the land degradation focal area under the GEF vis-à-vis the other two Rio Conventions, as well as the limited funding for the region.

Antigua and Barbuda, for the Latin American and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), expressed concern about the appointment of the new UNCCD Executive Secretary and requested an explanation from the UN Secretary-General on the reasons for not appointing Paula Caballero (Colombia). He said GRULAC opposed the alleged arguments of geographical imbalance in the leadership of the three Rio Conventions and a supposed lack of transparency during the selection process. He also lamented insufficient attention to his region's needs and priorities in the UNCCD context and emphasized the need for more streamlined and concise texts for national level discussions. He urged the UNCCD to focus on making the case for the economic feasibility of the use and value of drylands, in order to attract new and additional resources.

Emphasizing the role of global monitoring in reaching the goals of Rio+20, Armenia, on behalf of the Central and Eastern European States, voiced concern about recommendations on some indicators that do not allow for differentiation of land degradation characteristics among countries, and said this should be addressed by strengthening scientific research across regions.

The Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa, on behalf of CSOs, called for greater financial support of CSOs to enhance their role in raising awareness and capacity building, and to halt the decrease in the number of participating CSOs. Citing drivers of land degradation, including land grabbing, agribusiness and mining, she called for a significant increase in GEF funding.

Delegates elected the following candidates as Vice-Presidents of COP 11: Mamadou Honadia (Burkina Faso) for African States; Choi Young Tae (Republic of Korea) and Heimata Louisa Karika (Cook Islands) for Asia-Pacific States; Ashot Vardevanyan (Armenia) and Dalia Gudaitiene Holiman (Lithuania) for Central and Eastern European States; Thomas Tichelmann (Ireland) and Christine Dawson (US) for Western European and Other States; and Thiago Cavalcanti (Brazil) and Mariano Espinoza (Costa Rica) for Latin American and Caribbean States. Karika was selected as COP 11 Rapporteur.

Delegates then established a Committee of the Whole (COW) and designated Chencho Norbu (Bhutan) as its Chair. The COP allocated the following agenda items to the COW: review of the Strategy; programme and budget; governance and institutional arrangements of the GM; follow-up on the outcomes of Rio+20; and the UN Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification (2010-2020). The COP also agreed to accredit NGOs and private sector entities listed in Annexes I, II and III of document ICCD/COP(11)/20/Rev.1 as observers.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

COW Chair Norbu opened the first meeting on Tuesday, 17 September. After adopting the agenda and organization of work, the COW established two contact groups, the first on the

programme and budget for 2014-2015, and the second on non-budget issues. During two plenaries, on 26 and 27 September, COW Chair Norbu presented to the COP the outcomes of the Committee's deliberations, and the COP adopted 20 decisions based on the COW's work.

INDEPENDENT MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY:

The report by the IWG (ICCD/COP(11)/21) was discussed in the COW on Wednesday, 18 September. Several parties supported the recommendations, with: Viet Nam expressing hope they would lead to new indicators for monitoring DLDD; the Republic of Korea suggesting they would lead to discussions on the next phase of the Strategy; and the EU underlining that the purpose of the evaluation was not to modify but enhance the Strategy. Jordan stressed the need for more financial resources; Indonesia underlined a lack of financing, technological support and capacity building; and China advocated intergovernmental cooperation and involvement of the private sector. Cuba called for each of the report's recommendations to be reflected in COP 11 decisions. Morocco said parties need time to internalize and implement recommendations. Switzerland favored a pragmatic approach, including: considering best practices; accounting for countries' respective economic situations; and increasing the Convention's visibility. Algeria, on behalf of the African Group, called for a clear definition of reporting responsibilities. India said impact indicators need to be context-specific. Seychelles, on behalf of small island developing states (SIDS), called for the COP to consider SIDS in particular when addressing the recommendations.

The IWG report's recommendations were discussed in a contact group that met from Wednesday, 18 September, until Friday, 20 September. A draft decision was agreed in the COW on Friday, 27 September, and was adopted by COP the same day without amendment.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.14) requests the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the COP Bureau, to propose for consideration by COP 12, a process and potential terms of reference for developing a new strategy and plans to further improve the implementation of the Convention. The decision's annex lists decisions taken by COP 11 where the IWG's recommendations have been incorporated.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE GLOBAL MECHANISM: On Tuesday, 17 September, the Secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(11)/3 on options for new housing arrangements for the GM, including potential co-location with the Secretariat. During discussions, many parties supported the Secretariat's recommendation to locate the GM with the Secretariat in Bonn, and called for reaching a final decision in Windhoek. Stressing the GM's mandate and the importance of preserving its independence from the Secretariat, Italy said resource mobilization would be more efficient if the GM were located in the UN agricultural hub in Rome, within IFAD, and offered a €100,000 housing contribution. He indicated "controversial and sometimes incorrect figures" in the report. Germany emphasized that a fully operational GM is its primary interest,

and highlighted arguments for a relocation to Bonn, including: cost-effectiveness; increasing synergies between the GM and the Secretariat; and fostering cooperation between the UNCCD and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Algeria, supported by Honduras, said some aspects of the report need to be reviewed in light of commitments expressed by Italy. Panama, with Peru, stressed the importance of considering the operational aspects of the GM's resource mobilization mandate. Belgium drew attention to issues not fully addressed in the report, including: legal modalities; the position of GM staff; and impacts on the functioning and independence of the GM vis-à-vis the Secretariat. Switzerland opposed the way the evaluation had been carried out, saying it reflected the Secretariat's preferences.

A contact group on GM-related matters, facilitated by Markku Aho (Finland), met from Wednesday, 18 September until the final plenary. On Thursday, 19 September, the contact group began consideration of a Facilitator's draft decision containing bracketed text on the various housing options for the GM. A Friends of the Chair on the GM group met from Monday, 23 September, until the evening of Wednesday, 25 September.

During the High-Level Segment on Tuesday, 24 September, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said it could be open to hosting the GM if this was welcomed by parties and the Secretariat. As delegates addressed the FAO statement in the evening contact group on Wednesday, 25 September, many opposed the insertion of new options for which costing had not been calculated in the Secretariat's report, and stressed that a decision should be taken at COP 11.

During the COW plenary on Friday, 27 September, the Secretariat said the financial implications of the draft decision are estimated at €350,890. The decision was agreed in the COW and adopted by the COP without amendment.

Final Decision: In its decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.18), the COP relocates the GM to Bonn, to be co-located with the Secretariat, and to establish a liaison office in Rome with appropriate staff. The decision specifies that the purpose and functioning of the liaison office will be decided by the GM Managing Director in agreement with the Executive Secretary.

PROGRAMME AND BUDGET: Programme and budget for the biennium 2014-2015: The programme and budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (ICCD/COP(11)/6 and Corr.1, ICCD/COP(11)/7 and Corr.1, ICCD/CRIC(12)2-ICCD/COP(11)/CST/9) was introduced by the Secretariat in the COW on Tuesday, 17 September. Discussions on the budget resumed in the COW on Thursday morning. Noting additional funding does not guarantee effective implementation, Brazil opposed a budget increase, calling for improvements in cost efficiency and use of teleconference facilities. He also questioned the added value of new bureaucratic structures proposed by the *Ad Hoc* Working Group to further discuss the options for the provision of Scientific Advice focusing on DLDD (AGSA), describing the additional cost as "irresponsible." The US, with Trinidad and Tobago, called for a 3% decrease in the budget and urged fiscal discipline, saying her country is unable to increase financial support. Swaziland, on behalf of the African Group, opposed

any budget reduction and urged parties to pay their arrears. Cuba, Argentina, Mexico, Algeria, Peru and Colombia urged strengthening RCMs, and reflecting regional annexes' needs in workplan and budget allocations. Thailand urged synergies with other Rio Conventions, while India regretted the budgetary increase of less than 4.9% over the last biennium. Recalling the budget shortfall since COP 10, UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja reported that regional meetings had only been made possible with voluntary funding.

The contact group on programme and budget, with Sem Shikongo (Namibia) as facilitator, met from Friday, 20 September, until the final evening of COP 11. As it awaited the outcomes of decisions from other contact groups with budget implications, the group met daily to consider general questions relating to core budget requirements, special trust funds, indicative contributions, and implications of the core budget limitations. On Wednesday, 25 September, delegates from the budget contact group joined the CRIC contact group to negotiate a draft decision on collaboration with the GEF. The contact group continued meeting until 11:30 pm on Friday night, with discussions mainly focusing on the GM. In the evening of Friday, 27 September, the contact group reached consensus on a draft decision.

The draft decision on the programme and budget for the biennium 2014-2015 was agreed by the COW after 1:00 am on Saturday, 28 September, and adopted by COP.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.21) includes agreements to: approve the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 in the amount of €16,122,431, which represents zero nominal growth from the 2012-13 biennium; approve the staffing table for the programme budget; and adopt the indicative scale of contributions for 2014-2015. It further:

- decides to maintain the level of the working capital reserve at 8.3% of the estimated expenditures in the trust fund for the core budget;
- approves a contingency budget amounting to €2,073,550 for conference servicing;
- takes note of the estimated additional costs of up to €1,496,000, which will be incurred in the event COP 12 is held in Bonn;
- takes note of the funding estimates for extra-budgetary needs specified by the Executive Secretary (€7,281,000) and the GM (€11,578,150) for the biennium 2014-2015, and requests parties in a position to do so to make voluntary contributions; and
- approves a budget for the transfer of the GM to Bonn, on an exceptional one-time basis, amounting to €350,894, and authorizes the Executive Secretary to use the reserves of the trust fund for the core budget for this purpose.

Financial performance of the Convention's trust funds:

The financial performance of the Convention trust funds (ICCD/COP(11)/9-13) was introduced by the Secretariat in the COW on Tuesday, 17 September. On financial performance of the Convention trust funds (ICCD/COP(11)/6 and Corr.1, and ICCD/COP(11)/7), the Secretariat reported a lag in contributions, calling on parties to honor their commitments. Regarding the

report on unaudited financial statements for the Convention trust funds for the GM, he said due to disputed expenses and unforeseen legal costs regarding appeals from employees, the Secretariat could not reach an agreement.

Final Decision: In this decision, which is included in the decision on programme and budget (ICCD/COP(11)/L.21), the COP takes note of the financial statements for the bienniums 2010-2011 and 2012-2013, the report on financial performance and the reports on the implementation of the work programmes for the biennium 2012-2013 of the Secretariat and the GM, and the status of contributions as at 1 September 2013. The COP also expresses appreciation to parties that have paid their contributions to the core budget and to the trust funds, and called on parties that have not paid to do so without delay.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE OUTCOMES OF THE UN CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (UNCSD, or RIO+20):

On Thursday, 19 September, the Secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(11)/5 and Corr.1, explaining its contribution to the work of the UN Task Team assisting the Co-Chairs of the General Assembly Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals. The African Group, with the EU, advocated establishing an intersessional expert group. The EU and India suggested the group consider options for integrating the Rio+20 outcome in a new UNCCD strategy at COP 13. China suggested target setting must be based on consensus, scientific evaluation and effective institutional guarantees. Namibia, supported by Algeria and Armenia, said paragraph 17 of the Rio+20 outcome provides a clear mandate for the UNCCD to take action. He said he would table a draft decision for a specific protocol or annex to come out of COP 11. Emphasizing lack of clarity and scientific agreement on LDNW and zero net land degradation (ZNLD), the US proposed deletion of references to these concepts. Cuba, Argentina, Peru, Mexico and Brazil cautioned against prejudging the outcome of the post-2015 development agenda process, with Brazil also opposing expanding the UNCCD's mandate on land issues beyond drylands.

