

SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AND FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY OF THE UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 3-14 NOVEMBER 2008

The seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 7) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is convening in Istanbul, Turkey, back-to-back with the first Special Session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), from 3-14 November 2008. After an official opening session and regional consultations for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern Mediterranean and Central Eastern European country parties, the CST session will commence its work on 5 November. The CST will consider its draft, costed two-year work programme and four-year work plan. It is also expected to consider ways to measure progress in the implementation of the objectives of the ten-year strategic plan, which was adopted in September 2007 by the eighth Conference of the Parties (COP 8), and to present methodological suggestions for how to assess the plan's overall implementation. The CRIC will begin its work on 7 November, with a focus on: multi-year programmes of work prepared for the Secretariat, the Global Mechanism, a Joint Work Programme between both organizations, the CRIC and the CST; national reporting issues related to the drafting of new guidelines; and the future format of CRIC sessions.

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 193 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 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 elaborated and adopted during the fourth Conference of the Parties (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.

COP 1: COP 1 met in Rome, Italy, from 29 September to 10 October 1997. The CST held its first session concurrently from 2-3 October. The COP 1 and CST 1 agendas consisted primarily of organizational matters. Delegates selected Bonn, Germany, as the location for the UNCCD's Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development as the organization to administer the Global Mechanism (GM). At the CST's recommendation, the COP established an *ad hoc* panel to oversee the continuation of the process of surveying benchmarks and indicators, and decided that CST 2 should consider linkages between traditional and modern knowledge. One plenary meeting was devoted to a dialogue between NGOs and delegates. Delegates subsequently decided that similar NGO dialogues should be scheduled at future COP plenary sessions.

COP 2: COP 2 met in Dakar, Senegal, from 30 November to 11 December 1998. The CST met in parallel with the COP from 1-4 December. Delegates approved arrangements to host the Secretariat in Bonn. Central and Eastern European countries were invited to submit to COP 3 a draft regional implementation annex. The CST established an *ad hoc* panel to follow up its discussion on linkages between traditional and modern knowledge.

COP 3: Parties met for COP 3 in Recife, Brazil, from 15-26 November 1999, with the CST meeting in parallel to the COP from 16-19 November. The COP approved the long-negotiated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding the GM. It decided to establish an *ad hoc* working group to review and analyze in depth 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. In addition, the COP appointed an *ad hoc* panel on traditional knowledge and an *ad hoc* panel on early warning systems.

COP 4: COP 4 convened from 11-22 December 2000, in Bonn, Germany. The CST met from 12-15 December. COP 4's achievements included: the adoption of the fifth regional Annex for Central and Eastern Europe; commencement of work by the *ad hoc* working group to review UNCCD implementation; initiation of the consideration of modalities for the establishment of the CRIC; submission of proposals to improve the work of the CST; and the adoption of a decision on the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Council initiative to explore the best options for GEF support of the UNCCD's implementation.

COP 5: COP 5 met from 1-13 October 2001, in Geneva, Switzerland, and the CST met in parallel from 2-5 October. The COP focused on setting the modalities of work for the two-year interval before COP 6. Progress was made in a number of areas, including the establishment of the CRIC, identification of modalities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, and support for a proposal by the GEF to designate land degradation as another focal area for funding.

CRIC 1: CRIC 1 convened at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization headquarters in Rome, Italy, from 11-22 November 2002. Delegates considered presentations from the five UNCCD regions and addressed seven thematic issues. The meeting also considered information on financial mechanisms in support of the UNCCD's implementation, advice provided by the CST and the GM, and the Secretariat's report on actions aimed at strengthening the relationships with other relevant conventions and organizations.

COP 6: COP 6 met from 25 August-6 September 2003, in Havana, Cuba. The CST and CRIC met concurrently on 26-29 August. Delegates designated the GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD, identified criteria for the COP 7 review of the CRIC, and decided *inter alia* on the: activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies; ways to enhance the effectiveness of the CST; and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The CST discussed improving its efficiency and effectiveness, among other agenda items.

CRIC 3: The third meeting of the CRIC was held from 2-11 May 2005, in Bonn, Germany. It reviewed the implementation of the Convention in Africa, considered issues relating to Convention implementation at the global level, shared experiences, and made recommendations for the future work of the Convention.

COP 7: COP 7 took place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 17-28 October 2005. The CST met from 18-21 October and the CRIC met from 18-27 October. Participants reviewed the implementation of the Convention, developed an MoU between the UNCCD and the GEF, adopted the programme and budget

for the 2006-2007 biennium, and reviewed the recommendations in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the UN, among other agenda items. Discussion on the regional coordination units ended without the adoption of a decision. The CST considered land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation, among other issues. An Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group (IIWG) 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. The report of the IIWG's intersession work was forwarded to COP 8 for its consideration.

CRIC 5: The fifth session of the CRIC convened in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 12-21 March 2007, to review implementation of the Convention in affected country parties in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern Europe. Much of the meeting was devoted to panel presentations and discussions on selected topics such as the promotion of technology transfer and know-how, early warning systems, and financial resource mobilization. The meeting also addressed how to improve information communication and national reporting, reviewed the 2006 International Year for Deserts and Desertification (IYDD), and conducted a Global Interactive Dialogue with stakeholders on investments in rural areas in the context of combating land degradation and desertification.

COP 8: The eighth session of the COP convened in Madrid, Spain, from 3-14 September 2007. UNCCD parties also attended CRIC 6 from 4-14 September, and CST 8 from 4-7 September. The COP approved 29 decisions, with the decision on the ten-year strategic plan attracting the most attention. The CRIC decision to ask the Secretariat, in consultation with the GM, to revise the format of national reports as well as the CST decision to convene future sessions in a conference-style format contributed additional efforts to reform the UNCCD's implementation mechanisms in the coming decade. The ten-year strategic plan called for a number of progress reports on multi-year work plans to be made at CRIC 7, in addition to its review of the format of national reports. COP 8 delegates did not reach agreement on the programme and budget, however, and an Extraordinary Session of the COP (ESCAP) convened at UN headquarters in New York on 26 November 2007, to conclude this item. The final decision amounts to 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.

HIGH-LEVEL POLICY DIALOGUE: Based on a COP 8 decision, the UNCCD Secretariat organized a High-Level Policy Dialogue under the theme "Coping with today's global challenges in the context of the Strategy of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification," which convened on 27 May 2008, in Bonn, Germany. The Dialogue's purpose was to facilitate a targeted exchange from a number of stakeholders on the ten-year strategic plan and to foster awareness of and buy-in among relevant policy and decision makers. The Dialogue was organized under three topics: policy development; mobilizing for a forward-looking strategy; and responses to emerging challenges. The discussion included comments about national implementation, funding, and science, technology and economics related to desertification, land degradation and drought.

UNCCD CRIC 7 AND CST S-1: 3-4 NOVEMBER 2008

The seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 7) and first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-1) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) opened in Istanbul, Turkey, on Monday, 3 November 2008. The joint opening plenary meeting of the two-week session heard opening statements from its Turkish hosts, UNCCD leaders, and some regional groups. Regional groups then convened on Monday afternoon and all day Tuesday, 4 November.

JOINT OPENING PLENARY

Hasan Sarikaya, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Turkey, called the meeting to order and welcomed participants to the opening of the joint meetings of CRIC 7 and CST S-1. He introduced the short film, "Turkey, a Country Growing Greener," which presented Turkey's environmental challenges and responses. The film highlighted that this country faces erosion on 80% of its land, in various intensities, and indicated it will be among the countries that are most affected by global climate change. It described Turkey's efforts to improve its soil, including through afforestation projects on a catchment basis.

Sarikaya then presented a message from the President of Turkey. He highlighted the transboundary nature of the issues under consideration, and the resulting need to work together. Sarikaya also read a message of welcome from Recep Erdogan, Prime Minister of Turkey, and extended the welcome of Turkey's Ministers of Agriculture and Rural Affairs and of Culture.

Veysel Eroglu, Minister of Environment and Forestry of Turkey, said desertification is one of the most important environmental issues at present and emphasized that it causes poverty, migration, unemployment, and food and security threats. He highlighted the role that the ten-year strategic plan (the Strategy) can play in reducing poverty. Eroglu stressed the importance of cooperation at the regional as well as international levels. Arguing that "we cannot let the soil disappear in silence,"

he provided an overview of the challenges that Turkey faces with regard to desertification and the country's initiatives to combat it.

Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, noted that land degradation continues. Drawing attention to the relationship between global threats, such as food insecurity and climate change, and sustainable land management, he called for a new, integrative climate change regime that takes fully into account the interaction between climate and land degradation, and the action framework offered by sustainable land management. Gnacadja highlighted the organizational reforms carried out to implement the UNCCD COP 8 decisions and the expected outputs from CRIC 7 and CST S-1, noting that the Secretariat budget cannot remain at the level approved at COP 3 in Recife while its responsibilities expand. Emphasizing that the Secretariat also has high expectations of the parties, he suggested that the meeting outcomes indicate the roles that parties will need to carry out.

Christian Mersmann, Managing Director of the Global Mechanism (GM), noted that the Strategy develops a common framework to enhance the UNCCD's impact and gives impetus to increase the quantity and quality of GM services to the UNCCD's parties. He said the GM has adapted to the Strategy and restructured, and will continue to apply change in the course of its work, based on parties' guidance. He highlighted that the impact of the GM's work at country and sub-regional levels is already being felt. Mersmann noted that the development of the Joint Work Programme between the Secretariat and the GM constitutes a major success in the spirit of the Strategy and in overcoming the "old divide" between the Secretariat and the GM. He said it is a "living document" for enhanced cooperation that represents a first attempt to outline cooperation between the GM and the Secretariat. He applauded the Executive Secretary's efforts to position the Convention as a major player in global environmental governance. Mersmann said he looked forward to the results of the Joint Inspection Unit's (JIU) review of the GM, as it offers an opportunity to position the GM in the context of the Convention. He encouraged participants to reread the GM's mandate, as adopted in Article 21 of the Convention, and said the GM is operating within its mandate.

José Herranz, Directorate General of Natural Resources and Forestry Policy, on behalf of the COP President and Minister of Rural, Marine and Natural Environment of Spain Elena Espinosa, noted that the Strategy provides new instruments to improve the implementation of the Convention and its synergy with the other Rio conventions. He outlined progress achieved by the Secretariat over the last year, as well as the attention that the Convention gained at the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) meeting in May 2008. He emphasized that parties to the Convention must provide the energy to ensure the Convention's place on the global agenda, encouraged the flexible and practical implementation of the Strategy and highlighted the Government of Spain's support.

Noting that the complexity of the social and environmental problems of the current millennium have a special impact on the developing world and require a reassessment of what has been done to date, Israel Torres, Chair of CRIC 7, underlined the significance of the joint meeting as the start of a new chapter in the life of the UNCCD. He said this calls for re-engineering processes, learning from weaknesses and extending strengths in all aspects of the Convention, including in the UNCCD subsidiary bodies and parties.

William Dar, Chair of the CST, highlighted the role that the CST will play in the reform of the UNCCD. He noted that the Strategy indicates that the CST must produce sound scientific outputs and policy-oriented recommendations, and that the CST will reform its meeting style. He reported that a consortium of five leading institutions has been selected to help organize CST 9, and invited participants to visit the European DesertNet booth at this meeting to obtain more information on CST 9. He said CST 9 should make a decision to institutionalize scientific advice from experts, looking at the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change as a model.

Sarikaya then invited four speakers to make statements.

Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the G-77/CHINA, emphasized the G-77/China's support of the Strategy but noted its concern regarding the attainment of the Strategy's fourth objective on the mobilization of resources. She called for: an informal policy dialogue with developed country parties on financing prior to COP 9; the GEF to strengthen its focal point on land degradation, desertification and deforestation; the donor community to scale up the allocation of financial resources to the focal point under the GEF's fifth replenishment; and a review of the GM, including its relationship with its host, the International Fund for Agricultural Development. She said the G-77/China looks forward to the JIU's assessment of the GM and that it would seek clarification regarding the assessment's delay.

France, on behalf of the EUROPEAN UNION (EU), stressed the need for party compliance with the Strategy and that the key outcome of CRIC 7 is to move forward on the future working modalities of the Convention bodies, including: their collaborative arrangements, knowledge management and reporting systems, and the key indicators for assessing effects and impacts. He urged the UNCCD to promote the message on land degradation forcefully before the 2009 UNFCCC COP in Copenhagen, and suggested that the UNCCD also provide input to the fifth World Water Forum and obtain inputs from the seventeenth session of the CSD, both scheduled for 2009.

Ukraine, on behalf of the CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN countries, stressed the importance of the work programmes to be reviewed at this meeting. He highlighted the importance of taking into account the interests of all regions, and called attention to the regional initiative on financial resource mobilization for strengthening the implementation of the UNCCD in Central and Eastern Europe.

The Ecologic Youth of Angola, on behalf of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), lamented the lack of financial resources for the Convention, including the reduction of funds to finance participation of CSOs and delegates from developing countries. She reiterated CSOs' commitment to participate and offer capacities to the CST in the areas of knowledge, experience and technology, and emphasized the need to improve communication procedures and the formats of national reporting to the UNCCD. She said participation of CSOs in this regard must be assured through verifiable mechanisms.

Participants then watched a live video feed of Turkish officials and students at Ali Diza Özderici High School in Kemerburgaz, near Istanbul, planting trees in honor of CST S-1 and CRIC 7, including 193 trees to represent the 193 parties to the Convention and ten trees per delegate.

IN THE CORRIDORS I

Many participants left the opening ceremony feeling positive about the two weeks to come. They had just learned that the Turkish Government was planting ten trees for each delegate at the meeting, and many commented on the good organization of the meeting by the Turkish Government. Others thought that Executive Secretary Gnacadja had planted solid roots for the further development of the Strategy over the course of the next two weeks in his opening presentation. A few parties were surprised, however, that the floor was not opened for remarks by other parties, even though the joint opening plenary finished ahead of schedule. As parties headed to their one-and-a-half days of regional meetings, some expected that a few contact groups might be created during the second week, to advance the meeting's discussions on the work programme, monitoring and indicators, and the future format of the CRIC.

IN THE CORRIDORS II

As the world waited to see the "change" that Americans would usher in through their national election on Tuesday, participants at CRIC 7 and CST S-1 grappled with change of their own. Following their one-and-a-half days of regional group consultations, which focused on the Secretariat's and the GM's individual and joint work programmes, and indicators to measure impact, some participants suggested that it will take more time to adapt to the change envisioned in the ten-year strategic plan adopted by parties at COP 8. Participants indicated that the greatest challenge during the next two weeks could be in embracing the reforms that have taken place over the last year under the Convention, including: a shift in paradigm to a results-based implementation approach; repairing institutional relations; and eliciting party compliance with the measurement indicators. While Americans have waited two years to vote for change in their country, parties to the UNCCD will get a better sense, over the next two weeks, of what change might mean for the Convention.

