

THE TENTH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 10-21 OCTOBER 2011

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD COP 10) will take place from 10-21 October 2011, in Changwon, Republic of Korea. Delegates will consider agenda items related to, *inter alia*: the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018); the programme and budget; the evaluation of existing and potential reporting, accountability and institutional arrangements for the Global Mechanism; and mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention.

In addition to the COP, the tenth meeting of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST 10) is scheduled to meet from 11-13 October. The tenth meeting of the Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 10) is scheduled to meet for a period of three and one-half days between 11-20 October. Two half-day open dialogues with civil society are scheduled to take place on 14 and 19 October. A special segment, consisting of three round table discussions among ministers and other officials, will take place from 17-18 October. And an interactive dialogue session with Members of Parliament on 13-14 October also will take the form of round table discussions, with any outcome from the roundtable discussions expected to be communicated to COP 10 for consideration.

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. The UNCCD was adopted on 17 June 1994, and entered into force on 26 December 1996. Currently, it has 194 parties. The UNCCD recognizes the physical, biological and socioeconomic aspects of desertification, the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand-driven, and 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 NGOs.

NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION: In 1992, the UN General Assembly, 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 in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa (INCD). 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. A fifth annex, for Central and Eastern Europe, was adopted during COP 4 in December 2000. Pending the UNCCD's entry into force, the INCD met six times between January 1995 and August 1997 to hear progress reports on urgent actions for Africa and interim measures in other regions, and to prepare for COP 1. The UNCCD entered into force on 26 December 1996.

COPs 1-9: The first COP met in Rome, Italy, from 29 September - 10 October 1997, during which delegates, *inter alia*, selected Bonn, Germany, as the location for the UNCCD's Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development as the organization to administer the Convention's Global Mechanism (GM).

COP 2, which met in Dakar, Senegal, from 30 November-11 December 1998, invited Central and Eastern European countries to submit to COP 3 a draft regional implementation annex. Parties met for COP 3 in Recife, Brazil, from 15-26 November 1999, and approved a long-negotiated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding the GM, among other decisions. COP 3 also decided to establish an *ad hoc* working group to review and analyze the reports on national, subregional and regional action programmes and to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the UNCCD, among other decisions.

COP 4 convened from 11-22 December 2000, in Bonn, Germany, during which delegates, *inter alia*, adopted the fifth regional Annex for Central and Eastern Europe, began the work of the *ad hoc* working group to review UNCCD implementation, initiated the consideration of modalities for the establishment of the CRIC, and adopted a decision on the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council initiative to explore the best options for GEF support of UNCCD implementation.

COP 5 met from 1-13 October 2001, in Geneva, Switzerland, during which delegates, *inter alia*, established the CRIC, and supported a proposal by the GEF to designate land degradation as another focal area for funding.

COP 6 met from 25 August - 6 September 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, from 17-28 October 2005. Among their decisions, delegates reviewed the implementation of the Convention, developed a MoU between the UNCCD and the GEF, and reviewed the recommendations in the report of the JIU assessment of the Secretariat's activities. Discussion on regional coordination units ended without the adoption of a decision, and an Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group was established to review the JIU report and to develop a draft ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention.

COP 8 convened in Madrid, Spain, from 3-14 September 2007, and, *inter alia*, adopted a decision on the ten-year strategic plan (the Strategy). Delegates also requested the JIU to conduct an assessment of the GM for presentation to COP 9. COP 8 delegates did not reach agreement on the programme and budget, however, and an Extraordinary Session of the COP convened at UN Headquarters in New York on 26 November 2007, to conclude this item. The final decision amounted to a 4% euro value growth in the budget for the biennium 2008-2009, with 2.8% to be assessed from all parties and 1.2% to be provided as a voluntary contribution by the Government of Spain.

COP 9 convened in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 21 September-2 October 2009. Delegates focused on a number of items that were 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; the establishment of the CRIC as a standing subsidiary body to the COP; arrangements for regional coordination mechanisms (RCMs); the communication strategy; and the programme and budget.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

The CST has convened parallel meetings to each COP. At CST 1's recommendation, the COP established an *ad hoc* panel to oversee the continuation of the process of surveying benchmarks and indicators. CST 2 established an *ad hoc* panel to follow up its discussion on linkages between traditional and modern knowledge. CST 3 recommended that the COP appoint an *ad hoc* panel on traditional knowledge and an *ad hoc* panel 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. CST 8 decided to convene future sessions in a 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) convened in Istanbul, Turkey, concurrently with CRIC 7, from 3-14 November 2008. The two-day CST S-1 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 socioeconomic 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.

The second special session of the CST (CST S-2) took place from 16-18 February 2011. CST S-2 considered the status of work on methodologies and baselines for the effective use of the subset of impact indicators on strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the 10-year Strategy, among other matters.

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION:

The CRIC held its first session in Rome, Italy, from 11-22 November 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 met concurrently with COP 6 in 2003 to review implementation of the UNCCD and its institutional arrangements, and review information on the financing of UNCCD implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions.

CRIC 3 convened from 2-11 May 2005, in Bonn, Germany, and reviewed the implementation of the Convention in Africa, considered issues relating to Convention implementation at the global level, and made recommendations for the future work of the Convention.

CRIC 4 met concurrently with COP 7 in 2005, and considered strengthening Convention implementation in Africa, improving communication and reporting procedures, mobilization of resources for implementation; and collaboration with the GEF.

CRIC 5 convened in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 12-21 March 2007, to review implementation of the Convention in affected country parties in regions other than Africa. The meeting also addressed how to improve information communication and national reporting and reviewed the 2006 International Year for Deserts and Desertification.

CRIC 6 met concurrently with COP 8 in 2007, and reviewed the roles that developed and developing country parties should play in resource mobilization, and collaboration with the GEF.

CRIC 7 convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3-14 November 2008, during which delegates 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 convened concurrently with COP 9 in 2009 and, *inter alia*, 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 a performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS).

CRIC 9 convened in Bonn, Germany, from 16-25 February 2011. Delegates considered, among other items, preliminary analyses of information contained in the PRAIS reports.