The issue was negotiated in a contact group that met from Thursday, 19 September, until the closing plenary. Delegates were unable to reach agreement on: whether using the DLDD and LDNW terminology of the Rio+20 outcome document in the UNCCD context was appropriate; and the UNCCD's mandate as it relates to the Rio+20 outcomes, which were developed in the context of a conference mandated by the General Assembly, not a treaty body. On Wednesday evening, 25 September, an informal open-ended drafting group was established to address this impasse. The group focused on the establishment of an intergovernmental working group, its role and responsibilities.

A draft decision was presented to the COW during its final plenary, and the Secretariat noted the financial implications of this decision are estimated at €188,000. In a statement after the adoption of the decision by the COW, Armenia, on behalf of affected countries from Central and Eastern Europe, pointed out that the decision does not reflect the interests of Annex V countries, which have land degradation issues outside arid zones. The COP subsequently adopted the decision.

Final Decision: In this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.19), the COP recognizes the Rio+20 outcomes and decides to establish an IWG consisting of representatives from each region and funded by voluntary contributions, to: "establish a science-based definition of land degradation neutrality in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas; develop options relating to arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas that parties might consider should they strive to achieve land degradation neutrality; and advise the Convention on the implications for its Strategy, programmes and resource requirements." The IWG is requested to take note of, among others, the post-2015 development agenda process and the SPI's work, and prepare a report for the COP Bureau 60 days before COP 12, and that this report should be sent for consideration by the CST and the CRIC prior to COP 12.

REVISED PROCEDURES FOR THE PARTICIPATION OF CSOs AND PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES IN MEETINGS AND PROCESSES OF THE UNCCD:

On Thursday, 19 September, the Secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(11)/4 on revised procedures for the accreditation of CSOs and private sector representatives to the COP and their participation in meetings and processes of the Convention. CSOs lamented that, since COP 10, only annex region CSOs and private sector representatives have been allowed to register. She suggested stricter accreditation requirements, in particular on sustainability, to ensure private sector involvement is in line with the Convention's mandate.

This agenda item was discussed in a COW contact group that met from Monday - Thursday, 23-26 September. Delegates debated: budgetary implications of developing a business engagement strategy; the need for the private sector to report to the Convention; the involvement of indigenous peoples, local communities and youth; and the composition of the CSO selection panel.

On Friday, 27 September, COW Chair Norbu introduced the draft decision. The Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision are estimated at €45,000. Brazil requested changing the wording indigenous "peoples" to "people" in accordance with language in other conventions. The decision was accepted by the COW and subsequently adopted by the COP, as amended.

Final Decision: In this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.12), the COP, *inter alia*:

- invites parties to promote the active involvement of CSOs, including indigenous people, local communities and youth, in the Convention process;
- requests the Secretariat and the GM to develop a business engagement strategy for consideration by the COP Bureau *ad interim* and by COP 12; and
- decides that the CSO selection panel should also include one representative from CSOs from countries belonging to each of the five UN regional groups.

THE 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION (2008-2018): Review of progress in the implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy: On Thursday, 19 September, the Secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(11)/2 on progress made in implementing

the communication strategy. The African Group suggested adopting an outreach programme on DLDD and developing a communication strategy to catalyze investment. CSOs urged support for participatory rural communication and education activities in local languages.

On Tuesday, 24 September, discussions in the contact group centered on the mandate of the Convention regarding the Rio+20 outcome, with delegates agreeing that awareness-raising initiatives should align with the Convention's mandate and its Strategy. Financial implications of the UNCCD recognition programmes were also debated, with the Secretariat stressing voluntary contributions for such programmes.

Presenting the draft decision to the COW on Thursday, 26 September, the Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision are estimated at €1,580,300 and that it would be further considered in the contact group on programme and budget. The decision was then agreed by the COW and adopted by the COP without discussion.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.3), *inter alia*, welcomes progress in advancing operational objective 1 of the Strategy, in particular initiatives to promote best practices in SLM, and calls for greater attention to awareness raising and educational activities on DLDD issues through the World Day to Combat Desertification, United Nations Decade for Deserts and the fight against Desertification, SKBP, Land for Life Award, the Drylands Champions programme, and other public outreach tools.

Improving mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention: On Thursday, 19 September, the Secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(11)/14 on support by the Secretariat and the GM for the enhancement of regional cooperation. The African Group requested placement of the regional coordinating unit (RCU) at the UN Economic Commission for Africa, while Georgia noted interest by countries in Central and Eastern Europe to develop a RCM. Negotiations in the contact group that met from Monday, 23 September, until Thursday, 26 September, focused on financial implications of the RCM process, inclusion of IWG recommendations on RCMs, and incorporating references to new initiatives as tools to strengthen the implementation of the Convention. The COW considered the related draft decision on Friday, 27 September, and the Secretariat reported the financial implications of this decision are estimated at €763,000. The COW agreed on the decision without comment and it was subsequently adopted by the COP.

Final Decision: In this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.4), the COP recognizes the need to further improve the capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of RCMs and to ensure RCUs carry out their functions effectively. The COP also, among others:

- requests affected country parties under each annex to: establish or revise the mandates for regional committees, RCUs and thematic programme networks, based on regional priorities; review, subject to availability of resources, existing subregional and regional action programmes to ensure they reflect regional priorities, prior to COP 12; and improve financial support to RCMs to address their identified

priorities; and

- invites parties to consider the role of new initiatives, including the Changwon Initiative and the Kubuqi International Desert Forum, as tools to strengthen the implementation of the Convention and the Strategy.

THE UN DECADE FOR DESERTS AND THE FIGHT AGAINST DESERTIFICATION (UNDDD) (2010-2020):

On Thursday, 19 September, the Secretariat introduced a report on the activities supporting the UNDDD (ICCD/COP(11)/19). During discussions, some delegates highlighted national observance activities, and the African Group called for mainstreaming UNDDD activities with World Environment Day. Discussions in the contact group touched upon budgetary implications of the UNDDD Programme.

The COW considered the related draft decision on Thursday, 26 September. The Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision would be absorbed within the existing budget. The decision was subsequently adopted by the COP without comment.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.2) recognizes the importance of the Decade in raising awareness on the value of deserts, and the need to strengthen multi-stakeholder partnerships and collaboration among UN entities to scale-up observance activities.

OUTSTANDING ITEMS: Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure:

Procedure: On Thursday, 19 September, the Secretariat noted this agenda item has been outstanding since COP 2, and presented options for moving forward on COP decision-making processes as outlined in document ICCD/COP(11)/16. Algeria, joined by Argentina, said consensus should be the norm for the COP. This item was discussed and agreed in a contact group on Monday, 23 September.

During consideration of the draft decision on Thursday, 26 September, the Secretariat said the financial implications would be absorbed within the existing budget. The decision was then agreed in the COW and adopted by the COP.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.1) requests this pending rule of procedure to be included in the agenda of COP 12 and the Secretariat to report on the status of similar rules of procedure under other multilateral environmental agreements.

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

Chair Mary Rowen (US) opened CRIC 12 on Tuesday, 17 September, and the Committee adopted the provisional agenda and organization of work (ICCD/CRIC(12)/1), as orally revised. Delegates established a contact group on CRIC matters and appointed Luis Estuardo Ríos González (Guatemala), as facilitator. The contact group held meetings from 18-27 September and developed 12 draft decisions, which were agreed in the CRIC and adopted by the COP on Thursday, 26 September. The remaining decisions on assessment of financial flows, the GEF and best practices were adopted by the COP on Friday, 27 September.

REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AND THE 10-YEAR STRATEGY: REPORT OF CRIC 11:

The CRIC 11 report (ICCD/CRIC(11)/19 and

ICCD/CRIC(11)/19/Add.1) was discussed on Wednesday, 18 September. Côte d'Ivoire, on behalf of the African Group, and Jordan and Senegal, called for increased resource mobilization to enable the implementation of the Convention. Kiribati highlighted the complexity of the GEF funding process. On resource mobilization strategies, China called on the CST to increase cooperation with the FAO, while Mexico encouraged the Secretariat and the GM to participate in regional ministerial meetings on environment, food and agriculture. Japan underlined that agreeing to the activities presented does not mean endorsement of a budget increase. China expressed concern about limited reporting by parties and called for improved impact indicators and assessments at global and national levels.

Strengthening and enhancing the process of alignment and implementation of action programmes with the Strategy: The CRIC contact group considered this sub-item on Wednesday and Thursday, 18-19 September. Delegates were initially divided on specifying “adequate, predictable and timely” financing, with discussions addressing, *inter alia*, difficulties of accessing funds and concerns about shifting responsibilities. During the closing plenary on Thursday, 26 September, the Secretariat noted that the financial implications for this decision were estimated at €1,049,000, and said the programme and budget contact group would consider it. The CRIC agreed and the COP subsequently adopted the draft decision.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.1) addresses the need to: integrate NAPs into national development plans; facilitate and simplify access to financing, including through the GEF and climate financing; include private sector and grassroots organizations in the alignment process; and support the alignment and implementation of action programmes.

The draft decision further urges affected country parties to intensify their efforts to formulate and/or align, review and update their NAPs with the Strategy and adopt them as policy documents, and encourages them to, *inter alia*:

- develop action programmes at subnational level;
- use the NAP alignment process as a means to raise the awareness of policy makers; and
- while aligning their NAPs: address specific gaps in SLM; ensure coherence with other national sectoral policies and development plans at all levels; establish specific internal coordination mechanism; and apply a participatory process.

On ways to facilitate alignment programmes, the decision requests, *inter alia*:

- the Secretariat to continue: providing support for the alignment of action programmes; evaluating the effectiveness of these activities for 2014-15; providing technical support; raising awareness; ensuring high-level political advocacy; and facilitating the use and improvement of effective tools to guide the alignment process; and
- CRIC 13 to agree on a clear understanding of the integrated financing strategy/integrated investment framework processes and their relationships with the NAP alignment process, as well as to discuss a plan for the NAP alignment process *vis-à-vis* the overall SLM goals.

Assessment of the implementation of the Convention against the operational objectives of the Strategy: The CRIC contact group began negotiating a draft decision on this item on Monday, 23 September, finalizing the text on Wednesday, 25 September. Delegates considered updates to operational objectives, outcomes and indicators and discussed appropriateness of DLDD references, as well as focusing on access to existing databases. Chair Rowen presented the draft decision to the CRIC on Thursday, 26 September, and the Secretariat said the financial implications would be absorbed within the existing budget. The COP adopted the decision.

Final Decision: With regard to operative objective 1 on advocacy, awareness raising and education, the decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.8) encourages parties to, *inter alia*: strengthen linkages among national stakeholders; streamline their awareness-raising efforts into national communication strategies; use mass media, and information and communication technologies, for further outreach; explore ways to communicate the term “desertification” to the general public, while sending a positive message; and support capacity building for communities.

With regard to operational objective 3 on science, technology and knowledge, the decision, *inter alia*: encourages affected country parties to increase their efforts to establish and/or strengthen DLDD monitoring and evaluation, as well as to strengthen national support for monitoring and evaluation systems.