UNCCD CRIC 7 AND CST S-1: WEDNESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2008

The first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-1) commenced its work on 5 November 2008. After adopting the agenda, CST delegates conducted a general discussion on agenda items regarding preparations for CST 9, elements of the Strategy related to the CST, and the CST's four-year work plan.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

CST Chair William Dar (the Philippines) opened CST S-1, highlighting that the special session represents part of the UNCCD reform process. He stressed that the session can help to ensure that science properly informs policy.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK:

Chair Dar introduced the CST S-1 provisional agenda (ICCD/CST(S-1)/1 and Corr.1), which the CST adopted without amendment. He then introduced the organization of work contained in Annex II of the agenda. He encouraged the CST to move the discussion on agenda sub-item 4 (d) (elements for provision of advice on how best to measure progress on Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention), scheduled for 6 November, to the morning of 5 November, because it would feed into discussions in CRIC 7. The CST adopted the organization of work as orally revised.

THE TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION – CST:

Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja introduced the documents developed by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau of the CST and as requested by COP 8, on the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (ICCD/CST(S-1)/4).

ADVICE ON HOW BEST TO MEASURE PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 1, 2 AND 3 OF THE STRATEGY:

Elysabeth David, Knowledge Management, Science and Technology Coordinator, UNCCD Secretariat, introduced ICCD/CST(S-1)/4/Add.3 and Corr.1 on the provision of advice on how best to measure progress of the Strategy's Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3. Youba Sokona, Sahara and Sahel Observatory, served as a resource presenter on this topic.

The G-77/CHINA suggested following the IPCC model for the CST but underscored the need to respect scientific advice, and called for indicators and guidelines that could be used in designing Clean Development Mechanism projects that target land degradation and desertification.

The EU called for a more elaborate product prior to party consultation, a realistic schedule to develop the indicators further and an annex containing the sources used to develop the indicators. He recommended drawing on a limited number of simple and composite indicators using available data, and consulting monitoring and evaluation experts in assessing the assumptions made of the causal links from objective to impact.

SUDAN underscored the need for national-level research to facilitate monitoring and vulnerability assessment and generate broader baseline data. UGANDA stressed the need to carefully define the information to be gathered from the national level. MEXICO suggested identifying where the Convention wants to be in 2018 with regard to Strategic Objectives 1 and 2. ARGENTINA said further work should build on the CST's past consideration of indicators.

SENEGAL stressed the importance of transferring relevant information from the local to global level without data losses, and of harmonizing data collection at the sub-regional level. CHILE noted that the applicability of the chosen indicators must be evaluated and, along with INDONESIA, noted that adequate monitoring by parties has financial implications.

SAUDI ARABIA said achieving Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 depends on implementing Strategic Objective 4 (mobilization of resources through building partnerships) and YEMEN said Objective 4 should be discussed ahead of Objectives 1-3. The GM emphasized the connections between all four strategic objectives, stressing that solid arguments are needed to mobilize resources.

TURKEY suggested that a major institution should be identified to collate site-specific data. The EU invited parties to join the EU, UNEP and their collaborators in developing a new World Atlas on Desertification. PAKISTAN stressed the importance of cooperation with the other Rio conventions, and learning from them.

IRAN said it is vital to introduce measurable and quantitative indicators for all items under Strategic Objective 3. PERU highlighted indicators for raising the awareness of decision makers. KENYA stressed identifying: existing institutions that have information and data; and data gaps. SOUTH AFRICA urged the CST to collaborate with other fora, and to translate scientific information into action.

Stressing that the required information exists, PANAMA said the CST needs only to determine the indicators and methodology to be used. CUBA called for simple and objective indicators. VIET NAM stressed the need for a common understanding of the concepts of land degradation, desertification, drought and deforestation, and for a set of verifiable benchmarks under each

core indicator. EGYPT underlined the CST's role in promoting South-South cooperation and called for the compilation of lessons learned from countries facing similar challenges and with similar geographic characteristics. ITALY highlighted that water is a crosscutting issue relevant to both desertification and climate change and urged its inclusion when developing indicators.

COSTA RICA said the CST must establish a solid scientific knowledge base to raise the Convention's profile. ZIMBABWE called for "systematic cascading" of reforms from the global to local levels. Fundación Ambiental Oasis de Vida (Colombia), on behalf of CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS (CSOs), emphasized the importance of high quality and reliable data, and traditional knowledge.

The Secretariat responded to comments, and noted that the joint CST-CRIC Bureau has proposed making regional assessments of the status of existing indicators. Sokona noted the need to build bridges with climate change and the IPCC, especially in the operationalization of adaptation indicators and the baseline situation in drylands.

FUNCTIONING OF THE CST: WORK OF THE CST BUREAU DURING THE 2008 INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD: Chair Dar introduced the work of the CST Bureau during the 2008 intersessional period (ICCD/CST(S-1)/2), highlighting two Bureau meetings, the preparation of documents for CST S-1, and the selection of a consortium to help with the preparation of CST 9.

RESHAPING THE OPERATION OF THE CST: The Secretariat introduced the report on progress in the preparation of CST 9 in a scientific and technical conference-style format (ICCD/CST(S-1)/3), highlighting that the Bureau selected Dryland Science for Development (DSD) as the consortium to assist in organizing CST 9.

The EU stressed that CST 9 should provide input on land degradation to the 2009 Climate Change Conference, be open to the entire scientific community and improve the articulation of the ecological and financial terms and the measures to quantify actions, which must be harmonized and coordinated with other conventions. JAPAN proposed involving the consortium in collecting the data on Strategic Objectives 1-3 and evaluating the indicators. Emphasizing the scientific and policy roles of the IPCC, BRAZIL, supported by CHILE, stressed the need to define CST 9's expected outcomes. SOUTH AFRICA and PERU stressed the need to include indigenous knowledge. Many speakers expressed their national and regional experts' interest in participating in the consortium, and requested information on the selection criteria, highlighting the importance of geographical balance. SENEGAL, supported by TUNISIA, said Africa is particularly affected by desertification and its experts will want to participate. TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO urged inclusion of experts from, and issues relevant to, small islands developing States.

The Secretariat said DSD would establish three Working Groups by January 2009. The DSD said each Group would consist of 30 experts, selected according to scientific knowledge and regional and gender representation. He said the DSD would initially select 10 experts per group, who would select an additional 20 experts, who would solicit global participation.

BRAZIL noted the DSD proposal emphasized land degradation and said the focus should remain on desertification, and stressed transparency in the working groups' work processes. SUDAN highlighted that desertification is land degradation in specific ecosystems, and said sound research, not just a review of research, is necessary. SPAIN asked how scientific and technical focal points would be incorporated. COLOMBIA, supported by FRANCE, suggested linking the consortium's work with

existing regional programmes. LEBANON suggested taking advantage of overlaps with other conferences and platforms. The Arab Maghreb Union said issues such as food security and water should also be discussed and the private sector should participate. FRANCE suggested developing a road map towards the scientific conference. A CSO representative urged involvement of CSOs in the consortium.

The DSD clarified that private sector and civil society members could be observers. He outlined the DSD strategy to publish results for different stakeholders, and said countries would need to disseminate information locally.

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT MULTI-YEAR (FOUR-YEAR) WORK PLAN FOR THE CST: The Secretariat introduced its proposed four-year work plan (ICCD/CST(S-1)/4/Add.1) and related two-year work programme (ICCD/CST(S-1)/4/Add.2), noting that the latter would be revised to reflect the recommendations made on the work plan.

The EU said the four-year work plan is consistent with the Strategy, but called for a better definition of the role and contribution of the national focal points. On the work programme, he proposed harmonizing the Secretariat and CST Bureau's work, limiting the number of activities, elaborating a budget, and holding the scientific policy dialogue during COP 9 and CST 9 instead. BRAZIL emphasized quality over quantity of activities. PERU said work on indicator development exists, and suggested linking the plan's and programme's activities to ongoing activities and including work on traditional knowledge related to land degradation. JAPAN noted overlaps in the expected accomplishments and inquired about the Bureau's planned approach to gather performance data.

ARGENTINA recommended including an outcome on enhancing scientific networks. COLOMBIA agreed with Argentina and Brazil on the need to focus on desertification. CANADA suggested clarifying the logic between outcomes, accomplishments and activities and emphasized quality over quantity of performance indicators. MEXICO suggested that an international prize related to land degradation, desertification and drought be included in the work plan. MOROCCO cautioned against overlaps between indicators in the two-year work programme and four-year work plan.

IRAN asked what would happen between 2011 and 2018. CHILE, supported by CUBA, urged stressing the national dimension. YEMEN emphasized that desertification is land degradation in drylands, caused by human and climatic factors. CHINA said "hot topics" such as carbon sequestration in soil should be prioritized.

Delegates will continue their discussion on this agenda item on Thursday, 6 November.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While many thought the CST session was progressing smoothly inside the Plenary Hall, the outcome and impact of the US election was the focus of conversation for many participants in the corridors. With a Democrat as President, some hoped that US participation in international environmental agreements would change.

On a substantive front, the CST S-1 discussion of the first three Strategic Objectives led to some pondering about what comes first – the chicken or the egg – with resource mobilization being the preferred starting point for some. Meanwhile, some explained that an undercurrent that seemed to underlie participants' concerns about the composition of the consortium members is the risk of omitting developing country scientists and policy experts and therefore, in a departure from the IPCC model, de-linking technical from political interests.

UNCCD CRIC 7 AND CST S-1: THURSDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2008

The first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-1) concluded its work on 6 November 2008. The CST: discussed its four-year work plan, two-year work programme and an oral report to CRIC 7 on these items; considered its advice to CRIC 7 on measuring progress on Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the Strategy; and adopted its report.

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT MULTI-YEAR (FOUR-YEAR) WORK PLAN FOR THE CST: CST Chair Dar invited the Secretariat to respond to Wednesday's comments on the four-year work plan. The Secretariat: said the work programme was submitted for guidance and is being funded through supplementary funds, while the work plan, budget and accomplishments will be adopted at COP 9; agreed that the CST and the Secretariat's related work are complementary, thus indicators could be merged; and said it had noted the proposals to reduce the number of performance indicators and activities.

CONSIDERATION OF THE COSTED DRAFT TWO-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE CST: Chair Dar opened the floor for discussion of the two-year work programme of the CST (ICCD/CST(S-1)/4/Add.2). GUINEA-BISSAU suggested focusing on the impact of drought. SENEGAL pointed out that there was no budget in the two-year work programme. PANAMA suggested focusing more on the four-year work plan, as the two-year work programme will end in one year. YEMEN said the work programme should be a 13.5-month programme, given that 2008 is almost over. The EU said the work programme should be realistic and include the means to carry it out. PERU suggested that the CST establish a calendar for effective implementation of the programme, while EQUATORIAL GUINEA called for precise timeframes.

Recalling the history of the UNCCD, CHAD, BENIN, NIGERIA, GUINEA and CHILE asked where the resources for the programme would come from, with NIGERIA arguing that resource-based budgeting would significantly reduce the activities to be implemented. NIGERIA and GUINEA highlighted some incorrect underlying assumptions about the work plan. JAPAN said without cost estimates, it is difficult to determine the appropriateness of activities and expressed concern at the mention of the need for supplementary funds.

TURKEY asked whether the DSD is collaborating with international institutions mentioned in the report, and when the thematic programme networks would be developed.

URUGUAY, supported by BRAZIL, suggested focusing on resource mobilization for implementing many of the activities. CÔTE D'IVOIRE emphasized the role of the national correspondents. Highlighting the CBD's experience, PAKISTAN stressed the importance of science and technology correspondents in promoting transboundary environmental activities. ITALY said the international scientific conference is instrumental to the achievement of the Strategic Objectives, and the work programme should highlight and connect the conference with the Objectives. SOUTH AFRICA emphasized the need for the Convention's institutions to strengthen their cooperation to avoid duplication of efforts and save costs.

The US noted that the work programme amounts to €510,000 and identifies 55 activities. He asked if the Secretariat would provide all the funds and whether it is feasible to expect the CST Chair and Bureau to be involved in all of the activities. ARGENTINA proposed matching the budget to expected outcomes.

Many parties highlighted the need to prioritize activities, given limited financial resources. GHANA stressed the role of traditional knowledge in developing indicators and CHILE highlighted, as CST priorities, holding regional scientific meetings and promoting the Convention. BURKINA FASO urged the CST to prioritize regional consultations on indicators and meetings of the working groups. VIET NAM suggested the work programme focus on the international scientific conference, and stressed the need to mobilize the active participation of parties. MOROCCO said some activities might be postponed until the next two-year period.

MEXICO said allocated funds are insufficient to raise the CST's profile. INDIA cautioned that development of a robust scientific basis must not be sacrificed when prioritizing activities. KYRGYZSTAN said information collection from scientific correspondents must be budgeted for. CAPE VERDE called on the GM to help mobilize funds to overcome financial constraints.

COLOMBIA emphasized that the Friends of the CST group, to be established under Operational Objective 3, should guarantee regional representation. JORDAN said coordination

between the focal points, CST and Secretariat should be more active. CHAD stressed establishing formal links between the CST and research institutions, particularly in Africa.

TUNISIA said financial resources and countries' preparedness to produce and harmonize the indicators are obstacles to implementing the work programme. ALGERIA and the CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC highlighted the need to establish priorities, and LEBANON stressed the need for a harmonized database. ZAMBIA emphasized the need to eliminate unnecessary activities, and underlined the importance of using national information and data.

NIGER asked when individual activities would be budgeted for. CSOs stressed the links between community involvement, information dissemination, behavior change and impact, and asked how much money is directed towards these activities. VENEZUELA said preparatory materials are needed to develop appropriate indicators. ISRAEL pointed out that no mechanism for quality control of scientific deliverables exists in the programme, and said voluntary peer review would not affect the budget. DOMINICAN REPUBLIC proposed redesigning the timeframe for the plan.

In response to comments, the GM recalled its mandate, reiterated the need for robust technical and scientific arguments in resource mobilization, highlighted ongoing discussion with the DSD on collaboration and expressed its willingness to offer its financial advisory services to parties.

The Secretariat said the work programme was developed to achieve the results that parties requested through their adoption of the Strategy. She said the 2008-2009 work programme was developed for information purposes, but CST 9 and COP 9 will consider a 2010-2011 work programme that will be accompanied by a detailed budget, and the CST will identify priorities in that and future work programmes. She noted that of the 55 activities, some 20 serve multiple purposes and thus are redundant but not repetitive, adding that many entail no significant cost.