With regard to operational objective 4 on capacity building, the decision, *inter alia*: requests the GM to assist affected country parties in assessing their financial needs for capacity building; encourages affected country parties to further mainstream DLDD issues in national capacity-building initiatives carried out by science, technology and research institutions; and encourages parties to support the involvement of CSOs in the national reporting process and to assist them in developing the relevant capacities when required.

Assessment of the implementation of the Convention against strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3: The CRIC contact group discussed this sub-item on Tuesday and Wednesday, 24-25 September. Parties agreed that while information from national focal points may assist the Secretariat to simplify reporting templates, this exercise should be based on the information already provided. The draft decision was presented to the CRIC on Thursday, 26 September, and the Secretariat said the financial implications of the decision would be absorbed within the existing budget. The CRIC agreed, and the COP adopted the decision without comment.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.3) invites, *inter alia*:

- affected country parties to: make further efforts towards increasing the coverage of spatially explicit data; strengthen their institutional coordination at the national level with a view to improving data accessibility; and use available and internationally recognized datasets;
- developed and developing country parties in a position to do so, as well as financial and technical institutions, to provide technical and financial support to affected country parties; and

- CRIC to continue collaborating closely with the CST in harmonizing data and methodologies to establish a baseline for the assessment of the implementation.

Assessment of financial flows for the implementation of the Convention: The CRIC contact group negotiated a draft decision on this sub-item Wednesday and Thursday, 25-26 September. Delegates disagreed on whether an individual public-private partnership demonstrating successful resource mobilization for combating desertification activities should be recognized in CRIC decisions. During the final plenary on Friday, 27 September, the Secretariat said the financial implications of this draft decision are estimated at €250,000. The CRIC agreed to the draft decision, and the COP subsequently adopted it.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.10) invites all country parties, in the context of public-private partnerships, to support private sector investment in SLM in drylands. It invites developed country parties and multilateral institutions to increase the adequacy, timeliness and predictability of the resources provided to affected country parties and relevant subregional organizations, and requests the GM to continue assisting affected country parties and subregions in developing their integrated investment frameworks and to identify domestic, foreign and innovative sources of funding for their implementation. It urges affected country parties, with assistance of the GM, to increase their efforts to establish integrated investment frameworks with the aim of 50% of affected country parties having established such frameworks by 2014.

The decision invites affected country parties to, *inter alia*:

- step up their efforts in submitting project proposals, including those that promote synergistic implementation of the Rio Conventions at the national, subregional and regional levels, to multilateral financial institutions, facilities and funds;
- step up their efforts to commit resources from their public budgets and encourage private investments for the implementation of NAPs; and
- adopt an integrated financial strategy as a tool to increase financing of SLM.

Multi-year workplans and performance of the

Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies: These sub-items (ICCD/CRIC(12)/2 and ICCD/CRIC(12)/3) were introduced on Wednesday, 18 September, in the CRIC and subsequently discussed in the COW budget group. Several parties, including China, welcomed the multi-year workplans. Cuba raised concerns about language in the workplans relating to the LDNW target, stating provisions for DLDD in *The Future We Want* are translated into the sustainable development goals (SDGs), and DLDD issues are included in the post-2015 development agenda, and that negotiations on these issues are taking place in New York and are beyond the UNCCD's mandate.

During consideration of draft decision on Friday, 27 September, the Secretariat said the financial implications would be absorbed within the existing budget. The CRIC agreed to the decision, and the COP subsequently adopted it without comment.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.12) requests the Secretariat, GM, CST and CRIC to use the workplan outlined

in the decision on the six operational objectives of: advocacy, awareness raising and education; policy framework; science, technology and knowledge; capacity building; financing and technology transfer; and management and services. The decision provides multiple targets to be reached by 2015 for each operational objective. The decision further requests: the GM to increase capacity-building support to affected country parties in accessing funding; the GM and Secretariat to prepare multi-year workplans (2016-2019); and the Secretariat to integrate these plans into a comprehensive multi-year workplan for the Convention to be considered at COP 12. It decides performance review and performance indicator criteria for the Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies.

IMPROVING THE PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AS WELL AS THE QUALITY AND FORMAT OF REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COP: Consideration of the overall report on the fourth reporting and review process: The Executive Secretary's report ICCD/CRIC(12)/7 was introduced on Wednesday, 18 September, in the CRIC. Many parties, including Algeria, Jordan, Brazil, Argentina and Colombia, noted the difficulty of measuring progress given the low number of submissions. South Africa, Panama, Costa Rica, Tanzania, Morocco and Thailand attributed poor reporting to, among other reasons, the complexity of the PRAIS system and difficulties in collecting data. Many emphasized the need for more human, technological and financial capacity to allow countries to provide information in a timely manner. Guinea-Bissau and Benin stressed the need for involvement of regional bodies to assist with disaggregated statistics. Guatemala underlined the need to adjust PRAIS to enable policy-relevant analyses.

On Tuesday, 24 September, the CRIC contact group modified a draft decision on the iterative process relating to the assessment of implementation, including performance and impact indicators, methodology and reporting procedures, discarding the initially attached annex of the IWG report (ICCD/COP(11)/21). In subsequent negotiations on Wednesday, parties discussed the Secretariat's role in addressing some parties' difficulties with sustaining national data collection and processing.

During consideration of decision on Thursday, 26 September, the Secretariat said the financial implications are estimated to be €96,000. The CRIC approved the decision and it was subsequently adopted by the COP.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.7) requests the Secretariat to, *inter alia*: develop special narrative sections to report on additional voluntary indicators and/or specific actions taken by countries to combat DLDD; simplify PRAIS, including requirements for financial reporting, and reduce the overall number of performance indicators; and ensure data and information from the reporting process are available and accessible to all. The decision also:

- invites the Secretariat, when reducing the number of indicators, to pay particular attention to e-SMART (economic, Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) criteria and results from previous reporting process; and

- urges the Secretariat to improve the functioning of the PRAIS database.

Consideration of best practices in the implementation of the Convention:

The reports on: “Promoting the analysis and dissemination of best practices” and “Accessibility of best practices,” (ICCD/CRIC(12)/4-ICCD/COP(11)/CST/7 and ICCD/CRIC(12)/5) were introduced in the CRIC on Wednesday, 18 September. China shared his country’s experience through the Kubuqi International Desert Forum. Bhutan proposed regional experience-sharing workshops on PRAIS reporting. Argentina warned about property rights risks in storing information on best practices and SLM on the PRAIS portal. Senegal urged regions to enhance dissemination of best practices. Cambodia emphasized capacity building and financial support for national reporting. Egypt urged parties to translate recommendations into action on the ground. Switzerland called for the Secretariat to assign responsibility for managing the SLM best practice database to the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT).

A draft decision on consideration of best practices in the implementation of the Convention was first discussed in a Joint CST/CRIC meeting on Thursday, 19 September. CRIC contact group negotiations on this item began on Wednesday, 25 September, and were dominated by divergent views on whether an individual public-private partnership demonstrating successful resource mobilization for combating desertification activities should be recognized in CRIC decisions. During consideration by the CRIC on Friday, 27 September, the Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision are estimated to be €88,000. The CRIC agreed, and the COP adopted the decision without comment.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.9) requests the Secretariat and the GM to facilitate consultations among relevant organizations with a view to defining a framework for all thematic topics, including by providing access to best practice databases through the SKBP and to propose a revised timeframe and the resource requirements for the compilation of best practices to CRIC 13. The decision further requests the Secretariat, *inter alia* to:

- complete the selection of the primary recommended database for a thematic topic, SLM technologies including adaptation;
- develop a UNCCD policy to access data and information provided by parties and other reporting entities; and
- facilitate cooperation between partners of the SKBP and the institution(s)/database(s) that will be tasked with the compilation and dissemination of relevant best practices.

PROMOTION AND STRENGTHENING OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER RELEVANT CONVENTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES:

Relevant documents under this agenda item (ICCD/CRIC(11)/19 and Add.1, ICCD/CRIC(12)/INF.1 and ICCD/CRIC(12)/CRP.1) were first discussed on Wednesday, 18 September, in the CRIC. Parties welcomed efforts to promote synergies among the three Rio Conventions and emphasized focusing on: increasing efficiency and resource mobilization; ensuring

national implementation efforts for each convention are complementary; and harmonizing reporting formats. Jordan proposed assigning a liaison officer to coordinate relationships among all the Conventions’ organs. Argentina cautioned against the Secretariat’s “non-conventional” approach in elaborating its multidisciplinary documents, referred to as advocacy papers. On advocacy, awareness raising and promotion of the Convention, Zimbabwe proposed the establishment of an “open and non-political” global platform allowing stakeholders to have a say on DLDD issues and the implementation of the Convention.

Delegates in the CRIC contact group worked on a draft decision on Monday and Tuesday, 23-24 September. Consultations took place, including throughout Monday night, on the appropriate utilization of recommendations from “Global Drylands: A UN system-wide response” (ICCD/CRIC(10)/INF.1) and the proposed action plan for coordinated action in the drylands (ICCD/CRIC(12)/INF.1). During consideration of the draft decision by the CRIC on Thursday, 26 September, the Secretariat said the financial implications are estimated to be €696,000. The CRIC agreed to the decision and the COP adopted it without comment.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.2), *inter alia*:

- encourages the Secretariat to enhance its cooperation with UN agencies, organizations and treaties that are members of the UN Environmental Management Group, based on the recommendations in the report “Global Drylands: A UN system-wide response;” and
- requests the Secretariat to: assist country parties to promote partnerships to develop and implement national drought management policies; assess and report on the effectiveness of existing advocacy policy frameworks; and foster dialogue among stakeholders at CRIC 13 in the context of existing advocacy policy frameworks on substantive thematic issues.

COLLABORATION WITH THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY: Report by the GEF on its strategies, programmes and projects for financing the agreed incremental costs of activities concerning desertification:

The GEF report (ICCD/CRIC(12)/6) was first discussed on Wednesday, 18 September. Several parties called for expanding resource allocations to UNCCD focal points and improving direct accessibility to funds at all levels. Costa Rica said an alliance with the GEF allowed his country to transfer funds directly to farmers. Guatemala asked for a reassessment of co-financing required under the GEF and increased technical support and, with Tunisia, called for streamlining the bureaucratic process.

The CRIC contact group, joined by delegates from the budget contact group, negotiated a draft decision on this item from 25-27 September. Discussions focused on eliminating GEF references in other CRIC decisions and removing requests to the GEF incompatible with its mandate and decision-making structures. Parties disagreed on the timeliness of the request to the GEF, noting unresolved discussions on this matter among GEF donors.

On Friday, 27 September, the CRIC considered the draft decision and the Secretariat said the financial implications would be absorbed within the existing budget. The CRIC agreed to, and the COP adopted, the decision without comment.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.11) requests the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the CEO of the GEF, to prepare draft amendments to the existing MoU between the UNCCD and the GEF and report on proposed draft amendments to COP 12. The decision, *inter alia*: requests the Secretariats of the GEF and the UNCCD to engage in consultations on harmonizing the disbursement of funding for enabling activities with the deadlines for the alignment and the reporting and review process; calls on parties to align their programming of GEF resources at the national level, taking into account the priorities of subregional and regional action programmes; and invites parties to utilize GEF financial resources in their implementation of activities geared towards the objectives of the Convention, taking into account the outcome of Rio+20 relating to DLDD.

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES OR INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS TO ASSIST THE COP IN REGULARLY REVIEWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: This item was introduced in the CRIC contact group on Wednesday, 25 September. A draft decision was considered on Thursday, 26 September, and the Secretariat said the financial implications would be absorbed within the existing budget. The decision was agreed by the CRIC without comment and subsequently adopted by the COP.

Final Decision: In this decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.4), parties, *inter alia*:

- decide that the intersessional session of the CRIC to provide recommendations on priorities to be included in their programme of work and budget for the following programming biennium;
- request the Secretariat to use the outcomes of intersessional deliberations of the CRIC to inform the drafting of decisions and recommendations for consideration by the COP; and
- request the Secretariat and the GM to synthesize the outcomes of intersessional meetings, including on best practices, into information and capacity-building materials to guide parties in their efforts to enhance the implementation of the Convention.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR CRIC 13: The CRIC contact group discussed this item on Wednesday, 25 September. During the consideration of the draft decision by the CRIC on Thursday, 26 September, the Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision are estimated to be €42,500. The CRIC agreed and the COP adopted the decision without comment.

Final Decision: The final decision ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.5 lists six agenda items with seven sub-items for CRIC 13.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE 13TH SESSION OF THE CRIC: This was considered by the CRIC on Thursday, 26 September, and the Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision would be considered further during the negotiations on the programme and budget. The CRIC agreed to, and the COP adopted, the decision without comment.

Final Decision: The decision (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.6) states that CRIC 13 shall be held over five days during the period 8-27 November 2014, in Bonn, Germany, or in a venue with UN conference facilities in the event that no party makes an offer to host that session and meet the additional cost.

CRIC CLOSING SESSION: During its closing session, on Friday, 27 September, the CRIC concluded consideration of all decisions. Delegates also elected by acclamation the following delegates as Vice-Chairs to the Bureau of CRIC 13 and 14: Richard Mwenedandu (Kenya); Warapong Waramit (Thailand); Yuri Kolmaz (Ukraine); and Patrick Wegerdt (EU). In closing, Chair Rowen noted that COP 11 had been one of the most productive of the ten COPs she has attended. Chair Rowen then thanked other CRIC officials, the Secretariat, and participants for their hard work. She adjourned the meeting at 7:42 pm. During the closing COP plenary, delegates elected Philbert Brown (Jamaica) as the CRIC 13 and 14 Chair.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Chair Antônio Rocha Magalhães opened CST 11 on Tuesday, 17 September. After adopting the agenda and organization of work (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/1), the Committee also adopted the final report of the third special session of the CST (ICCD/CST(S-3)/7). A joint contact group between the CRIC, CST and AGTE, facilitated by Nicholas Hanley (EU), was established and met throughout the week to discuss best practices and knowledge sharing.

ROSTER OF INDEPENDENT EXPERTS: On Tuesday, 17 September, the Secretariat introduced the roster of independent experts (ICCD/COP(11)/15). On the proposal to revise and update details of existing national experts and propose new roster candidates, Japan and Argentina voiced concerns regarding the length and accessibility of the roster. Cuba, Niger, Pakistan and Switzerland suggested the Secretariat prepare a study analyzing its usefulness. Chair Magalhães referred the matter to the CST contact group, also facilitated by Nicholas Hanley, for further discussion throughout the week.

During consideration of the decision by the CST on Friday, 20 September, Brazil, opposed by the US, requested to include reference to the roster of independent experts as an additional source of scientific advice. After some debate, the US conceded to allow this inclusion.

Final Decision: Among other issues, this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.2) recognizes the need to improve the quality of services provided to parties through implementing the Convention in line with the Strategy, and notes the need to involve the scientific community by: inviting parties to propose new candidates; urging parties to confirm current experts and nominate new experts through national focal points; and requesting the Secretariat to set up web-based facilities and validate and manage the roster of experts.

CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS MADE IN THE ORGANIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL, INTERDISCIPLINARY SCIENTIFIC ADVICE IN THE CONVENTION PROCESS: On Tuesday, 17 September, the Secretariat introduced documents ICCD/COP(11)/CST/3, ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.1 and ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.2. Mariam

Akhtar-Schuster (DesertNet), AGSA Chair, presented the AGSA's recommendation for a modular approach to an integrated SPI. She explained the proposed approach could include a science-policy platform, regional science and technology hubs, and an Independent Group of Scientists (IGS).

The EU stressed the need to enhance synergies among existing science-policy platforms including the CST, the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). Morocco, Switzerland, Iran, Cameroon, Argentina, Cuba and others said adopting the recommendations could undermine and duplicate work of existing UNCCD advisory bodies. Switzerland suggested merging the SPI and IGS to form a permanent working group under the CST.

Argentina noted that UNCCD Scientific Conferences are not inclusive events and, as such, an IGS drawing mostly from them would not be a representative forum for informed policy-making. While supporting the proposed regional approach, Brazil noted it would be expensive, complex and result in additional bureaucracy. Italy proposed further work to refine AGSA's recommendations. Israel called for emphasis on the "P" in SPI.

Methods to enable the UNCCD to become the leading authority on DLDD scientific research were further discussed in the CST contact group throughout the week. By the morning of Friday 20 September, the contact group had yet to reach consensus on an exact model, but delegates did reach agreement on an SPI body, the form and function of which will be reviewed at COP 13.

During consideration of the draft decision by the CST on Friday, 20 September, the Secretariat added the financial implications of this decision are estimated to be €420,000. The decision was approved by the CST and adopted by the COP.

Final Decision: In its decision (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.3), the COP establishes a SPI to ensure science-policy dialogue that will be reviewed at COP 13:

- with the mandate of analyzing, synthesizing and translating relevant scientific findings and recommendations from DLDD-related scientific conferences and scientific networks;
- comprising members of the CST Bureau, five nominated Regional Implementation Annex scientists, ten scientists elected by the CST Bureau with consideration for a balanced disciplinary and regional balance, and three observers, with one each from a CSO, international organization and a relevant UN organization; and
- co-chaired by the CST Bureau Chair and a scientist selected by the SPI members.

The COP further, *inter alia*: encourages the formation of an independent consortium of scientific networks on DLDD and regional science and technology platforms to interact with the SPI; invites parties to promote targeted scientific research on DLDD, cooperate at national, regional and international levels, and harness traditional knowledge; and invites parties to make voluntary and in-kind contributions to support the SPI.

CONSIDERATION OF THE PROGRESS REPORT OF THE UNCCD FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME:

On Tuesday, 17 September, the Secretariat presented the report on the progress of the fellowship programme (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/8), which was then sent to the CST contact group for further discussion throughout the week.

Final Decision: In this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.1), welcoming initial pledges and commitments by potential partners of the fellowship programme, and the Partnership Agreement and Governance Manual for establishing the programme, the COP invites: broadening the partnership; linking the programme with capacity-building activities of the Secretariat; and considering collaboration with other Rio Conventions in support of the UNCCD fellowship programme.

IMPROVEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT, INCLUDING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE, BEST PRACTICES AND SUCCESS STORIES:

Introducing the sub-item on the SKBP on Wednesday, 18 September, Chair Magalhães invited comments on document ICCD/COP(11)/CST/6 and its progress report (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.4). Elysabeth David, UNCCD Secretariat, said it aims to develop an online portal that aggregates knowledge from existing repositories, and described the current pilot phase.

Many parties, including Morocco, Argentina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Costa Rica and Yemen, raised concerns regarding: internet access at the local level; language issues; and the system's ability to capture traditional knowledge and local practices. Tunisia said the objective of the undertaking cannot be achieved without commitment at the national level, and Namibia suggested adding mobile phone functionality to increase accessibility. Turkey suggested countries carry the responsibility of local language translations. Mexico, Italy and China called for greater regional knowledge sharing. Further discussions took place on this issue in the CST contact group throughout the week.

There was no separate decision on this sub-item.

Promoting the analysis and dissemination of best practices:

Chair Magalhães introduced this sub-item on Wednesday, 18 September, based on decisions 21/COP.10 and 15/COP.10, and relevant documents (ICCD/CRIC(12)/4-ICCD/COP(11)/CST/7 and Corr.1 and ICCD/COP(11)/CST/6). CRIC Vice-Chair Hussein Nasrallah (Lebanon) facilitated the discussion.

Brazil requested clarification on the CST's work to identify and recommend topics on which the CST requires advice. Japan called for the UNCCD to build partnerships with relevant decentralized organizations to facilitate knowledge transfer to the lowest level. Argentina supported calls for increased collaboration with WOCAT but voiced concerns over intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples. The US recalled that ownership and control of intellectual property remains in the hands of the countries hosting the information, not the UNCCD. Further discussions took place on this issue in the CST contact group throughout the week.

During consideration of a draft decision on this item by the CST on Friday, 20 September, the Secretariat said the financial implications are estimated to be €477,000.

Final Decision: In its decision (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.4), the COP requests the Secretariat to: continue active partnership-building activities with organizations and networks that maintain content repositories on knowledge and expertise relevant to the UNCCD; improve the website through regular updates, enhanced navigation and search functionalities, and access to languages other than English; and to continue developing the SKBP through promoting knowledge brokering and information exchange initiatives at national, regional and international levels. The COP also invites interested organizations that maintain regional-level relevant repositories to cooperate in the pilot implementation of the SKBP, and requests the UNCCD Executive Secretary to report on progress made regarding in implementing this decision at COP 12.

ADVICE ON HOW BEST TO MEASURE PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 1, 2 AND 3 OF THE STRATEGY – RESHAPING THE OPERATION OF THE CST IN LINE WITH THE STRATEGY: On Wednesday, 18 September, Gunilla Bjorklund (Sweden), AGTE Chair and AGTE member Juan Puigdefabregas (Spain) presented the AGTE's final recommendations (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/2). They highlighted: operational delineation of affected areas; global, national and local indicators; a conceptual indicator-integration framework; monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; linking across scales; and technical and resource requirements for current and future work.

The EU suggested using global indicators in the absence of national data, the US called for further clarification of indicators, and Japan urged refining definitions and methodologies. Algeria suggested considering indicators used by the Sahara and Sahel Observatory. India opined low reporting levels stem from a lack of appropriate datasets and of understanding of affected areas. Sudan, Morocco, Cuba and Egypt said affected areas should be defined broadly, and Recommendation 1 on operational delineation of affected areas be mandatory. Argentina warned this would include categories outside the mandate of the UNCCD. The Philippines proposed defining and considering seasonal aridity, which his country suffers from. FAO indicated the importance of the AGTE's discussion of multilevel indicators and requested more work be undertaken on this topic.

The joint CRIC-CST contact group met throughout the week to further discuss these issues. As negotiating time wound down on Friday afternoon, discussion focused on ways to implement the delineation of areas affected by DLDD, and revising provisionally-adopted impact indicators. On the delineation of areas, delegates expressed differing views, and contact group Chair Hanley referred the text to the CST.

The draft decision was considered by the CST on Friday, 20 September, and the Secretariat noted the financial implications of this decision are estimated to be €184,000.

Final Decision: In this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.6), the COP decides to maintain the strategic objectives of the Strategy while requesting revision of impact indicators by linking them to operational objectives and ensuring they are easily measurable. The COP also decides to, *inter alia*: establish a monitoring and evaluation approach consisting of indicators,

a conceptual framework, and indicator-sourcing mechanisms at the national level; use the term “progress indicator” rather than “impact indicator;” refine indicators through peer review; and require reporting for indicators that are part of standardized global datasets. On national indicators, the COP invites affected parties to develop and implement a new indicator framework to track progress and report at multiple scales, and encourages parties to establish targets using progress indicators while taking into account regional and national specificities.