CST S-1 REPORT ON THE FOUR-YEAR WORK PLAN AND THE TWO-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME: Chair Dar outlined the main contents of the report on the four-year work plan and two-year work programme of the CST to be presented to CRIC 7. He pointed out that the parties made a number of statements and endorsed the two documents. Regarding the 2008-2009 work programme, the priorities for which adequate funding should be mobilized include: selection of minimum indicators; organization of the CST 9 scientific conference; involvement of science and technology correspondents in activities identified in 2009; organization of the scientific policy dialogue together with the scientific conference; and planning of the next four-year work plan (2010-2013) and the next work programme. The CST decided to task the Chair to present the report to CRIC 7.

DRAFT ADVICE FROM THE CST TO THE CRIC ON HOW BEST TO MEASURE PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 1, 2 AND 3 OF THE STRATEGY: Chair Dar introduced the draft advice from the CST to the CRIC on measuring progress on Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 for consideration and approval by the CST. The EU recommended several changes, including stating who is responsible for various tasks. NIGERIA, supported by SYRIA, suggested that detailed changes to the text at this time are inappropriate because they had only just received the draft.

In response to ALGERIA's concern that the draft recommendations were available in English only, the text was read out and translated orally.

On selection of a minimum set of indicators, ISRAEL said there is a contradiction in the text, which calls for a minimum set of indicators but then lists numerous possible sources for them. BRAZIL, supported by SYRIA, said indicators should account for countries' special circumstances and needs. PERU stressed the importance of making indicators more explicit and of using available indicators. ECUADOR recommended inclusion of existing indicators from the FAO.

On benchmarks and baselines, the US, supported by ARGENTINA, suggested that the terms "benchmark" and "baseline" be clearly defined.

On methods for collecting and analyzing relevant data for use with the minimum set of indicators, the EU suggested methods should be "identified," "defined" and "developed," in addition to being "harmonized."

SUDAN cautioned that combating desertification does not always improve living conditions, which is a difficult Strategic Objective to achieve. COLOMBIA drew attention to the need for financial resources to accomplish the work, and suggested that mention be made of the GM. ALGERIA underlined the importance of costing and determining actual dates for accomplishing the tasks.

Chair Dar said that a Bureau meeting would be held with participation of interested parties to finalize the document at the close of the CST.

DRAFT REPORT OF CST S-1: Chair Dar invited Committee members to adopt the draft report of CST S-1 (ICCD/CST(S-1)/L.1). CST Rapporteur Maria Nery Urquiza Rodriguez (Cuba) introduced the report, noting that the final version would include a report of the debates under each item discussed during CST S-1, as completed by the Bureau and Secretariat. The Committee adopted the report without amendment and authorized the Rapporteur, with the assistance of the Secretariat, to complete it.

Chair Dar thanked participants for supporting the enhancement of the scientific and technological basis of the Convention, and closed CST S-1 at 4:44pm.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While the CST concluded its first special session and passed the discussion about indicators onto the CRIC, some delegates expressed their hope that the contact group that will consider this issue during the second week will give it appropriate attention, with participants indicating that debate has already begun regarding the contact group's composition. Attention was also given to what the most appropriate model for bringing science into the UNCCD would be, with some discussions focusing on the lessons from the IPCC model and how they might be incorporated into the CST's activities. Some stressed the value of an independent scientific body while others highlighted the merits of a representative group to ensure the incorporation of diverse perspectives. Meanwhile, the Western European and Others Group, the one UN regional group without a matching Convention Annex, was said to be slated to receive a briefing from the Executive Secretary on Friday. The other UN regional groups received similar briefings during their Annex meetings on the first two days in Istanbul.

UNCCD CRIC 7 AND CST S-1: FRIDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2008

The seventh session of the UNCCD Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 7) opened on Friday, 7 November 2008. Delegates participated in a general discussion on the implementation of the Strategy before and after an interactive dialogue on UNCCD strategic orientations.

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

CRIC Chair Israel Torres (Panama) opened CRIC 7 and urged participants to provide financial, technical and policy contributions to achieve the UNCCD's objectives.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK: The Secretariat introduced the provisional agenda (ICCD/CRIC(7)/1) and proposed moving the discussion of the two-year work programmes of the CST and CRIC from the afternoon of Monday, 10 November, to the afternoon of Friday, 7 November, in order to address the work plans and programmes of all Convention bodies together. In response to ALGERIA's concern regarding time constraints, the Secretariat said discussion could continue on 10 November, if necessary. The CRIC adopted the agenda, and the organization of work in Annex II of the provisional agenda, as orally revised. The CRIC appointed Vice Chair Hussein Nasrallah (Lebanon) as Rapporteur for CRIC 7.

THE TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: Luc Gnacadja, UNCCD Executive Secretary, presented the report on the implementation of the Strategy and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2). He invited the CRIC's recommendations on the Secretariat's organizational reforms and operationalization of the Strategy and expressed interest in holding a discussion before COP 9 on Strategic Objective 4 (mobilizing resources).

The Chair invited regional groups that did not speak at the joint opening session on Monday, 3 November, to make comments. Chile, on behalf of GRULAC, said the GM's and Secretariat's efforts to coordinate are laudable, and should continue. He lamented that a regional meeting was not convened and that resources for the Latin America and Caribbean's regional office are lacking. Chad, on behalf of the AFRICAN GROUP, made recommendations regarding the implementation

of the Strategy, including: creating clear links between the Secretariat and GM; strengthening resource mobilization efforts; reinforcing the Regional Coordination Units (RCUs); supporting and enhancing implementation of national action plans; and strengthening cooperation and coordination among countries and regions. Myanmar, on behalf of the ASIA GROUP, called attention to the 6 October meeting of Regional Implementation Annex (RIA) representatives on a mechanism to facilitate regional coordination of UNCCD implementation, which developed guidelines to facilitate the RIAs' task in proposing regional coordination mechanisms.

Delegates then offered general comments on the CRIC's agenda, with some speaking during the morning, and others after the interactive dialogue concluded in the afternoon.

ALGERIA stressed the need for clearly defined roles for each subsidiary body, and said the GM is the only body that has produced tangible results. Turkey, on behalf of the NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN countries, highlighted linkages between soil, water and carbon sequestration, and supported strengthening regional coordination. PAKISTAN stressed the importance of the communication strategy and learning lessons from other instruments.

NIGERIA stated that the Strategy does not specify the means to operationalize its objectives, and that the GM, while it has performed well, was never intended to facilitate effective resource mobilization. He said the presumption of a Joint Work Programme (JWP) is flawed because the GM is guided by donor priorities and not decisions by parties, and the extent of the GM's independence from the Secretariat requires discussion. ECUADOR said the Secretariat and GM must coordinate their efforts to secure funds for their region. SAUDI ARABIA highlighted that parties require support to harmonize regional and sub-regional efforts with the Strategy.

CHINA stressed the need to: mobilize "political resources and attention" to UNCCD implementation; further clarify the Strategic Objectives; reinforce coordination at global, regional and national levels; strengthen the UNCCD institutions; make the decision-making process more transparent; and strengthen the GM for mobilizing financial resources, especially for supporting the implementation of NAPs. Regarding the proposed plan for the Secretariat's restructuring, he said such a plan, if implemented, will further weaken its ability to coordinate and service the UNCCD's implementation and to meet parties' needs.

The US highlighted that, *inter alia*: there are overlaps in the functions of the Secretariat, GM and parties, and parties must take responsibility for their own functions; currently many

performance indicators are outputs, not results, although he said they should evolve over time; and consensus over indicators must be attained at COP 9.

SUDAN proposed that the GM be made an integral part of the Secretariat. The CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC called for resources to align NAPs with the Strategy, said the lack of active collaboration between the GM and Secretariat is a threat to the UNCCD, and explained the need for RCUs. The GAMBIA urged aligning NAPs with the Strategy, ensuring regional representation in the UNCCD's role as a global authority in scientific knowledge, and conducting a Stern-type study on the economics of desertification.

PROTERRA (Peru) said that CSOs play an important role in implementing the Strategy, and indicators should be established to monitor their contribution. SOUTH AFRICA highlighted regional coordination and the importance of strengthening UNCCD institutions, especially the GM, in mobilizing resources. TUNISIA noted that limited financial resources constrain the implementation of the Strategy. He stressed the role of national actions, links and cooperation between the Secretariat and GM, appropriate institutional structures, indicators for monitoring progress and funding of NGOs.

BANGLADESH proposed that UNCCD resource allocation be based on the severity of the problem. Comparing the number of annual meetings held by each of the Rio convention bodies and the earlier emergence of desertification as an international environmental problem, she said the UNCCD is weak and should be strengthened.

SWAZILAND said the Strategy's implementation is still focused on the global level and stressed the importance of the JIU evaluation in harmonizing and aligning the work of the GM and Secretariat. MALI expressed concern about the collaboration between the GM and Secretariat and explained the utility of RCUs.

MOROCCO said funding should be directed to activities that include reforestation. HAITI called on the Secretariat and GM to support countries most affected by desertification, including through technology transfer. PERU noted an opportunity to obtain funds from reducing emissions from deforestation. ARGENTINA said the UNCCD must receive funds dedicated specifically for the Convention and urged involvement of civil society, regional banks and the private sector.

Executive Secretary Gnacadja stressed that the Secretariat is seeking: parties' guidance on work programmes, indicators and the future format of CRIC; and views on existing regional coordination mechanisms. He said the Secretariat believes NAPs should be considered under the JWP.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON UNCCD STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS: In his introductory remarks, Modou Diagne Fada (Senegal), Chair of the Interactive Dialogue, proposed seven questions to focus the discussion, including: priorities to implement the Strategy; views on the budget and financial resources; partnerships and synergies; and support expected from CSD-17. Moderator Philbert Brown (Jamaica) said the session would facilitate an exchange of views among the parties on their expectations of the CRIC and on the incentive mechanisms. The Dialogue began with six presentations.

Godert van Lynden (World Soil Information) presented on the Global Assessment of Land Productivity (GLADA), an innovative initiative that uses biomass change as a proxy indicator for land productivity. Sem Shikongo (Namibia) outlined ways that parties can use a results-based management approach to ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy.

Luca Montanarella (European Commission) pointed out that desertification leads to substantial losses of terrestrial carbon to the atmosphere and recommended developing strong synergies among the Rio conventions to improve soil protection. Mika Castro Lucic (University of Chile) presented on food security

and indigenous people, noting that the UNCCD provides the best instrument to recognize indigenous people's rights in the fights against hunger, poverty and environmental degradation.

Cristina Manzano (International Federation of Agricultural Producers) presented on ways to enhance food security under the Strategy and stressed that farmers must be better integrated into the UNCCD. Christophe Crepin (World Bank) outlined the importance of cooperation frameworks for achieving the Strategy, noting their importance to improve mobilization of resources.

NIGERIA stated that in addition to partnership and better management, financial resources are most important, and that the GM lacks capacity to carry out its responsibilities. PAKISTAN said the role of soil organic carbon in developing synergies among the UNCCD, UNFCCC and CBD needs to be further elaborated. CHILE noted that there is a broad range of synergies among the Rio conventions, and expressed concern about the lack of financial resources for UNCCD implementation. ISRAEL suggested mapping social and political changes using the same time series that was used to map biophysical variables in the GLADA study, with the objective of correlating the changes in order to find the drivers of change in land productivity.

In response to parties' statements, Shikongo highlighted the role of the JIU evaluation in ensuring that the Convention bodies are aligned to implement the Strategy. Crepin said there is a clear financing gap, as well as a need for efficiency and for partnerships.

GRENADE asked what strategies should be employed to develop partnerships. The GAMBIA said the World Bank should fund the NAPs to alleviate poverty and incorporate environmental concerns into their projects. TURKEY suggested further attention to sustainable land and water management. COLOMBIA emphasized the need to work with indigenous peoples.

BURKINA FASO encouraged the mobilization of additional resources, particularly for investment in arid areas. BENIN said legislation should be developed that prioritizes arid areas. SAINT LUCIA asked how the UNCCD could encourage partnerships to combat poverty and achieve food security. ALGERIA emphasized the importance of rural development in combating desertification, and called for reinforcing the GM and drawing funds from the GEF.

In their concluding responses, the panelists highlighted: an apparent lack of political will by developed countries to provide resources; the importance of the JIU evaluation in addressing resource issues; the challenges of preparing a map on the socioeconomic factors; and the need for technology exchanges. Chair Fada stressed the responsibilities of the GEF and all parties in resource mobilization.

IN THE CORRIDORS

The close of the first day of CRIC 7 found participants expressing mixed reviews, with a majority stating satisfaction with the substance, but many articulating frustration with the process. While a number of participants welcomed the knowledge they gained from the Dialogue, they urged a rethinking of its structure, citing, for example, a reduction of the panel size to allow more discussion and providing for a thematic focus. Discussion on the Strategy was reported to have frustrated many. Some expressed concern that the session may find it difficult to generate something substantive for COP 9 and said the discussion was a restatement of "the same arguments we have heard before," while others expressed more substantive concerns that the Secretariat's work plan does not distinguish between the Secretariat's and other stakeholders' responsibilities. The more optimistic remarked that participants were more candid than ever before, and that the meeting was clearing "a path through the thicket" of issues.

UNCCD CRIC 7 AND CST S-1: MONDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2008

CRIC 7 considered the terms of reference (TOR) and programme of work of the Joint Inspection Union (JIU) on the assessment of the Global Mechanism (GM), and the work plans and programmes for the Convention's bodies during its second day. A contact group convened in the evening to consider the Convention bodies' work programmes.

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

PRESENTATION OF THE TOR AND PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE JIU ON THE ASSESSMENT OF THE GM: The JIU introduced the TOR on the assessment of the GM, including its objectives, intended impact, scope, methodology, missions and expected output, as requested by COP 8 (ICCD/CRIC(7)/INF.5). He said major issues to address include: work and functions of the GM; lack of clarity in institutional arrangements and accountability; and alignment between the GM and Secretariat's programmes.

Chad, for the AFRICAN GROUP, said the TOR should align with the decision established at COP 8. Myanmar, for the ASIA GROUP, highlighted that the Secretariat's restructuring has made communication with parties more difficult. Chile, for the LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN GROUP (GRULAC), supported the review and TOR, and urged the Secretariat to make funds available. Turkey, for the NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN, supported the review and called for examining, *inter alia*, indicators and financing. The EU stressed that: the COP Bureau should be more involved in elaborating the TOR; the review should build on previous reviews; and costs must be minimized. The G-77/CHINA said the impact of the funds mobilized by the GM is small, and urged full funding of the review.