RESHAPING THE OPERATION OF THE CST IN LINE WITH THE STRATEGY: Review of the outcomes of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference:

The CST considered this sub-item on Thursday, 19 September. Jonathan Davis, Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC), outlined the preliminary outcomes of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, held in April 2013, in Bonn, Germany, contained in document ICCD/COP(11)/CST/4. He also presented recommendations contained in documents ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.3 and Corr.1. Yemen called for a unified definition of DLDD, while the EU highlighted language barriers. Morocco lamented the low survey response rate. South Africa, with Italy, called for efforts to publish research presented at the conferences. Tunisia remarked that the first two conferences had not provided compelling evidence to decision makers and funding entities about the role of scientific research on DLDD and, with Mali, suggested this be the focus of the 3rd Scientific Conference. SAC Chair Davis suggested the SPI could help improve the conversation between science and policy makers. The topic was considered further in the CST contact group.

There was no separate decision on this sub-item.

Assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference:

Chair Magalhães opened the discussion on the sub-item on independent assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference on Thursday, 19 September (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/INF.5 and ICCD/COP(11)/CST/4). Rachel Schutte, Consultant, provided an overview of the assessment methodology, highlighting, *inter alia*, gender and regional balance, the need for early confirmation of the Conference date and venue, and “decoupling” conferences from the CST process to free up resources for implementation.

Commenting on the report, Japan said the UNCCD must undertake more and better communication of conference results to improve voluntary funding contributions. Ethiopia and Uganda indicated side events should be better organized. The topic was considered further in the CST contact group.

During consideration of this draft decision by the CST on Friday 20 September, the Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision are estimated to be €782,600.

Final Decision: In this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.7), the COP calls upon the Global Risk Forum Davos to share information on mobilization of partnerships with other organizations and institutions, and lessons learned in preparing the 2nd Scientific Conference. The COP also, *inter alia*: invites scientists to publish their research findings; requests

the Secretariat to facilitate publication of fact sheets, policy briefs, and targeted outcomes; and make all conference outputs available through the UNCCD website.

Organization of Future UNCCD Scientific Conferences:

On Thursday, 19 September, Chair Magalhães presented the assessment of UNCCD Scientific Conferences (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/4) and recommended future conferences be held intersessionally. The topic was considered further in the CST contact group.

Final Decision: This decision (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.7), which is included in the decision on the UNCCD 2nd and 3rd Scientific Conferences, calls on the COP to, *inter alia*: hold future UNCCD Scientific Conferences intersessionally in conjunction with CST sessions; focus its agenda only on specific thematic topics selected for the UNCCD Scientific Conference and its preliminary outcome review; add an extra day to the CST intersessional to allow contributions to the CRIC review against strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3; and request the SPI to translate the conference outcomes into CST recommendations, assess the conferences in supporting UNCCD decision-making processes, and propose future conference topics.

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT MULTI-YEAR WORKPLAN FOR THE CST (2014-2017):

On Thursday, 19 September, the Secretariat introduced document ICCD/CRIC(12)/2-ICCD/COP(11)/CST/9, noting the CST is only to discuss the objective on science, technology and knowledge. Argentina noted RCUs do not have the capacity to implement activities in the workplan and, supported by the US and Brazil, questioned why the workplan lacked reference to the SKBP. Morocco suggested adding capacity building to the operational objective on advocacy, awareness raising and education. The topic was considered further in the CST contact group.

During the closing CST session, Brazil expressed concern that there were still ongoing discussions on the concept of land degradation neutrality and the Rio+20 outcomes and requested the deletion of reference to this topic in the draft decision, and parties agreed.

Final Decision: In this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.5), the COP decides to include reshaping CST operation in line with the Strategy on the agenda of CST S-4, which includes preparation of the 3rd Scientific Conference, the preliminary outcomes of the 3rd Scientific Conference, and preparation for the 4th Scientific Conference on “Towards achieving land degradation neutrality in the context of sustainable development.”

In the related decision on the venue and date of the CST S-4 special session (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.8), parties decide to hold it no later than April 2015 in Bonn, Germany, or in another venue with UN conference facilities should no party make an offer to host the session and meet financial costs. The COP requests the Executive Secretary to facilitate participation by eligible science and technology correspondents.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR CST 12: On Friday, 20 September, Chair Magalhães reported on discussions of the CST workplan contained as part of document ICCD/CRIC(12)/2-ICCD/COP(11)/CST/9 and explained the related draft decision

on the draft multi-year workplan of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies would be tabled in the CRIC. The Secretariat said the financial implications of this decision and possible ways of meeting them will be considered by the contact group for the programme and budget.

Final Decision: In this decision (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.9), the COP decides that CST 12 shall be held over four working days, and will discuss:

- progress on measures to enable the UNCCD to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to DLDD and mitigation of drought effects, especially regarding the SPI;
- progress made in measuring progress regarding strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3;
- the CST 4 report, review of the 3rd Scientific Conference and assessment of its organization;
- progress on preparation for the 4th Scientific Conference and organization of future conferences;
- progress made in improving knowledge management, including traditional knowledge, best practices and success stories, and progress made related to the roster of independent experts;
- developments related to the UNCCD fellowship programme; and
- providing a draft four-year workplan of the CST (2016-2019).

CST CLOSING SESSION: During its closing session on Friday evening, 20 September, the CST forwarded nine draft decisions to the COP for adoption (ICCD/COP(11)/CST/L.1-9). Chair Magalhães then reported on discussions of the CST workplan contained as part of document ICCD/CRIC(12)/2-ICCD/COP(11)/CST/9 and explained the related draft decision on the draft multi-year workplan of the Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies would be tabled in the CRIC.

The CST nominated and elected by acclamation the following delegates as Vice-Chairs to the Bureau of CST 12: Fouad Chehat (Algeria), Allaadeen Mohammed Al Sharabi (Yemen), Hamid Custovic (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Sonia Gonzalez (Peru). During the closing plenary, the COP elected the Western European and Other States nominee, Uriel Safriel (Israel), as Chair for its 12th session by acclamation.

HIGH-LEVEL SEGMENT

The High-Level Segment took place on Monday and Tuesday, 23-24 September. COP President Herunga welcomed delegates and introduced Namibian Deputy Prime Minister Marco Hausiku to deliver statements by Prime Minister Hage Geingob and President Hifikepunye Pohamba. Hausiku commended outgoing UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja for his efforts to integrate DLDD and soil issues in the Rio+20 outcome and pledged Namibia's support under the incoming leadership of Monique Barbut. UNCCD Executive Secretary Gnacadja highlighted COP 11's unique opportunity to establish a new paradigm to achieve the vision of a LDNW. Veerle Vandeweerd, Director, Environment and Energy Group, UNDP, on behalf of UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, underscored that healthy land is a prerequisite for food and water security and averting political instability.

SPECIAL STATEMENTS AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL ON BEHALF OF REGIONAL AND INTEREST GROUPS:

The representatives from regional and interest groups thanked outgoing Executive Secretary Gnacada for his leadership of the Convention, and looked forward to working with Executive Secretary designate Barbut.

Fiji, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, called for, *inter alia*: empowering RCUs; maintaining current budget levels and improving the UNCCD's cost efficiency; and ensuring robust DLDD funding in the next GEF replenishment. Lithuania, on behalf of the EU, said science and technology should be prioritized if the UNCCD is to become a global authority on DLDD. He noted that IPBES could promote a global and integrated approach, with land degradation as a major issue, and stated that all COP decisions must contain a cost assessment.

Burkina Faso, on behalf of the African Group, called on the COP to produce efficient, operational strategies with measurable targets, and supported the GM's co-location with the Secretariat. India, on behalf of Asia-Pacific States, indicated support for a mechanism that can invigorate and streamline scientific efforts and the Changwon Initiative. Panama, on behalf of GRULAC, called for being precise when using the term land degradation. He reiterated GRULAC's concern over the selection process for the UNCCD Executive Secretary, and underscored that improved dissemination of best practices is key to moving forward on DLDD. Belarus, on behalf of the Central and Eastern European States, highlighted that the UNCCD brings together countries that deal with drylands as well as other land degradation issues, giving the Convention strength and complexity. Israel, on behalf of the Northern Mediterranean Region, said the region has accepted the invitation of Turkey to establish an RCU and looks forward to cooperation with the Secretariat in this regard.

Both ENDS, on behalf of CSOs, lamented that COP discussions and documents seldom reference specific DLDD drivers, which she said are related to unsustainable practices of large agribusiness. The National Youth Council of Namibia, on behalf of Youth, said young people aim to ensure "those who come after us will find our world in the best condition to farm, live and make a living."

ROUNDTABLE I: THE ROLE OF THE UNCCD IN ACHIEVING A LDNW IN THE CONTEXT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: COP President Herunga introduced the session, which was co-chaired by Bernice Adiku Heloo, Deputy Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation, Ghana, and Susheel Kumar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Forests, India. The session was moderated by Clare Short, former Secretary of State for International Development, UK.

Keynote speaker Uriel Safriel, Blaustein Institute for Desert Research, Israel, elaborated on the meaning of LDNW, and described the vicious cycle of biophysical processes driven by land users through persistent productivity losses leading to poverty and causing social, economic and political problems. He underscored that awareness raising should start at the community level. Timo Mäkelä, European Commission, said COP 11 was a "make or break" meeting and called on the UNCCD to solve

its institutional issues and build a framework for gathering and sharing scientific knowledge. Edna Molewa, South African Minister of Water and Environmental Affairs, stressed that concerted international effort is needed to implement a LDNW by 2030, and said other conventions must involve themselves in DLDD issues to facilitate real progress.

ROUNDTABLE II: OVERCOMING HURDLES OF SCALING UP AND DISSEMINATING GOOD PRACTICES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UNCCD IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS: Neville Gertze, Namibian Ambassador to Germany, and Michel Mordasini, Assistant Director-General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, co-chaired this session. Moderator Dennis Garrity, UNCCD Drylands Ambassador, said scaling up was "where this Convention should come alive."

Keynote speaker Chris Reij, World Resources Institute, said scaling up drylands re-greening projects entails: identifying and analyzing re-greening successes; working at the grassroots; ensuring top-down meets bottom-up; developing a good communications strategy; and developing agroforestry value chains. Yacouba Sawadogo, a farmer from Burkina Faso, described his efforts in combatting desertification and the film about his life: "The Man who Stopped the Desert." Salif Ouédraogo, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Burkina Faso, noted that hurdles to SLM include weak capacity, illiteracy, financial constraints, poor monitoring and oversight systems, lack of investment in SLM mechanisms, and land insecurity.

Igor Kachanovsky, Deputy Minister, National Resources and Environmental Protection, Belarus, emphasized integrated approaches to agricultural and industrial development. Mudiyanselage Uthpala Dayananda Basnayake, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Renewable Energy, Sri Lanka, said additional research and development is critical for SLM. Ambassador Carlos Manuel Rojas Lago, Ministry of Agricultural Affairs, Cuba, noted the potential of the Latin American Initiative on Science and Technology to promote regional cooperation in applied sciences for SLM. Responding to presentations, Franklin Moore, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau for Africa, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), described national policy-making as "the place where bottom-up and top-down meet," and warned that, for extremely poor farmers, initial financial support may be needed to encourage investments in SLM and innovation.