The US said the review should demonstrate the GM's comparative advantage and examine the GM's undertaking in relation to the organizations and subjects identified in UNCCD Articles 20 and 21 and emerging financing mechanisms. Ukraine, for CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE (CEE), emphasized optimizing the JIU budget. CÔTE D'IVOIRE suggested task adjustment, given resource constraints. NIGERIA said the GM must do more to finance the JIU evaluation. SOUTH AFRICA proposed taking account of the GM mandate in the context of the changing financial architecture, institutional arrangements and accountability, and sought clarification of

the criteria used to select the study countries. SAUDI ARABIA urged close study of the Convention articles to settle the dispute on the institutional question and clarification of the GM's cooperation with other international financial institutions and support at the national, subregional and regional levels.

MOROCCO said the Secretariat and GM are accountable to the COP and should find the money for the assessment. The GAMBIA recalled that the JIU assessment of the Secretariat was cheaper than the proposed GM assessment, and suggested reducing costs. SWAZILAND highlighted the current "unhealthy environment," in which some parties are labeled supporters of the Secretariat and others supporters of the GM. He anticipated that the JIU assessment could help resolve the situation.

CHINA suggested adding an assessment of the GM's organizational structure, staff composition and professional competency to the TOR. THAILAND supported combining the mandate of the Secretariat and GM at the regional level. The JIU said it will make efforts to reduce costs, and the financial issue for the assessment should be resolved urgently.

CONSIDERATION OF THE WORK PLANS OF THE

CONVENTION BODIES: Deputy Executive Secretary Grégoire de Kalbermatten introduced the Secretariat's draft multi-year work plan (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.1), costed draft two-year work programme (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.2), and draft joint work programme (JWP) of the Secretariat and GM (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.5). Christian Mersmann, GM Managing Director, presented the GM's work plan and costed work programme (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.3 and Add.4).

The Chair called on speakers who were not able to comment during the general discussion on Friday, 7 November. BRAZIL said the UNCCD's regional approach is unique, but the work programmes do not adequately reflect this aspect. He lamented that his region's meeting did not take place as planned, questioned the need for a Secretariat conference services unit, and suggested combining the policy and advocacy and awareness raising units. He supported a Secretariat role in resource mobilization and emphasized that the UNCCD is not a climate or land convention. BURUNDI highlighted the need to align NAPs with the Strategy.

Executive Secretary Gnacadja said: the UNCCD should address land degradation in order to respond to climate change, food security, poverty reduction and sustainable development; the Secretariat's restructuring sought to adapt to the Strategy,

improve capacity and eliminate redundancy; and parties should take the restructuring into account in their regional coordination and cooperation.

Chad, for the AFRICAN GROUP, stressed the importance of: the RCUs; funding for NAPs; capacity building for focal points; and resolving differences between the GM and Secretariat. Saudi Arabia, for the ASIA GROUP, said indicators for the GM's work programme should be quantitative. GRULAC called for a region-focused approach, a clear timetable for the regional priorities, and quantitative indicators and measures. The NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN called for a sequential and consistent methodology of implementation across the regions, and suggested the CST's involvement in developing the methodology. The CEE expressed regret that the GM's work programme lacked activities for his region. The G-77/CHINA called for indicators that provide baseline data, and said the lack of regional consultations before CRIC 7 had constrained the Group's ability to make valuable contributions.

The EU stressed: ensuring effectiveness; postponing the high-level scientific dialogue; ensuring that the Secretariat plays a supportive role without pre-empting COP decisions; and distinguishing the activities to be funded through core and voluntary resources. He said the GM's: work plan and programme meet requirements but are difficult to read; expected outputs should be concrete; performance indicators should be precise on expected results; and investment framework should measure impact and client satisfaction.

CANADA congratulated the GM for its efforts to align its approach with the Strategy and in presenting a funded work programme, and said other Convention bodies should use the GM example to identify performance indicators. He said the GM and Secretariat have different mandates and their JWP should constitute a small area of their work.

The US called for: quantitative indicators; a clearer division of labor between the GM and Secretariat; the GM's disaggregation of the "innovative" mechanisms; clarity in the causal links between expected accomplishments and performance indicators; and clarification that the focus on soils and land pertains to drylands.

CHINA inquired about the relationship between the Secretariat's new structure and the UNCCD's six activity areas. He said capacity building activities are omitted, RCUs should be strengthened, and the GM is a resource mobilization, not a project implementation, body, which should coordinate with the Secretariat, RCUs and national focal points.

SWITZERLAND said activities in the GM work programme are connected to its fundamental role, but together they risk dispersing the GM's action. She noted that the JWP includes results expected from the GM work programme. ARGENTINA said regional activities are the "heart" of the JWP, with the Secretariat working from the global to regional levels, and the GM working from the regional to local. MEXICO emphasized the need for a global information strategy and suggested creating a documentary with someone of international prestige to enhance the Convention's global impact.

Algeria, for the AFRICAN GROUP, said the JWP is doable, the GM work programme is fully aligned with the Strategy, and indicators must be specific, easy, precise and implementable. NIGER and ZIMBABWE welcomed the JWP, with NIGER highlighting the importance of national capacity building. CÔTE D'IVOIRE stressed the importance of resources from the GEF and national level coordination. MOROCCO said some indicators are redundant.

EGYPT expressed interest in hosting an RCU, proposed the establishment of a global trust fund and, with NIGERIA, proposed integrating the GM under the Secretariat. PAKISTAN

said the communication strategy must be effective and the new reporting strategies are "stressing" parties. COLOMBIA said, at COP 9, the work plans and programmes should demonstrate how they support NAPs and resource mobilization, and called for greater clarity regarding RCUs.

ISRAEL suggested: determining an agreed baseline; identifying a quality control mechanism for the materials to be posted to the website; and organizing a structured brainstorming to consider the UNCCD's focus. MALI said NAPs are a major element of UNCCD implementation, but the documents only refer sporadically to them. THAILAND prioritized capacity building. TUNISIA said the GM should focus on fundraising to implement NAPs.

The GAMBIA emphasized the need for a functional regional mechanism that could be close to the implementation level. JAPAN asked what the Secretariat has done to implement the work plan. CSOs suggested developing a mechanism to facilitate CSO participation in the Convention, and adopting the slogan "Yes we can and Yes we must!"

Responding to the comments, de Kalbermatten said the consensus on the Convention's focus is desertification, but other related issues should be considered. He recognized the gaps in servicing national programmes, and agreed on the need to provide support for regional coordination, but said the Secretariat is limited in delivering all the services requested by parties. He supported moving towards quantitative indicators, and said capacity building is in the work programme, but the Secretariat's focus is on monitoring and reporting. Gnacadja added that the five operational clusters of the Secretariat are derived from the Strategy. Mersmann observed that there was an apparent acceptance of the Secretariat's proposed basic structure, agreed with Nigeria on the GM's advisory role, and clarified that the GM does not have regional offices, stating that it works with consultants on a project-by-project basis.

REPORTS ON THE CST 4-YEAR WORK PLAN AND 2-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME AND CRIC 2-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME: CST Chair Dar introduced the CST's multi-year work plan and the costed work programme for 2008-2009 (ICCD/CST (S-1)/4/Add.1 and Add.2), and made an oral presentation of the report of the CST's meeting held from 5-6 November 2008. He noted that the CRIC will take them into account to ensure coherence with the work plans of the CRIC and Secretariat.

The Secretariat introduced the CRIC two-year work programme (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2 Add.6), noting that COP 9 is expected to give it a new mandate and operational modalities, making a four-year work plan difficult to develop. Parties will discuss these items on Tuesday.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Contact Group 1, on work programmes of the Convention's institutions and bodies, was chaired by South Africa's Maria Mbengashe and met for the first time on Monday evening. According to informal reports, the discussion, which lasted one hour, focused on the objective of the group and the purpose of an informal paper circulated by the Secretariat to facilitate discussion. In the end, no substantive discussion was reported to have taken place, due to participants' varied interpretations of the group's mandate. However, participants apparently agreed to have the regions consult over the Secretariat's draft text on Tuesday morning and solicit their additional input for submissions to the Secretariat by 1:00pm Tuesday, on the basis of which the Secretariat would prepare a revised document for circulation to the Contact Group on Tuesday afternoon.

UNCCD CRIC 7 AND CST S-1: TUESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2008

CRIC 7 considered the two-year work programmes of the CRIC and CST, the format of future meetings of the CRIC, and input from CST S-1 to the CRIC. A contact group convened in the afternoon and evening to consider the Convention bodies' work programmes.

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

CONSIDERATION OF THE WORK PLANS OF THE CONVENTION BODIES: Parties continued their discussion, started on Monday, 10 November, on the CRIC and CST work plans. Chad, for the AFRICAN GROUP, stressed operational complementarity among the Convention bodies' work plans. The US called for relevant and quantifiable indicators for the Operational Objectives and said the difference between baselines and benchmarks should be made clear. Myanmar, for the ASIA GROUP, suggested making the technical aspects of the work plans more understandable.

Ukraine, for CEE, highlighted the importance of scientific correspondents, indicators and the baseline. The G-77/CHINA pointed out that funding for the work plans and their implementation remains unclear. Chile, for GRULAC, said the CST needs regional contributions such as those from regional coordination mechanisms and meetings, and urged inclusion of regional activities in the Secretariat's and GM's regular budgets. YEMEN emphasized strengthening regional networks and asked if communications with countries that have not aligned with the new reporting guidelines would continue. SAUDI ARABIA said organizations specialized in the areas of desertification and land degradation should partake in evaluating biophysical data.

CHILE suggested analyzing countries' obstacles in implementing the CRIC work programme and said CSOs should comply with RBM reporting guidelines. BANGLADESH proposed that the CST meet at least twice annually, and suggested classifying countries by vulnerability rather than regional annexes. The EU emphasized the need to harmonize the CST and CRIC work plans. CHINA commented that the role of science and technology in establishing synergies between the Rio conventions has been overlooked, and called for more training on science and technology. ZAMBIA stressed interactions between the CST and relevant Rio convention bodies.

CST Chair Dar said the priority activities for 2008-2009 involve impact indicators, for which support from scientific and technological correspondents is required. He noted the need to mobilize the support of international and regional scientific institutions to help correspondents to network and share scientific advice.

LESOTHO underscored the UNCCD's intended impact of improving the livelihoods of those living in drylands. SUDAN cautioned that achieving this impact requires addressing elements outside of the UNCCD. MEXICO proposed publishing CRIC results on the internet and a world ranking of the countries most affected by desertification.

CONSIDERATION OF THE FORMAT FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE CRIC: The Secretariat introduced options for the future format of CRIC meetings (ICCD/CRIC(7)/4). He proposed that performance indicators be reviewed every two years and impact indicators every four years. Chad, for the AFRICAN GROUP, expressed its support of the proposed format.

Chile, for GRULAC, and Georgia, for CEE, supported addressing all regions at once, with the implementation of the Strategy reviewed every two years and of the Convention through desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) profiles and impact indicators every four years. The EU expressed preference for: CRIC intersessionals in a learning forum style; CRIC sessions held during COP to review implementation, with annual reporting on the Operational Objectives and reporting every four years for the Strategic Objectives; and CST meetings held during CRIC intersessionals focusing on the Strategic Objectives. BRAZIL proposed that: regional coordination meetings precede CRIC meetings; CRIC review both UNCCD implementation and the functioning of its bodies; and two of the CRIC's five segments be devoted to evaluating national performance. The US suggested that future CRIC sessions focus on the Strategy and the indicators be reviewed every four years, and supported the CRIC format, but with a review of global indicators added. She clarified that while different indicators would be reviewed in the four years, the same indicators would be reviewed for all the UNCCD bodies and parties during each review session.

THAILAND, CANADA, Chile, for GRULAC, and others supported running intersessional CRIC and CST meetings back-to-back or in parallel. Antigua and Barbuda, for G-77/CHINA, questioned whether holding back-to-back CST and CRIC sessions was a cost-saving or strategic decision. Chile,

for GRULAC, supported the proposal that the GM should report concurrently with other Convention bodies. Georgia, for CEE, said reporting from the GEF, GM and the Secretariat should occur at CRIC meetings. EQUATORIAL GUINEA said it is necessary to link the GM with GEF, and GEF should submit reports to the CRIC.

In reference to CSOs, PERU reminded participants that the UNCCD is a convention of parties and, with the G-77/CHINA, JAPAN and others, said the number of days of intersessional meetings should be reduced. ARGENTINA, CANADA, BRAZIL, the EU and others supported CSO involvement, with BRAZIL suggesting their involvement should occur early in the session's agenda. A CSO representative encouraged further defining the role of CSOs, particularly related to indicators.

SAUDI ARABIA said the CRIC should define its required activities and outcomes before each meeting. PAKISTAN suggested drawing lessons from the other Rio conventions for national reporting guidelines. MEXICO said all reports should be prepared in one CRIC period, and proposed evaluating gender aspects in national reports. CHINA said CRIC submissions should contain focused recommendations. Myanmar, for the ASIA GROUP, highlighted that reviewing the implementation of the two-year work programmes is missing from the proposed CRIC format. The G-77/CHINA stressed that reporting guidelines for the GM should be established by COP 9 to ensure alignment with the GEF Regional Allocation Framework mid-term reallocation.

TURKEY and ARGENTINA suggested that the CRIC should also review Convention implementation at the regional level. JAPAN supported a focus on the results of Convention implementation. EL SALVADOR said financial support related to the CRIC review should be provided directly to national coordination bodies.

CONSIDERATION OF THE INPUT FROM CST S-1: CST Chair Dar presented the advice from the CST to the CRIC on how best to measure progress on Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 (ICCD/CST (S-1)/5/Add.1).

The EU said the document requires urgent implementation and should indicate who will implement it and on what timetable. ISRAEL said the selection of indicators should seek to identify optimal indicators, but may not satisfy all the criteria identified in the document. VIET NAM cautioned against the uptake of indicators that are used by multiple entities but are defined differently by each one, and encouraged uptake of indicators most relevant to the Convention. PAKISTAN implored the Secretariat to consider regional work done on developing indicators.

BURKINA FASO encouraged the Bureau and Secretariat to establish systems to empower science and technology correspondents and, with INDIA, sought clarification on how to appoint them. INDIA asked if recommended North-South and South-South cooperation would occur under the CST or on a bilateral basis.

The G-77/CHINA said regional meetings should be funded from the Secretariat's core budget, and called on the GM to ensure that funds are made available for the full participation of all regions at CST meetings. She also requested making funds available to regions for the preparation of national baselines and assessments as inputs to the CST's baseline work. ARGENTINA said it is useful to set an initial goal when choosing indicators, and highlighted increasing capacity and harmonizing the process.