ROUNDTABLE III: ECONOMICS OF DESERTIFICATION, LAND DEGRADATION AND RESTORATION: Onno Adalbert Hückmann, Ambassador of Germany to Namibia, and Lahcene Kaid-Slimane, Ambassador of Algeria to Namibia, co-chaired this session. Hückmann introduced the International Economics of Land Degradation (ELD) initiative. Keynote speaker and Moderator Richard Thomas, ELD scientific coordinator, UN University, presented the initiative's interim findings. He said recommendations included: establishing Payments for Ecosystems Services schemes; encouraging voluntary payments for conservation; creating micro-finance schemes; establishing research, policy and

stakeholder platforms; and improving data availability. Naoko Ishii, CEO and Chairperson, GEF, noted that land is the meeting point for environmental issues, and said the GEF wants to work together with the UNCCD to catalyze action and break down silos.

Maria Teresa Kralikas, Minister for General Direction of Environmental Matters, Ministry of Foreign Relations, Argentina, said development of value-added products for smallholders has been policy-driven in the case of Argentina. Jean-Pierre Thebault, Ambassador for the Environment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France, urged breaking silos, including among conventions, mind-sets, and governmental departments. Respondent Michael Mack, World Business Council on Sustainable Development (WBCSD) and CEO, Syngenta, noted that subsistence farmers are “small businesses-in-waiting.” Welcoming the ELD report, he said its focus on fact-based analysis would contribute to more cost-benefit assessments of land degradation.

FINAL DISCUSSION BY MINISTERS ON THE WAY FORWARD:

COP 11 President Herunga opened the final session of the High-Level Segment. Hanifi Avci, General Director, General Directorate of Combating Desertification and Erosion, Ministry of Forests and Water Affairs, Turkey, announced Turkey’s offer to host COP 12 in 2015.

Monique Barbut, incoming UNCCD Executive Secretary, supported synergies between conventions and said she would ensure the UNCCD’s indicators work together with those found in other Rio Conventions. FAO declared FAO could be open to consider hosting the GM if this were welcomed by parties and the Secretariat.

ENDA, for CSOs, said a responsible private sector will be critical. Zenab for Women in Development, Sudan, for CSOs, said parties should focus on drivers of land degradation, including the mining industry, deforestation and large scale agriculture. She urged the UNCCD to only engage with businesses committed to sustainable livelihoods and healthy ecosystems.

SLM Business Forum Chair David Nuyoma outlined the Forum’s Declaration, which included commitments to: participate in the implementation of the Convention and Strategy; monitor, measure and communicate impacts of business activities on land; and incorporate SLM into business operations.

Concluding the session, COP President Herunga summarized discussions from the roundtables and highlighted that the Convention should, *inter alia*, emphasize recognition of land and soil as foundation of the food-security and poverty-reduction nexus and thus provide impetus for countries to mobilize resources and scale up SLM, and shift from a reactive to a more proactive stance to involve prevention and planning at national level.

UNCCD Executive Secretary Gnacadja assured delegates that the outcome of the High-Level Segment would be presented to the COP for its consideration, and noted that this COP will be remembered for welcoming a farmer to give a keynote address at a high-level event.

Complete *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* coverage of these discussions is available at <http://www.iisd.ca/vol04/enb04250e.html> and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol04/enb04251e.html>.

INCLUSION OF ACTIVITIES OF CSOS WITHIN THE OFFICIAL PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE COP: OPEN DIALOGUE SESSIONS

Two half-day open dialogue sessions with CSOs took place on Friday, 20 September, and Wednesday, 25 September.

1ST DIALOGUE SESSION – RESOURCE MOBILIZATION:

Discussing national experiences, Marioldy Sanchez Santivañez, Asociación para la Investigación y el Desarrollo Integral (AIDER), Peru, lamented that the dryland forests of Peru fall outside of remit of the UNFCCC because of a definitional issue, and therefore are not eligible for REDD+ (Reduced emissions from avoided deforestation and forest degradation in developing countries, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries) projects. Fatima Ahmed, Zenab for Women in Development, Sudan, said empowering rural women helps alleviate poverty, improve food security and enhance SLM. She lamented difficulties NGOs face in accessing GEF funding. Eileen de Ravin, UNDP’s Equator Initiative, said mobilizing resources is not only about funding, and recommended the Initiative’s publication, “The Power of Local Action,” as a useful resource on scaling up successful local practices. China, while recognizing the significance of CSOs, underscored the importance of the private sector in DLDD. Stressing the importance of CSO involvement in grassroots activities, UNEP reported that CSOs play a lead role in 30% of UNEP/GEF projects on land degradation, biodiversity and climate change, and an active role in 67% of projects.

Discussing resource mobilization at the international level, Lee Sung-Gil, Future Forest, said cooperation among Korean and Chinese NGOs and local governments helped create the “Korea-China Friendship Great Green Wall,” a 16 km long and 0.6 km wide windbreak of trees to combat dust storms in the Kubuqi desert. Christian Houdus, DRYNET, highlighted: reductions of UNCCD funding of civil society over time; the need for a cautious approach to private sector investment under the UNCCD; and ambiguity over the concept of ZNLD, which could be understood as a compensation mechanism offering a “license” to degrade. He said bringing CSOs into discussions on donor funding guidelines could enable more organizations to qualify for financing. Jean-Marc Sinnassamy, GEF, described resources available to CSOs via the GEF. Turkey called on delegates to increase voluntary contributions and noted other avenues to help CSOs, such as workshops and training. He also said parties should invite CSOs to be members of national coordination units.

2ND DIALOGUE SESSION – CAPACITY BUILDING:

Kenneth Ganeb and Vivian Kinyaga, Desert Research Foundation of Namibia, and Maria Tharacky Namupala, the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa, presented on capacity-building initiatives in the subregion. Nahid Naghizadeh, CENESTA, Iran, highlighted capacity-building activities to align Iran’s NAP with the Strategy, including capacity-building workshops for community level stakeholders.

Fatima Kaba, ENDA-TM, Senegal, described efforts to develop a platform through which CSOs could develop a common vision and build capacity to participate in political events, such as the COP. Wang Wenbiao, CEO Elion, China, described his company's desertification-control activities in the Kubuqi Desert, and encouraged CSOs to combine public and market interests in their work. Nathalie van Haren, Both ENDS, the Netherlands, presented on the re-cultivation of saffron on degraded cotton fields in Turkey and an organic rooibos tea cooperative in South Africa, both resulting in improved ecological, social and economic benefits. She offered recommendations for delegates on ways to facilitate CSO work and increase their capacities.

During discussions, Settar Aslan, President, Trade Union of Turkish Agriculture and Forestry Laborers, said global environmental problems are the result of "aggressive production methods," and stressed without global action, "we are doomed to fail." The Philippines requested the Secretariat insert CSO funding into the COP work programme. Burkina Faso said that the private sector, government and civil society must work in solidarity. Kenya said his country's NAP has been mostly driven by CSOs, while India stated CSOs implement 25% of India's integrated watershed management programme activities. The US lauded presenters for offering suggestions on how delegates can assist their work. Senegal and Peru said Senegalese CSOs are involved at the highest levels and called for funding and capacity support. Patrice Burger, CARI, France, said good practices are often context-specific and may be difficult to replicate globally. Closing the session, COP Vice-President Tichelmann noted such dialogues offer opportunities for delegations to build their capacity as much as for CSOs to build theirs.

Complete *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* coverage of these discussions is available at <http://www.iisd.ca/vol04/enb04249e.html> and <http://www.iisd.ca/vol04/enb04252e.html>.

CLOSING PLENARY

At 8:34 pm on Friday, 27 September, COP 11 President Herunga convened the closing plenary and invited the COP to finalize remaining draft decisions. The COP elected Uriel Safriel (Israel) as Chair of CST 12, as well as any intersessional meetings, and Philbert Brown (Jamaica) as CRIC 13 and 14 Chair. The COP adopted, without discussion, a draft decision on the credentials of delegations (ICCD/COP(11)/L.17), and took note of the related report (ICCD/COP(11)/22).

CRIC: CRIC Chair Rowen reviewed the report of the CRIC and its recommendations, after which the COP adopted, without discussion, the draft decisions that it had not yet considered.

On the multi-year workplans of Convention institutions and subsidiary bodies (ICCD/CRIC(12)/L.12), Brazil stated that, because references to DLDD in all decisions are to be implemented in accordance with the Convention, and setting targets and making recommendations against its own mandate would be impossible, the need to remove the acronym "DLDD" from the documents is not necessary.

COW: COW Chair Norbu reported on the progress of the work of the COW, and delegates proceeded to adopt, without discussion, the decisions approved by the COW. Delegates also agreed to include: the Chair's summary report of the interactive

dialogue sessions as an annex to the report of the COP decision (ICCD/COP(11)/L.5); the Namib Declaration as an annex to the report of the COP (ICCD/COP(11)/L.20); the programme of work for COP 12 (ICCD/COP(11)/L.9), which concluded COP 11's consideration of the recommendations for its work; and the declaration of CSOs as an annex to the COP 11 report (ICCD/COP(11)/L.7).

Following the distribution of the draft decision on programme and budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (ICCD/COP(11)/L.21), the COW was called to order for a final time at 1:08 am, Saturday, 28 September. Delegates agreed to the decision without comment. Chair Norbu then introduced the draft decision on the follow-up to the outcomes of Rio+20 (ICCD/COP(11)/L.19) which was agreed. He closed the COW at 1:12 am.

COP: The COP adopted the draft decision on the date and venue of COP 12 (ICCD/COP(11)/L.6), which indicates COP 12 will be held in Turkey in 2015.

Responding to the adoption of the draft decision on the inclusion of activities of NGOs within the official programme of work of the COP open dialogue sessions (ICCD/COP(11)/L.7), Viviane Kinyaga, Desert Research Foundation of Namibia, on behalf of CSOs, urged a bottom-up approach to improving living conditions. She opposed agribusiness, genetic crop manipulation, and mining activities in national parks. She said the roster of independent experts should include CSO members, and experts should be included on the roster without having to go through national focal points. The COP adopted the draft decision on the interactive dialogue sessions (ICCD/COP(11)/L.5) without discussion, and the report on the Declaration by the SLM Business Forum (ICCD/COP(11)/L.8). The report on the tenth Round Table of Members of Parliament (ICCD/COP(11)/L.13) was also adopted, with Benjamin Amadhila, on behalf of Parliamentarians, reading the Declaration on "The role of Members of Parliament in the efforts to combat DLDD: Parliamentary contributions to achieving a LDNW in the context of the post-2015 Development Agenda."

After suspending the meeting to wait for the completion of the programme and budget negotiations, the COP President reopened the closing plenary at 1:18 am and invited the COW Chair to present a summary of remaining decisions for COP adoption. Following adoption of decisions on the programme and budget (ICCD/COP(11)/L.21) and follow-up to the outcomes of Rio+20 (ICCD/COP(11)/L.19), Armenia, on behalf of Central and Eastern European States, stated that the decision does not take into account the interests of Annex V countries, which have land degradation outside arid zones. The Republic of Korea welcomed the decision on Rio+20 outcomes, including the establishment of an intergovernmental working group to define LDNW, among other tasks, but expressed disappointment that the decision did not include a target-setting approach, which he said could strengthen the Convention.