Chile, for GRULAC, stressed the importance of capacity building at global, regional and national levels. GUINEA said science and technology correspondents should be provided with the appropriate means to carry out their mission. ECUADOR

suggested that the CST carry out an in-depth study on indicators that already exist in the regions. JAPAN requested that the medium-term steps listed in the document on advice from the CST on measuring progress be specified in detail (ICCD/CST(S-1)/5/Add.1). SUDAN proposed: textual amendments to emphasize the use of "directly relevant existing indicators"; that efforts be aimed at generating new data and information based on scientific, biophysical and socioeconomic research; and a focus on the national level.

CST Chair Dar, in response to comments, outlined the process to be followed to harmonize the indicators and the additional inputs to be included in the recommendations for submission to COP 9. He emphasized that implementation, however, will depend on resource availability. The plenary adjourned early so that simultaneous interpretation could be offered in the contact group on work programmes of the Convention's bodies.

CONTACT GROUP 1

Chaired by Maria Mbengashe (South Africa), the Contact Group on the work programmes of the UNCCD's bodies convened following plenary and met until 9:00 pm. The Group agreed to conduct its work based on the terms of reference proposed by the Secretariat, on the basis of which they began consideration of the revised draft document containing part of the CRIC's report to COP 9. The Group considered text addressing the programmatic framework, which is structured into six sub-sections: general recommendations, CST, CRIC, GM, Secretariat and the Secretariat-GM JWP. The Group concluded an initial paragraph-by-paragraph consideration of the first three subsections, *ad referendum*.

The major debate centered around whether to attribute to "some" parties the specific references for which divergent views could not be reconciled, with some expressing concern that this would flag a lack of consensus. Among these issues were references to the mobilization of resources for the JIU assessment of the GM, support for the resource-based management approach and regional coordination units, and concern about the adequacy of financial resources for implementation. The Group will reconvene Wednesday to consider the remaining subsections, and for a second reading of the revised text.

IN THE CORRIDORS

While delegates offered their official statements in the CRIC 7 plenary hall, activity was reported to be taking place on a number of fronts in other meeting rooms. Consultations over the past few days involving the CST Bureau and the science and technology correspondents have reportedly led to the development of a draft questionnaire to solicit information regarding indicators that are currently in use in countries, along with a timeline for gathering and compiling this information in time for COP 9's consideration.

Meanwhile, task forces from each of the regional annexes have been meeting to share their visions on regional coordination mechanisms, in preparation for the reports that COP 8 called on them to prepare regarding such possible mechanisms. Some regions indicated that they were nearing agreement on their proposal, and are now considering whether a consultant or a member of the regional annex will draft the TORs for the mechanisms.

LAND-L ANNOUNCEMENT LIST: The International Institute for Sustainable Development, in cooperation with the UNCCD Secretariat, is pleased to announce the launch of the LAND-L announcement list. To subscribe to LAND-L, please visit <http://www.iisd.ca/email/subscribe.htm>

UNCCD CRIC 7 AND CST S-1: WEDNESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2008

CRIC 7 considered the report on indicators and monitoring of the Strategy and the draft reporting guidelines in regard to improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and format of reports submitted to the COP. Contact Group 1 met during the afternoon to continue its consideration of the Convention bodies' work plans, and Contact Group 2 convened for the first time to discuss indicators and reporting principles.

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT ON INDICATORS AND MONITORING OF THE STRATEGY: The Secretariat introduced the report on indicators and monitoring (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.7). He explained that parties were invited to submit indicators for consideration at CRIC 7, and that while parties presented diverse views, they agreed on the need to select a minimum set of indicators.

Saudi Arabia, for the ASIA GROUP, stressed the need for a quantitative assessment of the Strategic Objectives. Chile, for GRULAC, encouraged: defining a limited number of simple and measurable indicators; prioritizing the outcome on integrating NAPs into development planning; and accounting for existing country experience. Turkey, for the NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN, said his annex had developed monitoring indicators in cooperation with the European Commission.

The G-77/CHINA sought clarification on the expected outcome of the discussion. The EU urged the Secretariat to prioritize drafting a consolidated set of indicators, which, he said, is a necessary basis for consultations. CHINA highlighted the need to: determine which indicators should be quantitative and qualitative; provide more details when describing indicators for the regional and national levels because desertification varies geographically; and define who is responsible for monitoring results. Many countries stressed the need to develop baselines where relevant.

SWAZILAND, the AFRICAN GROUP and TANZANIA requested the Secretariat to prepare a set of simple, applicable and measurable indicators before COP 9, and stressed the need for baseline information. Chad, for the AFRICAN GROUP, supported by TANZANIA and VENEZUELA, highlighted the need for human and financial resources. BRAZIL, with VENEZUELA, BENIN and ARGENTINA, called for consideration of countries' special needs when developing indicators.

GUINEA requested resources to support reporting and, with PAKISTAN, called for simple, measurable indicators with a defined baseline inventory. THAILAND highlighted the shortcomings of indicators and, with EGYPT, stressed the need for benchmarks and an agreed unit of measurement to assess progress.

VENEZUELA and CHINA called for a glossary to define the terms in the document, and suggested producing a procedural manual on how to implement the indicators. GUINEA and ARGENTINA stressed the need for regional indicators. CAPE VERDE expressed its desire to see the indicators developed and implemented for sustainable land management.

Based on the assessment of poverty, BURUNDI emphasized the problematic nature of indicators, and asked who was expected to respond to the CST questionnaire on indicators. JAPAN inquired about the source of funding for this exercise. BURKINA FASO urged developing simple and straightforward indicators that take into account ongoing activities, and highlighted their awareness-raising and educational roles. MOROCCO concurred on the need for simple, quantifiable and measurable indicators.

IMPROVING PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AS WELL AS THE QUALITY AND FORMAT OF REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COP: CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT REPORTING

GUIDELINES: The Secretariat introduced the documents on reporting guidelines (ICCD/CRIC(7)/3 and Add.1-Add.7). Chad, for the AFRICAN GROUP, raised the issue of funding for the preparation of national reports. Myanmar, for the ASIA GROUP, encouraged standardizing the format and size of national reports. Chile, for GRULAC, said the GM and GEF must account for information provided by the CST, and highlighted the importance of assessing the impact of donor country and subsidiary body support for regional and subregional action programmes. The G-77/CHINA stressed the cost of collecting and storing data for reporting and asked if the GM or GEF would fund national reporting.

The EU supported the recommendations contained in the document on the draft reporting guidelines, and urged the Secretariat to produce the draft reporting guidelines before COP 9. His comments on the addenda, *inter alia*, addressed the areas of: good practices and experiences; financial reporting; submission of the national reports; performance indicators; regional financial mechanisms; and regional information centers. PAKISTAN said additional financial resources should be sought for meaningful reporting. SAUDI ARABIA highlighted the importance of capacity building.

MOROCCO said all parties should be involved in the design of the implementation guidelines. PERU called for capacity building and sufficient and timely funding to ensure

broad national consultation in reporting. The US suggested that failures, in the context of lessons learned, should be documented, and called for ensuring parity in financial reporting by developed and developing country parties. CHINA proposed the improvement of reporting processes and formats, establishment of a special fund and collaboration between the GM and Secretariat and others in capacity building. SWITZERLAND noted that, unlike developing countries, developed countries and the GM are required to report the impacts from their financial contributions.

BRAZIL said finances for national reporting must not take away from finances for implementing the Convention. He stressed that the GM must provide strong information on mobilization of financial resources. BURUNDI said the GM must report on the impact of its activities on parties, and noted that collection of statistics is difficult because they are often biased or incomplete. YEMEN highlighted that countries require resources to establish databases to collect relevant data from different institutions.

SWAZILAND said donor and affected country party reports must be aligned to trace the impact of financial flows. He stressed the importance of accurately measuring financial flows for implementing the UNCCD. CANADA said donor countries may need to revise sector coding to measure such flows, while BRAZIL highlighted the problem of double counting.

NIGER emphasized the need for technical, financial and institutional capacity building. SURINAME highlighted that the need to align work programmes and NAPs with RBM, particularly without adequate financing, may "take us back to square one." SYRIA highlighted awareness raising, capacity building and provision of financial resources for reporting. VENEZUELA stressed financial support and harmonization in producing the reports.

The Secretariat urged the parties to provide further input for the preparation of the reporting guidelines. She said impact indicators will be taken into account when drafting the reporting guidelines. In response to Switzerland's concern that only developed countries were required to provide information on impact indicators, she said the point was not to burden developed countries, but that the suggestion was made in recognition of the financial burden the request would place on developing countries.

CONTACT GROUP 1

In the afternoon, the contact group on work programmes of the Convention's bodies resumed discussion of the CRIC's draft report on the multi-year work plans and programmes. Chaired by Maria Mbengashe (South Africa), the group completed a first reading of the subsections on the GM, the Secretariat and the Secretariat-GM JWP. The Secretariat also circulated and introduced a new text, also for consideration by the Group, containing the CRIC's report to the COP on the future format of the CRIC.

A recurrent debate was whether to begin the paragraphs with "parties" or "some parties" because the report is simply a reflection of statements made. Some delegates proposed following CRIC 5's report structure that avoids the use of "parties," as it is a qualitative measure of the level of consensus. Other delegates said this would jeopardize the Committee's work. Some parties also objected to the tendency: by delegates to propose amendments requiring action by COP 9, which some cautioned was decision taking and therefore a COP role; and to negotiate text, as the report was a reflection of statements made in plenary.

On the outstanding provisions in the subsection on the GM, new text was submitted: reflecting the interlinkages between resource mobilization and policy necessitating collaboration between the GM and Secretariat at the national level; and requesting the GM to develop indicators to better measure its activities and to provide more detailed "annual" information on its financial support to parties, quantifying different kinds of

funding, including innovative funding that is disaggregated by sector. There was agreement to retain references on the need for the GM, where it plays a supportive role, to avoid overlap with the Secretariat.

On the Secretariat, some parties disagreed that its new structure was "welcomed and appreciated," due to the incapacities that had resulted in the regions, with some suggesting that the new structure may be re-visited at COP 9. Consequently, all references expressing support for the Secretariat's new structure are preceded by "some parties." The view that there was poor communication between the Secretariat and regions was a recurring point of divergence. Other amendments sought to ensure that the Secretariat: undertakes work contained not only in the Strategy, but the Convention as well; demonstrates its "comparative advantage"; prepares for, but does not pre-empt, COP decision making; and limits its activities on land and soil, in the context of climate change adaptation and mitigation, to the drylands.

On the JWP, amendments highlighted: the need to specify who was responsible for the JWP; the enhancement of the JWP in the implementation of SRAPs, in addition to NAPs, but in the context of the Secretariat and GM mandates; and a request to the GM and Secretariat to "include" further details on concrete steps taken to implement the JWP. The Group also agreed to add text reflecting that parties believe the JWP is one of the most important and complex of the Secretariat's and GM's programmes, and that the JWP must be analyzed in depth at COP 9.

FUTURE FORMAT OF THE CRIC: Introducing the draft report, the Secretariat highlighted that the draft will constitute the final section of the CRIC 7 report, and reflects the deliberations of the Committee that seemed to have a common understanding and support for some of the Secretariat's recommendations. He explained that the first section recalls relevant COP 8 decisions, the second addresses how to conduct a review across regions and over time and the inputs of the institutions in the review process, and the last section is on the frequency and type of review. He said the report includes a recommendation to the Secretariat to prepare a revised proposal on the future format and the new TORs of the CRIC.

The report highlights parties' agreement to: eliminate alternating reporting so that all entities report concurrently; review the two-year and four-year working programmes; and focus on reviewing the performance indicators and Operational Objectives every two years and the impact indicators and Strategic Objectives every four years. The report indicates that there is no consensus on the duration of the meeting.

Parties completed a first paragraph-by-paragraph reading of the report.

CONTACT GROUP 2

The contact group on indicators and reporting principles, facilitated by Markku Aho (Finland), met at 5pm and adopted the TOR of the Group. A draft document prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of the CRIC 7 deliberations was distributed, which will be discussed by the Group on Thursday. The document to be revised by the Group will constitute part of the CRIC 7 final report. The EU distributed a paper on its position on the two issues, which will be included in the revised document.

IN THE CORRIDORS

As CRIC 7 participants awaited their evening "Boat Trip and Gala Dinner," hosted by the Government of Turkey, some commented on how the meeting's debates have echoed what has been said at UNCCD meetings over the years, wondering whether the call for change wasn't simply "more of the same." Others pointed out that, while the Strategy was developed with the goal of moving the Convention in new directions, the compromises and achievements of the first ten years should not be overlooked as the Convention moves into its next ten years.

UNCCD CRIC 7 AND CST S-1: THURSDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2008

CRIC 7 convened in a morning plenary session to discuss the reporting process with several members of the Interagency Task Force. Contact Groups 1 and 2 met at the conclusion of this discussion to continue their consideration of the Convention bodies' work plans and CRIC review process, and indicators and reporting principles, respectively.

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

REPORTING PROCESS: CRIC 7 Chair Torres introduced a panel discussion on reporting, facilitated by members of the Interagency Task Force (IATF). The Secretariat pointed out that following decision 8/COP 8, an IATF was established and has provided advice on the issue of reporting principles and guidelines. He said its members have agreed to provide further advice on this issue. He requested the delegates to supply guidance, in relation to reporting, on: the role of the GM and Secretariat; capacity building; the reporting of implementation of NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs; and reporting of relevant agencies.

Anna Rita Gentile (European Environment Agency - EEA), who facilitated the session, explained that capacity building related to reporting leads to the writing of the reports and should be strengthened step-by-step, have flexibility, and meet the needs of countries. She pointed out that capacity building includes: building monitoring and assessment systems based on countries' initiatives; institutional networking; using existing data and experiences of different institutions; and building capacity for the preparation of the reporting guidelines. She said the new reporting process would start in 2010, and the first reporting cycle would be a pilot phase.

Barbara Ruis, UNEP, said the IATF was established due to the realization that many reporting initiatives existed at the country level. She emphasized that reporting is a means to a goal, not an end, and that the UNCCD has a role in: analyzing reports and synthesizing findings; providing technical assistance for using methodologies; and compiling lessons learned. She highlighted the GM's role in conducting the financial analyses. Reporting on the informal feedback provided by CRIC 7 participants to him on the reporting guidelines, Ola Smith (Global Forum on Agricultural Research), highlighted: prioritizing finances for

capacity building focused on the use of indicators to monitor implementation; and developing budget requirements following a global assessment of parties' needs.

ARGENTINA said building national capacity is a "grey" area, as it may encroach on national responsibilities. Reporting on an exercise to draft an indicators map that was facilitated by the EEA, ALGERIA welcomed a similar initiative on desertification sensitivity.

COLOMBIA noted the role for capacity building at institutional and grassroots levels to adjust reports to the Strategy. TANZANIA said capacity building should be viewed as a process as opposed to a project with a specific lifetime. KYRGYZSTAN noted his regions' efforts to prepare reports for donors on its ten-year programme for land management, and said there is an opportunity for focal points to draft national reports. PAKISTAN complimented the diverse composition of the IATF.

CHAD suggested that all desertification players should be involved in the process of data collection, and focal points should be involved in centralizing these efforts. SAUDI ARABIA said all NAPs and work programmes need to be aligned with the Strategy, and expressed hope that the preparation of national reports will be simplified. CHILE highlighted that, based on his country's experience, it is a major challenge to set up a national information center.

GUINEA-BISSAU noted that there has been no mention of capacity building for post-conflict countries, and said its definition should be different for these countries. MOROCCO suggested that the specialized regional bodies should organize regional capacity-building workshops, and capacity building should have the support of donors, the GM and Secretariat, and involve remote sensing institutions.

EGYPT pointed out that capacity building includes strengthening financial and technical capacities, and that reinforcing financial capacity should precede technical support. PERU stressed the importance of providing national reports, strengthening networks at the regional level and funding.

Gentile stressed the importance for countries to find national partners to strengthen their technical capacity. On the CST's preparation of performance and impact indicators, Smith recalled that parties had agreed on the need for: a minimum core set of indicators focused on the Operational and Strategic Objectives

to be used by parties and UNCCD bodies; and for coherence between performance and impact indicators, and between these and the resource-based management indicators and indicators used by UNCCD-related institutions such as the GEF. He sought feedback on how such coherence could be ensured, and suggested considering the need for flexibility, particularly in reporting to the UNCCD, by UN entities and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). Noting the challenge of providing feedback to the UNCCD on impact, which becomes manifest only after a long duration, GUINEA proposed collaborating with IGOs, such as the Comité Permanent Inter-Etats de lutte contre la Sécheresse dans le Sahel, which have experience in collecting impact data. BURUNDI expressed a preference for reporting using results-based indicators, and sought clarity about the apparent overlaps in country-level data gathering by UN entities and IGOs.

SUDAN asked what kind of support would be available for reporting on indicators, and when it would be available. PAKISTAN questioned the effectiveness of existing indicators, noting that many have not been validated or tested, and lack a baseline year. CHILE stressed that the CST should select one indicator per objective from validated indicators. THAILAND said the CST must recognize that staff require capacity building to properly compile, assess, develop and manage data. He proposed that the CST draw on different groups, including social scientists, in developing indicators for the Strategic Objectives. BURKINA FASO suggested that country teams, not consultants, be involved in reporting on indicators. CIVIL SOCIETY encouraged the inclusion of CSO reports in country reports.

Smith noted that capacity building is an ongoing process and regional networks can be tapped into in this regard. He observed that the GEF has done work on indicators that is relevant to the UNCCD. In her summary, Gentile highlighted delegates' emphasis on: the importance of harmonization and prioritization of indicators; the need for training and methodological guidance; and the benefits from using all existing reports and databases.

CONTACT GROUP 1

The Contact Group on the CRIC 7 report on the work plans of the UNCCD's bodies convened at noon and concluded its work at approximately 2:30 pm. Chaired by Maria Mbengashe (South Africa), the Group considered revised text regarding reports on the CRIC review process and the programmatic framework of the Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies. The Group focused on paragraphs that were revised during their previous meetings, and reached agreement on all of them.

On the programmatic framework, delegates held an extensive discussion on issues concerning: the scope of the UNCCD's attention to land degradation and soil conservation in ecosystems outside its legal mandate; and a recommendation that would involve the Executive Secretary in the preparation of the CRIC work plan for 2010-2013, to be submitted to COP 9.

On the report on CRIC reform, discussion focused on the structure of the CRIC interactive dialogue, with proposals highlighting that it should focus on a small number of "key elements of the Strategic Plan" and "key, politically important topics, *inter alia*, climate change mitigation and adaptation and food security." Proposals further said the interactive dialogue should not jeopardize and "impinge upon" the intergovernmental nature of the review process and "affect the time necessary for party deliberations."

The revised reports will be included in the draft CRIC 7 report to be considered for adoption by plenary on Friday.

CONTACT GROUP 2

The Contact Group on indicators and reporting principles met in the morning following the plenary session, and continued in the afternoon. The Group discussed a draft report on these two issues, which was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of the deliberations by parties in the CRIC 7 plenary, and which will become part of the CRIC 7 report. The draft report contained four sections: general information; specific recommendations relating to reporting entities, including affected and developed country parties, the GEF, Secretariat and GM, and reports on the implementation of RAPs and SRAPs; performance indicators for the review of the Strategy; and impact indicators for the review of the implementation of the Convention.

Participants discussed the draft report paragraph-by-paragraph, and made some amendments and additions. They expressed general agreement on the proposed reporting principles, as they related to the content of reporting, its format and the reporting process. Parties shared the view that: the new reporting should be based on simple, quantitative and measurable indicators; information systems should be established and/or improved at the national, subregional, regional and global levels; and a global assessment on capacity needs is necessary. The report was not intended to be a negotiated consensus document, and delegates did not enter into major debate.

IN THE CORRIDORS

Contact Group 1's discussion on the Programmatic Framework during the last two days has heard a level of discontent with the Secretariat's new structure, particularly in regard to its communications with regional annexes, surprising many participants. Delegates indicate that, as a result, some participants have begun to take an interest in the background discussions on regional coordination mechanisms that have taken place throughout CRIC 7 in the confines of Regional Annex group meetings. Also, while many participants expect that the issue will still be highly contested at COP 9, some past opponents of regional coordination units have suggested that they might be more open to mechanisms that are region-driven. Conversations in the corridors suggest that while some Regional Groups are at an advanced stage in devising what their regional mechanism might look like, others have not yet reached agreement on the terms of reference that will guide their formulation.

Meanwhile, in spite of the short time allocated to the agenda items on indicators and reporting principles, delegates reported that they were generally satisfied with the results of the discussion on these two items. Participants assert that discussion on these two issues has progressed in a cooperative spirit, and no major issues cropped up. They noted that parties have agreed on the reporting principles, on the basis of which the reporting guidelines will be produced. On the issue of indicators, the CST Bureau is preparing a questionnaire to solicit information and data for the preparation of such indicators.

ENB SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS: The *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* summary and analysis of CRIC 7 and CST S-1 will be available on Monday, 17 November 2008, online at: <http://www.iisd.ca/desert/cric7/>

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST SPECIAL SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE SEVENTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: 3-14 NOVEMBER 2008

The first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-1) and the seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 7) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3-14 November 2008. These meetings represented the first time that delegates convened to discuss progress in implementing the UNCCD's ten-year strategic plan (the Strategy), which was adopted at the eighth Conference of the Parties (COP 8) in Madrid, Spain, in September 2007. The Strategy called for CRIC 7 and a concurrent special session of the CST to review the two-year work programmes and four-year work plans that the Convention's bodies were asked to develop, as well as indicators and national reporting guidelines, to set in place the mechanisms through which implementation of the Strategy would be executed and assessed.

Approximately 650 government, intergovernmental and non-governmental representatives gathered for the meetings. The two-day CST S-1 session, from 5-6 November, 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. CRIC 7, which convened from 7-14 November, 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.

In addition to the CRIC 7 and CST S-1 agenda items, delegates also engaged in three interactive dialogues addressing: UNCCD strategic orientations; the Terms of Reference (TOR) and programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the

Assessment of the Global Mechanism (GM); and the national reporting process. Delegates also conducted a number of informal consultations that will contribute to COP 9, including: regional annex meetings to consolidate proposals for regional coordination mechanisms; CST Bureau and scientific and technical correspondent consultations to develop a questionnaire regarding indicators; and Secretariat-led consultations on its draft communication strategy and possible efforts related to water issues.

Delegates largely accomplished their goals, although some indicated that the real outcome of their discussions in Istanbul may have been to identify how much work they must do at COP 9 in late 2009, where they will, *inter alia*: consider the JIU assessment of the GM; review the Secretariat's communication strategy; review the Convention bodies' work programmes; consider options for regional coordination mechanisms; discuss the format for future CRICs and reporting guidelines; and conduct a concurrent scientific conference during the ninth session of the CST. In Istanbul, delegates began discussions on these issues, identifying their positions and preferred alternatives without narrowing the options for consideration, leaving their COP 9 plates very full.

IN THIS ISSUE

A Brief History of the UNCCD	2
CST S-1 and CRIC 7 Report.	3
Joint Opening Plenary.	3
CST S-1.	4
CRIC 7.	6
Closing Plenary.	11
A Brief Analysis of CST S-1 and CRIC 7	12
Upcoming Meetings	15
Glossary	15

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 193 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 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.

COP 1: COP 1 met in Rome, Italy, from 29 September to 10 October 1997. The CST held its first session concurrently from 2-3 October. The COP 1 and CST 1 agendas consisted primarily of organizational matters. Delegates selected Bonn, Germany, as the location for the UNCCD's Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development as the organization to administer the GM. At the CST's recommendation, the COP established an *ad hoc* panel to oversee the continuation of the process of surveying benchmarks and indicators, and decided that CST 2 should consider linkages between traditional and modern knowledge.

COP 2: COP 2 met in Dakar, Senegal, from 30 November to 11 December 1998. The CST met in parallel with the COP from 1-4 December. Delegates approved arrangements to host the Secretariat in Bonn. Central and Eastern European countries were invited to submit to COP 3 a draft regional implementation annex. The CST established an *ad hoc* panel to follow up its discussion on linkages between traditional and modern knowledge.

COP 3: Parties met for COP 3 in Recife, Brazil, from 15-26 November 1999, with the CST meeting in parallel to the COP from 16-19 November. The COP approved a long-negotiated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding the GM. It 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. In addition, on the CST's recommendation, the COP appointed an *ad hoc* panel on traditional knowledge and an *ad hoc* panel on early warning systems.

COP 4: COP 4 convened from 11-22 December 2000, in Bonn, Germany. The CST met from 12-15 December. Delegates 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, submitted proposals to improve the CST's work, 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: COP 5 met from 1-13 October 2001, in Geneva, Switzerland, and the CST met in parallel from 2-5 October. Delegates established the CRIC, adopted modalities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, and supported a proposal by the GEF to designate land degradation as another focal area for funding.

CRIC 1: CRIC 1 convened in Rome, Italy, from 11-22 November 2002. Delegates considered presentations from the five UNCCD regions and addressed seven thematic issues. The meeting also considered information on financial mechanisms in support of the UNCCD's implementation, advice provided by the CST and the GM, and the Secretariat's report on actions aimed at strengthening the relationships with other relevant conventions and organizations.

COP 6: COP 6 met from 25 August-6 September 2003, in Havana, Cuba. The CST and CRIC met concurrently on 26-29 August. Among other agenda items, delegates designated the GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD, identified criteria for the COP 7 review of the CRIC, decided that a comprehensive review of the Secretariat's activities would be undertaken by the JIU, and requested the Secretariat to facilitate a costed feasibility study on all aspects of regional coordination. The CST discussed improving its efficiency and effectiveness, among other agenda items.

CRIC 3: The third meeting of the CRIC was held from 2-11 May 2005, in Bonn, Germany. It 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.

COP 7: COP 7 took place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 17-28 October 2005. The CST met from 18-21 October and the CRIC met from 18-27 October. Participants reviewed the implementation of the Convention, developed an MoU between the UNCCD and the GEF, adopted a programme and budget for the 2006-2007 biennium, and reviewed the recommendations in the report of the JIU, among other agenda items. Discussion on the regional coordination units ended without the adoption of a decision. The CST considered land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation, among other issues. An Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group (IIWG) 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. The report of the IIWG's intersessional work was forwarded to COP 8 for its consideration.

CRIC 5: The fifth session of the CRIC 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, reviewed the 2006 International Year for Deserts and Desertification, and conducted a Global Interactive Dialogue with stakeholders on investments in rural areas in the context of combating land degradation and desertification.

COP 8: The eighth session of the COP convened in Madrid, Spain, from 3-14 September 2007. UNCCD parties also attended CRIC 6 from 4-14 September, and CST 8 from 4-7 September. The COP approved 29 decisions, with the decision on the ten-year strategic plan attracting the most attention. The CRIC decision requesting the Secretariat, in consultation with the GM, to revise the format of national reports as well as the CST decision to convene future sessions in a conference-style format contributed additional efforts to reform the UNCCD. Decision 3/COP8 on the ten-year strategic plan called on CRIC 7 to review a number of multi-year work plans as well as to review the format of reports. 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.

CST S-1 AND CRIC 7 REPORT

Participants at the first special session of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-1) and the seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 7) convened in a joint opening plenary on Monday morning, 3 November 2008. Following opening statements and an opening reception hosted by the Government of Turkey, delegates met with their regional annexes in one and a half days of consultations and briefings on the meetings' agenda items. The CST then conducted a two-day meeting, from 5-6 November, following which the CRIC convened from 7-14 November. Two contact groups were created to address items on the CRIC agenda: the work plans of the Convention's bodies and future CRIC formats; and indicators and national reporting principles. Three dialogues in CRIC plenary sessions addressed additional issues, namely UNCCD strategic orientations, the Terms of Reference (TOR) and programme of work of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on the Assessment of the Global Mechanism (GM); and the national reporting process. This report summarizes the meetings, based on their respective agendas.

JOINT OPENING PLENARY

On Monday, 3 November, Hasan Sarikaya, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Turkey, welcomed participants to the opening of the joint meetings of CRIC 7 and CST S-1. He presented messages from the President and Prime Minister of Turkey, and conveyed to delegates a warm welcome from Turkey's Ministers of Agriculture and Rural Affairs

and of Culture. Veysel Eroğlu, Minister of Environment and Forestry of Turkey, emphasized the importance of addressing desertification.

Luc Gnacadja, Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, drew attention to the relationship between global threats, such as food insecurity and climate change, and sustainable land management, and called for an integrative climate change regime with linkages to land degradation. He said the Secretariat needs more resources if it is to implement the increased responsibilities allocated to it by COP 8, adding that the Secretariat also has high expectations for parties. Christian Mersmann, Managing Director of the GM, said the Strategy gives impetus to increase the quantity and quality of GM services to UNCCD parties, and noted that the Joint Work Programme (JWP) between the Secretariat and GM would help to overcome the "old divide" between these bodies. He welcomed the JIU's review of the GM.

José Herranz, Directorate General of Natural Resources and Forestry Policy, on behalf of Elena Espinosa, COP 8 President and Minister of Rural, Marine and Natural Environment of Spain, emphasized that parties must ensure the Convention's place on the global agenda. Israel Torres (Panama), Chair of CRIC 7, said the joint meetings of CRIC 7 and CST S-1 represent the start of a new chapter for the UNCCD. William Dar (the Philippines), Chair of the CST, explained that a consortium of five leading institutions was selected to help organize CST 9, where he suggested a decision should be made to institutionalize scientific advice from experts, with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as a model.