Delegates adopted decisions on Procedures and institutional mechanisms for the resolution of questions on implementation (ICCD/COP(11)/L.15), annexes containing arbitration and conciliation procedures (ICCD/COP(11)/L.16) and the Namib Declaration on a Stronger UNCCD for a Land Degradation

Neutral World (ICCD/COP(11)/L.20) without comment. The Namib Declaration, which the decision takes note of and decides to annex to the COP 11 report, is a statement from the Government of Namibia highlighting that since COP 11 is the first COP since Rio+20, parties had agreed “new and refreshed momentum is required to address our planet’s environmental and social challenges” regarding DLDD. Based on deliberations at COP 11, the Namibian Government made declarations on six thematic areas:

- Strengthen UNCCD leadership for the future we want: Namibia notes a “responsibility” to indicate there was differing momentum in willingness to address the Rio+20 outcomes in the UNCCD context, and feels “much stronger and dedicated leadership is required to secure the future we want.”
- Address drought mitigation as a matter of priority: As droughts can severely impact and reverse achievements on SLM, an increased emphasis on drought mitigation must be given.
- Advance the SPI: The Declaration advocates that the SPI established at COP 11 will enhance policy directives under the Convention.
- Focus on local communities: Namibia urges all parties and relevant institutions to direct resources and efforts into more meaningful and dedicated actions to ensure sustainable livelihoods and food security.
- Engage with the private sector: Recognizing the role of the private sector towards innovative strategies and relevant technologies for establishing the business case for reversing land degradation and enhancing land restoration, partnerships must be fostered.
- Empower women in SLM: Women are critical pillars in achieving the Convention’s strategic objectives, and Namibia will advance the Windhoek Initiative on Women’s Empowerment during its COP Presidency.

Delegates then adopted the report of COP 11 (ICCD/COP(11)/L.11). The Republic of Korea introduced the resolution on the expression of gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Namibia (ICCD/COP(11)/L.10), which delegates adopted with a round of applause.

CLOSING STATEMENTS: UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja highlighted the successes of COP 11, including: the SPI and the proposal to use a global data set for monitoring; the convening of the second SLM Business Forum with 75 private sector representatives in attendance; agreement on the housing for the GM; and an outcome to follow-up on the Rio+20 outcome on LDNW. He said the UNCCD objectives will remain close to his heart and said he is confident that his successor will “keep our common goal moving forward.”

In their closing statements, speakers thanked Luc Gnacadja for his contributions to the Convention and looked forward to working with incoming Executive Secretary Monique Barbut.

Armenia, on behalf of affected countries in Central and Eastern Europe, said the course the Convention is taking is of concern for his region, noting not all affected countries

are in arid areas. He said the current direction will not let the Convention achieve its goal to be a global authority.

India, for the Asia-Pacific Group, emphasized his region’s priority for strengthening the regional coordination mechanisms. He said global environmental problems are dynamic, and we may need to look beyond the Convention text to recognize land degradation globally.

Burkina Faso, on behalf of the African Group, said the spirit of flexibility shown by parties should be commended and encouraged in the future. He reiterated his region’s request to the Secretariat and financing partners to support affected parties with NAP alignment and drawing up of implementation reports.

The EU said COP 11 saw the adoption of many difficult but important decisions that will bear on the future of the Convention and fulfillment of the Strategy. He said the decision to move the GM to Bonn with a liaison office in Rome should not be underestimated in terms of its potential to improve the effectiveness of the Convention.

Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of GRULAC, reaffirmed his region’s support for incoming Executive Secretary Monique Barbut despite concerns over the selection process. He declared a new era in the work of the Convention had begun with the COP 11 decisions, and reiterated calls for increased support for regional annexes.

Fiji, for the Group of 77 and China, indicated his hopes that outstanding housekeeping issues can be resolved quickly to ensure implementation deficits on SLM and DLDD are addressed and monitored, but he noted many parties will require support in this regard.

Jamaica thanked delegates for electing him as the new CRIC Chair, and emphasized the full support of parties is needed to ensure progress towards the CRIC’s and Convention’s mandates.

President Herunga stated that COP 11 represented an important opportunity to capitalize on the momentum from Rio+20 regarding DLDD issues, and said a path for determining the role of the UNCCD in achieving “the world we want” had been laid. He applauded parties for moving forward on the SPI and GM, and highlighted the inclusive approach to collaboration with CSOs, the private sector and other groups during COP 11. He thanked parties for their hard work and adjourned the meeting at 2:34 am.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF COP 11

THE UNCCD IN “THE LAND OF THE BRAVE”

I would like to remind you that you have come to what we Namibians like to call “The Land of The Brave”, and I challenge each one of you to take brave and bold steps over the next two weeks towards achieving sustainable land use.

Uahekua Herunga, COP 11 President and Namibian Minister of Environment and Tourism

Set against the Namibian landscape, which in remote places features large chasms that can make sure footing a matter of survival, the eleventh session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification presented parties

with the opportunity to move the Convention onto stronger footing in a number of issue areas. But did COP 11 take the bold steps, as called for by its host, and live up to his challenge?

One area where the UNCCD seeks to take these bold steps is in bridging bottom-up and top-down processes in the pursuit of sustainable land management (SLM). Along these lines, the World Resources Institute's Chris Reij captured the attention of many in his keynote presentation during the High-Level Segment as he described the success of farmers in the drylands. Reij identified five necessary steps for success in SLM: identify and analyze re-greening successes; work at the grassroots; ensure top-down meets bottom-up; develop a good communications strategy; and develop agroforestry value chains. Can these steps for success also apply to the UNCCD at the international level?

This brief analysis explores the COP 11 process and outcomes within the context of Reij's presentation to see if UNCCD delegates were able to take the necessary "brave and bold" steps for success.

IDENTIFY AND ANALYZE RE-GREENING SUCCESSES

In "The Land of The Brave," building a bridge across a seemingly insurmountable chasm requires a strong structure built on a solid foundation. In the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), a similar requirement became particularly apparent during discussions on the science-policy interface and sharing of best practices. In this case, delegates were not only addressing the question of how to bridge the chasm between those who research desertification and land degradation and those who need the results translated into policy.

Many participants highlighted that one accomplishment of the past six years, under Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja's tenure, has been the focus on generating scientific advice for the UNCCD. The UNCCD's 10-year Strategy called for the convening of scientific conferences as well as for the CST to provide advice to the COP on impact indicators. At COP 11, delegates turned to considering proposals for establishing a science-policy interface (SPI).

Many participants thought that the decision to establish an SPI provides the UNCCD the best opportunity yet to help it identify and analyze desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) processes and successes, and to translate this knowledge into appropriate policy recommendations. Some participants were particularly pleased because, as they pointed out, the UNCCD occupies an important place in bringing a holistic approach to SLM policy, in the midst of an expanding number of land-and soil-related partnerships and initiatives. Some held out hope that, with a few ingenious strokes, the SPI could turn the fortunes of the Convention, through building a new foundation on solid science, using existing scientific research, determining gaps in current findings, and combining the wealth of knowledge present in the many success stories that national delegations and CSOs report on during COP sessions.

In Windhoek, discussions turned in many cases to focus on "what works" in relation to the Convention's effort to identify the global extent of land degradation (impact indicators) and the level of activity to address it (performance indicators). Delegates agreed that data should "make sense" and be high quality: "We

don't want the UNCCD to look bad due to poor reporting or because we are unable to report on the data requested in our reporting framework," summarized one participant. Various speakers emphasized the need for flexibility, making use of existing databases, and lack of capacity in some countries, underscoring the focus on what works given different national circumstances or "[what is] as appropriate"—a phrase that became the compromise trademark attached to many decisions of COP 11.

WORK AT THE GRASSROOTS

Ever since the beginning, the UNCCD has been referred to as a "bottom-up" Convention, with input from non-governmental organizations, civil society and land users particularly recognized as important input. Chris Reij's presentation highlighted this point, especially when he related the experience of Yacouba Sawadogo, a farmer from Burkina Faso whose experience has been documented in the film "The Man Who Stopped the Desert." Yacouba also addressed the High-Level Segment, which participants pointed to as evidence in and of itself of the Convention's ability to bring bottom-up grassroots efforts together with the top-down to explore the requirements for implementing the UNCCD.

Open dialogue sessions with CSOs have been fixtures of the UNCCD COP since its first session, and a number of speakers at the COP 11 open dialogue sessions highlighted their continuing value of bringing in grassroots perspectives to COP decision making. At the conclusion of the dialogues, COP 11 Vice-President Tichelmann who was chairing the discussion noted its value as a capacity-building opportunity for delegates, and another delegate lauded presenters for explaining the relationships between CSOs and local people, and offering suggestions on how delegates can assist in this work. The growing number of side events and the activities at the Rio Conventions Pavilion also brought discussions about grassroots-level efforts within the COP 11 security perimeter.

The difficulty remains in translating and transmitting these lessons to busy delegates under time pressure to negotiate COP decisions. Participants highlighted that this perennial challenge for multilateral environmental agreements is all the more acute for a convention that seeks to develop international collaborative approaches for an issue that manifests itself locally. The UNCCD's ability to ensure that "top-down meets bottom-up" is therefore a critical step in this model, if delegates are to heed the caution from one COP 11 CSO that "anything for us without us is against us."

ENSURE TOP-DOWN MEETS BOTTOM-UP

In the apt words of one COP 11 delegate, "the national level is where top-down meets bottom-up." Discussions in the CRIC on NAP alignment and difficulties in national reporting took on increased importance in this light. Regional-level activities were also identified as bridges between the top and bottom, noting activities such as the Great Green Wall for the Sahel and the Sahara, in particular, as an example that has fostered learning and the exchange of best practices. Delegates also noted the important role of the global level in facilitating national level

action and regional projects, including the Global Mechanism's efforts to support affected countries in assessing their financial needs for capacity building and integrating them into an integrated investment framework.

COP 11 participants also pointed to one of the UNCCD's newest efforts as a key mechanism for building a bridge to connect actors at all levels: the Science Knowledge Brokering Portal (SKBP). Some said that they thought the plenary discussion on the SKBP elicited more universal interest and support than any other UNCCD initiative. Many delegates expressed their support for the prospect of developing "our own portal," which would build on existing content repositories to facilitate UNCCD stakeholders' access to knowledge concerning DLDD. Likewise, the decision on best practices aims to provide an open, centralized best practice repository that would make available a wealth of knowledge around the world.

DEVELOP A GOOD COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

One of the biggest challenges in "The Land of the Brave" is communication across vast expanses with virtually no physical link. Overcoming this challenge in an international organization would not only ensure survival, but can provide a vital impetus for growth. As many speakers and presenters of case studies have alluded to over the past eleven COPs, a strength of the UNCCD lies in the myriad of practices across countries and on all continents, where local communities have devised strategies to cope with drought and desertification. Inspiring examples that are now showcased through the UNCCD's Land for Life Awards and stories told by the Drylands Champions, among others, hold the promise of a wealth of building bricks to erect a lasting structure.

The challenge is communicating these practices across the expanse of an entire globe, where a quarter of the world's land is degraded and over a billion people are struggling either with drought or the threat of desertification. If the Convention can manage to "get the message across" through its communications strategy and other efforts to cultivate mechanisms to identify, analyze and transmit the best practices across the "divide" of geographical limitations, it will similarly position itself as a leading convention on communicating successful stories—in itself a priceless service.

DEVELOP VALUE CHAINS

Just as a value chain is a chain of activities that a company performs in order to deliver a product or service, the UNCCD is involved in a chain of activities to build linkages with other intergovernmental processes and the private sector.