Sarikaya then invited four speakers to make statements. Antigua and Barbuda, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), called for: an informal policy dialogue with developed country parties on financing prior to COP 9; strengthening the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) focal area on land degradation; and a review of the GM, including its relationship with the International Fund for Agricultural Development. France, for the European Union (EU), stressed the need for party compliance with the Strategy. He said CRIC must make progress on, *inter alia*, key indicators for assessing the effects and impacts of the Convention's bodies.

Ukraine, on behalf of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), stressed the importance of accounting for regions' distinct interests. A civil society representative lamented that financing for civil society organizations (CSOs) and developing country participation had been reduced.

On Friday, 7 November, during the opening session of CRIC 7, Chair Torres invited regional groups that did not speak on 3 November to make comments. Chile, on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), and Chad, on behalf of the African Group, stressed the need for improved Secretariat-GM coordination. Chile, for GRULAC, lamented that resources for its regional office are lacking. The African Group encouraged reinforcing the Regional Coordination Units (RCUs). Myanmar, on behalf of the Asia Group, called attention to the 6 October 2008 meeting of Regional Implementation Annex representatives on mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of UNCCD implementation.

CST S-1

The first special session of the CST convened from 5-6 November 2008 to consider the following agenda items: the CST Bureau's functioning during the 2008 intersessional period; progress on the preparation for the scientific and technical conference at CST 9; the draft multi-year work plans for the CST; and advice for how best to measure progress on Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the Strategy. The CST Bureau and "Friends of the Chair" finalized the CST S-1 report, which was conveyed to CRIC 7 on Monday, 10 November.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

On Wednesday, 5 November, CST Chair William Dar introduced the CST S-1 provisional agenda and organization of work (ICCD/CST(S-1)/1 and Corr.1), which the CST adopted with minor amendments.

CONSIDERATION OF THE DOCUMENT ON THE 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION – CST

On Wednesday, 5 November, Executive Secretary Gnacadja introduced the documents developed by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Bureau of the CST and as requested by COP 8, on the ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (ICCD/CST(S-1)/4). Delegates did not offer comments on this presentation.

CONSIDERATION OF ADVICE ON HOW BEST TO MEASURE PROGRESS ON STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 1, 2 AND 3 OF THE 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

On Wednesday, 5 November, the Secretariat introduced ICCD/CST(S-1)/4/Add.3 and Corr.1 on the provision of advice on how best to measure progress on the Strategy's Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3, which relate to improving the living conditions of affected populations, improving the condition of affected ecosystems, and generating global benefits through effective implementation of the Convention, respectively. Youba Sokona, Sahara and Sahel Observatory, served as a resource presenter on this topic.

The G-77/China called for indicators and guidelines that could be used to design Clean Development Mechanism projects that target land degradation and desertification. The EU recommended drawing on a limited number of simple and composite indicators using available data, and consulting monitoring and evaluation experts in assessing the assumptions made of the causal links from objective to impact.

Other speakers suggested incorporating the CST's past work on indicators, identifying where the Convention wants to be in 2018, and harmonizing data collection at the subregional level. Speakers also highlighted the role of indicators in raising awareness of decision makers, and the need to develop a common understanding of the concepts of land degradation, desertification, drought and deforestation. Italy highlighted that water is a crosscutting issue relevant to both desertification and climate change and urged its inclusion when developing

indicators. The EU invited parties to join the EU, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and their collaborators in developing a new World Atlas on Desertification.

Several developing country parties stressed that achieving Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 depends on implementing Strategic Objective 4 (mobilization of resources through building partnerships). The GM emphasized the connections between all four Strategic Objectives, stressing that solid arguments are needed to mobilize resources.

The Secretariat said the joint CST-CRIC Bureau had proposed making regional assessments of the status of existing indicators. Sokona highlighted the need to build bridges with climate change and the IPCC, especially in the operationalization of adaptation and baselines in drylands.

On Thursday, 6 November, Chair Dar introduced a document on draft advice from the CST to the CRIC on measuring progress on Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 for consideration and approval by the CST. Delegates suggested that the draft should: indicate who is responsible for various tasks; not specify too narrowly what the minimum set of indicators should encompass; note that indicators should account for countries' special circumstances and needs; and clearly define the terms "benchmark" and "baseline." A CST Bureau meeting convened with the participation of interested parties to finalize the document on the evening of 6 November. It was subsequently presented to CRIC 7 on Tuesday, 11 November.

Final Outcome: In its report (CST(S-1)/5/Add.1), the CST recommends selection of a minimum set of indicators based on, *inter alia*: those identified in the Strategy; relevant indicators in use under the Convention and from other sources; and the special circumstances and needs of developing countries. The report provides recommendations on, *inter alia*: benchmarks and baselines; provision of scientific and technical support; and harmonization of data collection, monitoring and analysis. It states that the CST Bureau will work during the intersessional period to provide concrete advice to the CRIC during COP 9.

FUNCTIONING OF THE CST: WORK OF THE CST BUREAU DURING THE 2008 INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD

On Wednesday, 5 November, Chair Dar introduced the work of the CST Bureau during the 2008 intersessional period (ICCD/CST(S-1)/2), highlighting two Bureau meetings, the preparation of documents for CST S-1, and the selection of a consortium to help with the preparation for CST 9. Delegates did not comment on this presentation.

RESHAPING THE OPERATION OF THE CST: PROGRESS WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN A SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL CONFERENCE-STYLE FORMAT

On Wednesday, 5 November, the Secretariat introduced the report on progress with the preparation of CST 9 in a scientific and technical conference-style format (ICCD/CST(S-1)/3), highlighting that the CST Bureau selected Dryland Science for Development (DSD) as the consortium to assist in organizing CST 9.

Mark Winslow (DSD) discussed the consortium's plan to establish three working groups by January 2009, with each comprised of 30 experts. DSD would select the initial 10 experts per group, who would select an additional 20 experts. The groups would then solicit global participation. The working groups would meet twice in the first half of 2009 to develop inputs to the scientific conference at CST 9.

Many delegates commented on the composition of the working groups, with South Africa, Peru and CSOs stressing the need to include indigenous knowledge, and others emphasizing the importance of regional balance in the composition of experts. The importance of transparency in the groups' work was also emphasized. The EU highlighted the opportunity for CST 9 to provide input on land degradation to the 2009 Copenhagen Climate Change Conference.

Winslow indicated that DSD would take delegates' comments into consideration. He also outlined the DSD strategy to publish results for different stakeholders, and said countries would need to disseminate information locally.

THE TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION – CST

CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT FOUR-YEAR WORK PLAN AND COSTED DRAFT TWO-YEAR WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE CST: On Wednesday, 5 November, the Secretariat introduced the proposed four-year work plan (ICCD/CST(S-1)/4/Add.1) and the costed draft two-year work programme (ICCD/CST(S-1)/4/Add.2), noting that the programme would be revised to reflect delegates' comments. Delegates offered comments on 5 and 6 November.

Many developed and developing countries stressed the importance of quality over quantity of activities and performance indicators. Some developing country parties said the national dimension must be emphasized. The EU said the plan was consistent with the Strategy, but suggested better defining the role and contribution of national focal points. Canada suggested clarifying the logic model between accomplishments, indicators, outputs and activities.

Delegates also: recommended including an outcome on enhancing scientific networks; suggested developing an international prize related to land degradation, desertification and drought; and inquired whether the Secretariat had considered its ten-year goals when developing the two- and four-year activities. Peru suggested linking the plan's and programme's activities to ongoing activities and including work on traditional knowledge related to land degradation. Several parties stressed that the CST should remain focused on desertification, and that it should prioritize "hot topics" such as soil carbon sequestration.

The EU: said the work programme should be realistic and include the means to carry it out; proposed harmonizing the Secretariat and CST Bureau's work and elaborating a budget; and suggested holding the scientific policy dialogue during COP 9 and CST 9. Italy said the work programme should connect the CST 9 scientific conference to the operational objectives of the Strategy. Japan said that without cost estimates it is difficult to determine the appropriateness of activities. He expressed concern at the mention of supplementary funds.

Many developing country parties questioned where the resources to support the work programme would come from. Argentina suggested matching the budget to outcomes. Uruguay and Brazil supported a focus on resource mobilization to implement the activities. Cape Verde called on the GM to help mobilize funds to overcome financial constraints.

The US noted that the work programme amounts to €510,000 and identifies 55 activities. He asked if the Secretariat would provide all the funds and whether it is feasible to expect the CST Chair and Bureau to be involved in all of the activities. Given limited financial resources, many parties highlighted the need to prioritize activities, and suggested, *inter alia*: traditional knowledge in developing indicators; regional scientific meetings; regional consultations on indicators; meetings of the CST working groups; the international scientific conference; and information collection by science and technology correspondents. India cautioned that development of a robust scientific basis must not be sacrificed when prioritizing activities. Israel noted the lack of a quality control mechanism for scientific deliverables in the programme, and said voluntary peer review would not affect the budget.

Colombia emphasized that the Friends of the CST group, to be established under Operational Objective 3, should guarantee regional representation. Jordan called for more active coordination between the focal points, CST and Secretariat. Several parties stressed that the CST should collaborate with other institutions.

In response to comments, the GM recalled its mandate and reiterated the need for robust technical and scientific arguments in resource mobilization. The Secretariat said the work programme was developed to achieve the results that parties requested through their adoption of the Strategy. She said the 2008-2009 work programme was developed for information purposes, but CST 9 and COP 9 will consider a 2010-2011 work programme that will be accompanied by a detailed budget, and the CST will identify priorities in that and future work programmes. The Secretariat: said the work programme is being funded through supplementary funds, while the work plan, budget and accomplishments will be adopted at COP 9; agreed that the CST and the Secretariat's related work are complementary, thus indicators could be merged; and said it had noted the proposals to reduce the number of performance indicators and activities.

Final Outcome: On Thursday, 6 November, Chair Dar outlined the main contents of the report on the four-year work plan and two-year work programme of the CST to be presented to CRIC 7. He pointed out that the parties made a number of statements and endorsed the two documents. Regarding the 2008-2009 work programme, the priorities for which adequate funding should be mobilized include: selection of minimum indicators; organization of the CST 9 scientific conference; involvement of science and technology correspondents in activities identified in 2009; organization of the scientific policy dialogue together with the scientific conference; and planning the next four-year work plan (2010-2013) and the next work programme. The CST decided to task the Chair to present the report to CRIC 7, which he did on Monday, 10 November.

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSING OF CST S-1

On Thursday afternoon, 6 November, Chair Dar invited Committee members to adopt the draft report of CST S-1 (ICCD/CST(S-1)/L.1). CST Rapporteur Maria Nery Urquiza Rodriguez (Cuba) introduced the report, noting that the final version would include a report of the debates under each item discussed during CST S-1, as completed by the Bureau and Secretariat. The Committee adopted the report without amendment and authorized the Rapporteur, with the assistance of the Secretariat, to complete it. Chair Dar thanked participants for supporting the enhancement of the scientific and technological basis of the Convention, and closed CST S-1 at 4:44 pm.

CRIC 7

The seventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention convened from 7-14 November 2008. Delegates reviewed the two-year work programmes and four-year work plans of the Convention's bodies, considered indicators and principles for reporting, and discussed the future format of the CRIC. Two contact groups were created to assist in its work, with the first considering the work plans and CRIC format, and the second considering indicators and principles for reporting.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

The Secretariat introduced the provisional agenda (ICCD/CRIC(7)/1) on Friday, 7 November. The CRIC adopted the agenda and the organization of work in Annex II of the provisional agenda. The CRIC also appointed Vice Chair Hussein Nasrallah (Lebanon) as Rapporteur for CRIC 7.

THE 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: On Friday, 7 November, UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja presented the report on the implementation of the Strategy and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2). He expressed interest in holding a discussion before COP 9 on Strategic Objective 4 (mobilizing resources) and invited the CRIC's guidance on the work plans and programmes, indicators and the future CRIC format and views on existing regional coordination mechanisms.

Commenting on the implementation of the Convention, the EU stressed ensuring effectiveness and China stressed the need to mobilize "political resources for and attention to" UNCCD implementation. On the implementation of the Strategy, China noted the need to further clarify the Strategic Objectives and Argentina urged involvement of civil society, regional banks and the private sector. The US highlighted that many performance indicators are outputs, not results, and said consensus over indicators must be attained at COP 9. Tunisia stressed indicators for monitoring progress, and PROTERRA (Peru) suggested developing indicators to monitor civil society's contribution to the Strategy.

Many parties emphasized the need to support and enhance implementation of National Action Programmes (NAPs) as well as the need to align NAPs, subregional and regional action plans with the Strategy. Pakistan lamented that the new reporting strategies are "stressing" parties. Others commented on the communication strategy, highlighting that it needs to be global and effective, and learn from other instruments. Mexico proposed creating a documentary with someone of international prestige to enhance the Convention's global impact, and Israel suggested the need for quality control for items placed on the UNCCD's website.

Concerning the ongoing institutional restructuring, parties emphasized the need to strengthen the UNCCD's institutions, ensure that decision-making processes are more transparent and develop appropriate institutional structures.

Concerning the role of science in the UNCCD, delegates: highlighted linkages between soil, water and carbon sequestration; compared the UNCCD to its sister Rio Conventions; called for a Stern-type study on the economics of desertification; and stressed ensuring regional representation in fostering the UNCCD's role as a global authority in scientific knowledge. Delegates also stressed varied concerns about regional coordination, including the need to: strengthen cooperation and coordination among countries and regions; reinforce coordination at global, regional and national levels; and maintain RCUs.

Concerning resources, many parties said limited financial resources had constrained the implementation of the Strategy, with the African Group calling for strengthening resource mobilization efforts and Argentina for UNCCD funds dedicated specifically to the Convention. Others proposed funding NGOs, allocating resources based on the severity of the problem, providing funds for reforestation activities and seizing the funding opportunities relating to emissions reductions from deforestation. The conclusions and recommendations section of the CRIC report does not include views specifically focused on this agenda item.

CONSIDERATION OF THE WORK PLANS OF THE CONVENTION BODIES: On Monday, 10 November, Deputy Executive Secretary Grégoire de Kalbermatten introduced the Secretariat's draft multi-year work plan (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.1), costed draft two-year work programme (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.2), and the draft JWP of the Secretariat and GM (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.5). GM Managing Director Christian Mersmann then presented the GM's work plan and costed work programme (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.3 and Add.4).