In *The Future We Want*, the outcome from Rio+20, the international community recognized "the need for urgent action to reverse land degradation. In view of this we will strive to achieve a land degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development." Rio+20 also called for the development of a set of sustainable development goals (SDGs), which are currently under discussion at UN Headquarters in New York within the context of the UN's post-2015 development agenda. Given the success of the 10 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in mobilizing international action around

shared objectives, the field of proposed SDGs is very crowded. While many delegates supported an SDG calling for a "land degradation neutral world" (LDNW), COP 11 delegates were informed that up to 200 proposals have already been presented for the next set of approximately 10 goals. Each goal will comprise a number of targets, and delegates were encouraged to develop proposals for land degradation-related options that could be incorporated into larger targets on food security and water, for example.

The chasm between parties proved to be very wide on this agenda item, and negotiations on the details by which the COP could advance the LDNW goal were among the most difficult in Windhoek. The resulting compromise reflects the diverging views among negotiators, which stretched along a spectrum from "let's seize the momentum," to "let's not preempt outcomes of the post-2015 development agenda discussions," and "let's not incorporate undefined concepts like green economy or LDNW in a legally-binding treaty body's decisions." For some countries, incorporating a decision from the non-legally binding Rio+20 process into a legal treaty instrument proved difficult, as did the implications of a target for the "world" in a Convention that indicates its scope extends only to dry sub-humid, semi-arid and arid lands.

During the final hours of COP 11, parties agreed to establish an intergovernmental working group to establish a science-based definition of land degradation neutrality in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas; develop options that parties might consider "should they strive to" achieve land degradation neutrality; and advise the Convention on the implications for its Strategy, programmes and resource requirements. Several speakers at the closing plenary expressed disappointment that COP 11 delegates had not been "braver" in this decision, but they nonetheless recognized the possibilities the decision offered.

Intergovernmental targets, while important in building political momentum and public awareness, will ultimately have to find linkages in consumption and production patterns, including supply chains, within the "real world." This reality was brought home to delegates by the SLM Business Forum. Participants realized that a new player had joined them in the COP halls—the private sector, including agribusiness—which led to an unprecedented demonstration by NGOs and demands for transparency in partnerships between the private sector and the Secretariat.

What some said was an inevitable, but still unanticipated at COP 11, development presents delegates with an opportunity and a dilemma. The opportunity comes in the chance to sensitize a critical group of actors to the tenets of the Convention. The dilemma remains that the ultimate audience for the Convention—the people in the drylands—may be at a disadvantage in dealing with this actor while at the same time international efforts to assist them would benefit from resources that private-public partnerships could bring. COP 11 and subsequent COPs may well have a new challenge on their hands: redefining the rules of the game to ensure that the most vulnerable are protected in the search for innovative new sources of financing and science and technology solutions to "save" the drylands. In this regard,

many participants indicated they would be closely watching the implementation of the COP 11 decision requesting the Secretariat and the GM to develop, before COP 12, a business engagement strategy that outlines the objectives, modalities and conditions of UNCCD partnerships with business and private entities.

ON THE PATH TO A BRAVE NEW WORLD?

While the COP did not take the “brave and bold steps” that some delegations would have preferred, one noted that delegates did assign themselves and the Secretariat a number of tasks that could realistically be achieved by COP 12. Many highlighted that successful projects on the ground encourage further success, and the same principles could work at the global level as well. If delegates come to COP 12 with a better picture of the extent of DLDD on the ground-based on parties’ collective monitoring and reporting, a portal that can help actors at all levels quickly access relevant information, and a post-2015 development agenda that includes efforts to address land degradation, the decisions taken in “The Land of the Brave” could catalyze further success for the Convention.

But the steps outlined by Reij are interactive and not linear, and the addition of the international, regional and subregional levels increases the complexity of an already multidimensional issue, making success more elusive than the simplicity of the steps might suggest. Nonetheless, with a change in leadership, close links to activities on the ground, and the possibility for successes in the coming biennium, the UNCCD may actually take “brave and bold steps” that both Reij and Herunga identified for achieving sustainable land management.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

First International Conference on Global Food Security:

The conference will explore the economic, social, biophysical, technological and institutional drivers of current and future global food security. The conference will address, *inter alia*: enabling trade and market policies for local and global food security; sustainable intensification of food production systems; novel ways of feeding nine billion people; land sparing, land sharing and trade-offs; agricultural production as feedstock for renewables; lost harvest and wasted food; nutritional security; and labeling, certifying and striving for quality and sustainability of food production. **dates:** 29 September - 2 October 2013 **location:** Noordwijk, Netherlands **contact:** Nina Cosgrove **email:** customerservice-foodsecurity13@elsevier.com **www:** <http://www.globalfoodsecurityconference.com>

Launch Workshop of the Global Soil Partnership for Central America and the Caribbean: The workshop will focus on the theme of prevention and restoration of degraded soils in the region, and will feature sessions on: the Global Soil Partnership, and regional initiatives; national presentations on status, priorities and needs for sustainable soil management; establishment of the Regional Partnership and development of a Plan of Action; and a field trip to model farms. **dates:** 30 September - 3 October 2013 **location:** Havana, Cuba **www:** <http://www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/gsp-events/detail/en/c/197686/>

World Food Day 2013: “Sustainable Food Systems for Food Security and Nutrition” will be the focus of World Food Day in 2013. The official World Food Day theme gives focus to World Food Day observances and helps increase understanding of problems and solutions in the drive to end hunger. **date:** 16 October 2013 **location:** worldwide **www:** <http://www.fao.org/getinvolved/worldfoodday>

2nd Global Soil Week: This event will convene under the theme “Losing Ground?” It will consider what “losing ground” implies for food, water and energy security and it will bring together practitioners, policy makers, scientists and representatives from civil society organizations to share knowledge and experience on soil- and land-related issues and to make plans to advance the global agenda for sustainable development. The event will be organized around four thematic threads: Material Cycles; Sustainable Land Management and Soil Engineering; International Soil Policy and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and Responsible Land Governance, **dates:** 27-31 October 2013 **location:** Berlin, Germany **contact:** IASS Potsdam **email:** info@iass-potsdam.de **www:** <http://globalsoilweek.org/>

19th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change: UNFCCC COP 19 and CMP 9 and the subsidiary bodies will convene in Warsaw, Poland. **dates:** 11-22 November 2013 **location:** Warsaw, Poland **contact:** UNFCCC Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-1000 **fax:** +49-228-815-1999 **email:** secretariat@unfccc.int **www:** <http://www.unfccc.int>

Global Landscapes Forum: This Forum will convene on the margins of UNFCCC COP 19 and is co-organized by the Collaborative Programme on Forests (CPF) and the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Research Program on Climate Change Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS). The Forum will focus on four main themes: investing in sustainable landscapes and livelihoods; landscape policy and governance; synergies between adapting to, and mitigating climate change in landscapes; and landscapes for food security and nutrition. **dates:** 16-17 November 2013 **location:** Warsaw, Poland **contact:** Bruno Vander Velde **phone:** +62-811-8006-150 **email:** b.vandervelde@cgiar.org **www:** <http://www.landscapes.org/>

IPBES-2: The second meeting of IPBES will address, *inter alia*: the initial work programme; financial and budgetary arrangements; and rules and procedures for the operations of the Platform, including for the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel. **dates:** 9-14 December 2013 **location:** Antalya, Turkey **contact:** UNEP Secretariat **email:** secretariat@ipbes.net **www:** <http://www.ipbes.net>

Land Transformations: Between Global Challenges and Local Realities: The 2014 Global Land Project Open Science Meeting will synthesize and discuss the role of the land system as a platform for human-environment interactions, connecting local land use decisions to global impacts and responses. Conference themes include: rethinking land change transitions; the role of human decision making on land use as both a driver and response to global environmental change;

land systems changes to mitigate global environmental change impacts and adapt to increasing demands for food, fuel and ecosystem services; and ways in which alternative approaches to governance of land resources can enhance the sustainability transition. **dates:** 19-21 March 2014 **location:** Berlin, Germany **www:** <http://www.glp-osm2014.org/>

World Day to Combat Desertification 2014: The day is celebrated on 17 June, to mark the conclusion of negotiations on the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). **date:** 17 June 2014 **location:** worldwide **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat, Awareness Raising, Education and Communication Unit **phone:** +49-228 815-2800 **fax:** +49-228 815-2898 **email:** arce@unccd.int **www:** <http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Event-and-campaigns/Pages/default.aspx>

International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
2020 Conference: The conference will bring together policy makers, practitioners and scholars to discuss how resilience can be strengthened for food and nutrition security. The conference will: articulate an intellectual framework for resilience; identify key emerging shocks that pose the biggest threats to food and nutrition security; assess experiences through case studies; identify key approaches and tools to build resilience to shocks; set priorities for action by different actors and in different regions; and identify knowledge and action gaps in research, policy and programming that need to be met or scaled up in order to successfully build resilience to food and nutrition insecurity. Participation in the conference is by invitation only. **dates:** 15-17 May 2014 **location:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia **contact:** IFPRI Secretariat **phone:** +1-202-862-5600 **fax:** +1-202-467-4439 **email:** ifpri@cgiar.org **www:** <http://www.ifpri.org/event/building-resilience-food-and-nutrition-security>

CRIC 13: CRIC 13 will be held for five working days in November 2014 in Bonn, Germany, or in any other venue with UN conference facilities in the event no party makes an offer to host the session. **dates:** November 2014 (to be determined) **location:** to be determined **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-228-815-2898 **email:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <http://www.unccd.int/>

Fourth Special Session of the CST and UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference: CST S-4 will convene back to back with the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference and is expected to take place no later than April 2015. The meeting will be held in Bonn, Germany, unless another party offers to host the meeting. Organized by the Scientific and Traditional Knowledge for Sustainable Development (STK4SD) Consortium, the 3rd Scientific Conference will address the theme of combating DLDD for poverty reduction and sustainable development, and the contribution of science, technology, traditional knowledge and practices. **dates:** to be determined **location:** to be determined **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-228-815-2898 **email:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <http://www.unccd.int/>

UNCCD COP 12: The next meeting of the UNCCD Conference of the Parties is tentatively scheduled for late 2015. **dates:** to be determined **location:** Turkey **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-228-815-2898 **email:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** <http://www.unccd.int/>

For additional meetings and updates, go to <http://land-i.iisd.org/>.

GLOSSARY

AGSA	<i>Ad Hoc</i> Working Group to further discuss the options for the provision of Scientific Advice focusing on desertification/land degradation and drought issues
AGTE	<i>Ad Hoc</i> Advisory Group of Technical Experts
COP	Conference of the Parties
COW	Committee of the Whole
CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
CSOs	Civil society organizations
CST	Committee on Science and Technology
DLDD	Desertification, land degradation and drought
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organization
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GM	Global Mechanism
GRULAC	Latin American and Caribbean Group
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IWG	Intersessional Working Group for the Mid-term Evaluation of the Strategy
LDNW	Land degradation neutral world
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAP	National Action Programme
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
PRAIS	Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation Systems
RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
Rio+20	United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SLM	Sustainable land management
SKBP	Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal
SPI	Science-Policy Interface
Strategy	Ten-year Strategic Plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018)
UNCCD	UN Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	UN Framework Convention on Climate Change
WOCAT	World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies
ZNLD	Zero net land degradation