During the discussion, on 10-11 November, the G-77/China said the lack of regional consultations before CRIC 7 had constrained the Group's ability to make valuable contributions. Delegates highlighted that while NAPs are a central element of the UNCCD, the documents only refer sporadically to them, and that the work plans and programmes should demonstrate how they support NAPs and resource mobilization.

Regarding indicators, delegates urged: clarity in the causal links between expected accomplishments and performance indicators; that indicators be specific, simple, precise and implementable and have quantitative measures and a baseline. Morocco said some indicators were redundant.

Concerning the financing of the plans and programmes, the African Group stressed funding for NAPs and capacity building for focal points and the EU suggested distinguishing core and voluntary budget activities. Côte d'Ivoire highlighted the importance of GEF funding, and Egypt proposed the establishment of a global trust fund.

Regarding regional coordination, delegates called for: a region-focused approach; a clear timetable for the regional priorities; work programmes that adequately reflect the UNCCD's unique regional approach; a functional regional mechanism that could be close to the implementation level; and greater clarity regarding the RCUs. Egypt expressed an interest in hosting an RCU.

The multi-year work plan for the Secretariat and the joint work programme of the Secretariat and the Global Mechanism: In the discussion held on 10-11 November on the Secretariat's proposed restructuring, some parties stressed that the Secretariat's role is a supportive one and some expressed concern that the restructuring would further weaken the Secretariat's ability to coordinate and service the UNCCD's implementation and to meet parties' needs. Some parties questioned the need for a Secretariat conference services unit, proposed combining the policy and advocacy and awareness-raising units, supported a Secretariat role in resource mobilization, said RCUs should be strengthened, and expressed concern about the omission of capacity-building activities by the Secretariat.

On the science-related activities, the EU stressed postponing the proposed high-level scientific dialogue. Brazil said the UNCCD is neither a climate nor land convention, with the US clarifying that the focus on soils and land should refer to drylands. Israel suggested organizing a structured brainstorming to consider the UNCCD's focus.

Niger and Zimbabwe welcomed the JWP, and GRULAC commended the GM's and Secretariat's efforts to coordinate. Many countries, including Canada, Switzerland and the US, highlighted overlaps in the JWP, and, with the African Group, emphasized defining clear links between the Secretariat and the GM. Some highlighted their concern about GM-Secretariat collaboration, with Nigeria stating that the GM's independence from the Secretariat requires discussion. The African Group stressed resolving differences between the two and Swaziland highlighted the importance of the JIU evaluation of the GM in harmonizing and aligning the work of the GM and Secretariat. On the specific areas of collaboration, some called for: support to countries most affected by desertification; a limited scope for joint activities; a clear division of labor and roles; and inclusion of regional activities in the Secretariat's and GM's regular budgets. Argentina said regional activities are the "heart" of the JWP, and that the Secretariat should work from the global to the regional levels, and the GM should work from the regional to local levels.

In response, the Secretariat highlighted its efforts to improve institutional capacity and remove redundancy, acknowledged gaps in servicing national programmes, and agreed on the need to provide support for regional coordination, but said the Secretariat is limited in delivering all the services requested by parties. The GM noted an apparent acceptance of the

Secretariat's proposed basic structure, and clarified that the GM does not have regional offices, stating that it works with consultants on a project-by-project basis.

The multi-year work plan for the Global Mechanism: In the discussion on 10-11 November, Algeria commended the GM's performance, and Canada commended the GM's efforts to align its approach with the Strategy and to present a funded work programme. The CEE lamented the absence of activities for the region in the work programme.

Proposals were made to: strengthen resource mobilization by the GM, especially for NAP implementation; ensure the expected outputs are concrete; provide precise performance indicators for expected results; ensure the investment framework measures impact and client satisfaction; disaggregate the "innovative" mechanisms; integrate the GM into the Secretariat; avoid project implementation, but coordinate with the Secretariat, RCUs and national focal points; and ensure GM activities are not dispersed, but focus on fundraising; and provide quantitative indicators.

The work plans for the CST: On Monday, 10 November, CST Chair Dar introduced the CST's multi-year work plan and the costed work programme for 2008-2009 (ICCD/CST (S-1)/4/Add.1 and Add.2), and made an oral presentation of the report of the CST's meeting held from 5-6 November 2008. He suggested that the CRIC take it into account to ensure its coherence in the work plans of the CRIC and Secretariat.

During the discussion, China noted that the role of science and technology in establishing synergies between the Rio Conventions had been overlooked, and called for more training on science and technology. Zambia stressed interactions between the CST and relevant Rio Convention bodies. Speakers also highlighted the importance of science and technology correspondents, which parties were encouraged to select, in decision 15/COP.7, to assist and advise the National Focal Point and the CST, through the National Focal Point. The importance of indicators and their baselines, and the need for regional contributions to the CST, were also discussed. Bangladesh proposed that the CST meet at least twice annually, and suggested classifying countries by vulnerability rather than regional annexes.

CST Chair Dar said the priority activities for 2008-2009 on impact indicators will require support from science and technology correspondents, and noted the need to mobilize international and regional scientific institutions to support networking and sharing of scientific advice among the correspondents.

The two-year work programme for the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention: On Monday, 10 November, the Secretariat introduced the CRIC two-year work programme (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2 Add.6), noting that COP 9 is expected to give it a new mandate and operational modalities, making a four-year work plan difficult to develop. On Tuesday, 11 November, parties discussed this item.

With respect to the work plans and programmes: the EU emphasized harmonizing the CST and CRIC work plans; the US called for relevant and quantifiable indicators for the Operational Objectives and clarity between baseline indicators and benchmarks; the Asia Group urged making the technical aspects of the work plans more understandable; and the African Group

called for complementarity with the work plans and programmes of the other institutions. Other proposals included: analyzing countries' obstacles in implementing the CRIC work programme; ensuring CSOs comply with results-based management (RBM) reporting guidelines; strengthening regional networks; ensuring the participation of relevant specialized organizations in evaluating biophysical data; and publishing on the internet a ranking of countries according to various criteria, such as the countries most affected by desertification, donor contributions and donor fund recipients. Some delegates highlighted the intended impact of improving the livelihoods of those living in drylands and potential intervening factors outside the ambit of the UNCCD that could limit intended impact. The G-77/China pointed out that funding for the work programmes and its implementation remains unclear.

Contact Group on the Work Plans: Contact Group 1, chaired by Maria Mbengashe (South Africa), was established on Monday, 10 November, and met from 10-13 November to consider the draft report on these work plans and programmes.

On 10 November, the Group debated its objectives, and on 11 November agreed to work based on the Secretariat's proposed TOR of providing guidance to the Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies for improving documentation for COP 9. The Group considered the Secretariat's draft summaries of the programmatic framework on the basis that the summary should include only statements that were made in plenary. The Group conducted a first reading of the text on 11 November and the final reading of the revised text in the afternoon on Thursday, 13 November.

Some of the issues that attracted debate concerned the UNCCD's scope of focus on land degradation and soil conservation outside the Convention's mandate, the involvement and scope of the GM's policy role, and parties' divergent views on the Secretariat's new structure.

Final Outcome: During the closing plenary on Friday, 14 November, delegates adopted the summary contained in the Report's conclusions and recommendations (ICCD/CRIC(7)/L.1) subsection A, entitled "Programmatic framework: the work programmes of the Convention's Institutions and subsidiary bodies." The summary consists of a compilation of the ideas, suggestions and proposals offered by delegations, and highlighted above. It is organized in sections on general recommendations, the CST, the CRIC, the GM, the Secretariat, and the Secretariat-GM JWP.

CONSIDERATION OF THE INPUT FROM CST S-1: CST Chair Dar presented the advice from the CST to the CRIC on how best to measure progress on Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3 (ICCD/CST (S-1)/5/Add.1) on Tuesday, 11 November, in plenary.

Participants highlighted that: the CST should provide scientific and technological input to the development of indicators for measuring progress of the Convention's implementation; science and technology correspondents should be empowered to carry out their mission; and funds should be made available for full participation of all the regions in the CST meetings, and for CST activities at the regional level.

The EU said the document requires urgent implementation and should indicate who will implement it and on what timetable. Israel said the selection of indicators should seek to identify optimal indicators, but may not satisfy all the criteria identified in the document. Viet Nam cautioned against the uptake of indicators that are used by multiple entities but are defined differently by each one. Pakistan urged the Secretariat to consider regional work done on developing indicators.

Burkina Faso and India sought clarification on how to appoint science and technology correspondents. India asked if North-South and South-South cooperation would occur under the CST or on a bilateral basis.

The G-77/China said regional meetings should be funded from the Secretariat's core budget, and called on the GM to ensure that funds are made available for the full participation of all regions at CST meetings. She also requested making funds available to regions for the preparation of national baselines and assessments as inputs to the CST's baseline work.

Delegates also: stressed the importance of capacity building at global, regional and national levels; suggested that the CST carry out an in-depth study on indicators that already exist in the regions; and emphasized the use of "directly relevant existing indicators."

CST Chair Dar, in response to comments, indicated that the CST Bureau was working with the CST science and technology correspondents during the session to develop the process to recommend a minimum set of indicators at CST 9, and invited interested parties to participate. He emphasized that implementation, however, will depend on resource availability.

Final Outcome: The discussion on this agenda item is also addressed in the CRIC report (ICCD/CRIC(7)/L.1) in sections on performance indicators for the review of the Strategy and impact indicators for the review of the implementation of the Convention. The report indicates that the CST was requested to: provide advice on performance indicators, in relation to its work on fine-tuning Strategic Objectives 1, 2 and 3; coordinate the process for the selection of a minimum set of indicators to be made available and presented through the CST process at COP 9.

INDICATORS AND MONITORING OF THE 10-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND FRAMEWORK TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: The Secretariat introduced the report on indicators and monitoring (ICCD/CRIC(7)/2/Add.7) on Wednesday, 12 November.

Participants highlighted the need for: making use of existing indicators at regional and national levels; developing baselines; human and financial resources; a glossary to define the terms in the document; a procedural manual on how to implement the indicators; developing regional indicators; and benchmarks and an agreed unit of measurement to assess progress. Parties requested the Secretariat to prepare a set of simple, applicable and measurable indicators before COP 9.

Delegates also: stressed the need for a quantitative assessment of the Strategic Objectives; encouraged prioritizing the outcome on integrating NAPs into development planning; and highlighted accounting for existing country experience. Turkey, for the Northern Mediterranean, said his annex had developed monitoring indicators, in cooperation with the European

Commission (EC). Cape Verde expressed its desire to see the indicators for sustainable land management developed and implemented.

The EU urged the Secretariat to prioritize drafting a consolidated set of indicators as a necessary basis for consultations. China highlighted the need to: determine which indicators should be quantitative and qualitative; provide more details when describing indicators for the regional and national levels because desertification varies geographically; and define who is responsible for monitoring results. Many countries stressed the need to develop baselines, where relevant. Japan inquired about the source of funding for this exercise.

Contact Group on Indicators and Reporting Principles: Facilitated by Markku Aho (Finland), the Group briefly met at 5:00 pm Wednesday, 12 November, and adopted its terms of reference. The Group met again on Thursday morning following the plenary session, and continued in the afternoon. They discussed a draft report on indicators and reporting principles, which was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of CRIC 7 plenary statements. The draft report contained two sections: performance indicators for the review of the Strategy and impact indicators for the review of the implementation of the Convention. In the section on performance indicators for the review of the Strategy, delegates added text indicating that parties called for, *inter alia*: the set of performance indicators to be limited, with flexibility to be expanded; the performance indicators to be measurable, implementable and clear to stakeholders using them; and special emphasis to be given to indicators dealing with financial issues.

In the section on impact indicators, delegates added text indicating, *inter alia*, that they called for indicators to be relevant and comparable for all regions.

Final Outcome: The draft report, which was agreed on in the Contact Group, was adopted in plenary on Friday afternoon and is contained in the final report of CRIC 7 (ICCD/CRIC(7)/L.1), subsection B, entitled "Reporting Process: methodological elements of the communication of information." The compilation of views indicates that parties agreed: the set of indicators should initially be limited, with flexibility to expand where necessary; that the indicators should be measurable, implementable and clear to the stakeholders using them; and special emphasis should be given to indicators dealing with financial issues. Parties requested the CST Bureau to coordinate the process for the selection of a minimum set of indicators, to be made available and presented at COP 9, and further requested the Secretariat and GM to assist and support the CST Bureau in undertaking this task.

IMPROVING THE PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AS WELL AS THE QUALITY AND FORMAT OF REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COP: CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT REPORTING GUIDELINES AS REFERRED TO IN DECISION 8/COP.8

The Secretariat introduced the documents on reporting guidelines (ICCD/CRIC(7)/3 and Add.1-Add.7) on Wednesday, 12 November. During the discussion, delegates emphasized the improvement of, *inter alia*: additional financial resources to make reporting meaningful; capacity building and awareness raising; assessing the impact of donor country and subsidiary

body support for Regional and Subregional Action Programmes (RAPs and SRAPs, respectively); and financial reporting by both developed and developing country parties. Participants urged the Secretariat to produce draft reporting guidelines before COP 9.

Chile, for GRULAC, said the GM and the GEF must account for information provided by the CST, and highlighted the importance of assessing the impact of donor country and subsidiary body support for RAPs and SRAPs. The G-77/China stressed the cost of collecting and storing data for reporting and asked if the GM or the GEF would fund national reporting.

The US suggested that failures, in the context of lessons learned, should be documented, and called for ensuring parity in financial reporting by developed and developing country parties. China proposed the improvement of reporting processes and formats and collaboration between the GM, Secretariat and others in capacity building. Switzerland noted that, unlike developing countries, developed countries and the GM are requested to report the impacts of their financial contributions.

Brazil said finances for national reporting must not take away from finances for implementing the Convention. He stressed that the GM must provide strong information on mobilization of financial resources. Burundi said the GM must report on the impact of its activities on parties, and noted that collection of statistics is difficult because they are often biased or incomplete. Swaziland said donor and affected country party reports must be aligned to trace the impact of financial flows.

Niger emphasized the need for technical, financial and institutional capacity building. Suriname highlighted that the need to align work programmes and NAPs with an RBM approach, without adequate financing to do so, may "take us back to square one."

Contact Group on Indicators and Reporting Principles: The Contact Group that discussed indicators (see above), also discussed reporting principles. Delegates reviewed a draft that compiled recommendations relating to the reporting entities, including affected and developed country parties, the GEF, Secretariat and GM, and recommendations on reports on the implementation of RAPs and SRAPs.

Final Outcome: The draft report, which was agreed upon in the Contact Group, was adopted in plenary on Friday afternoon and is contained in the final report of CRIC 7 (ICCD/CRIC(7)/L.1), subsection B, entitled "Reporting Process: methodological elements of the communication of information." Participants expressed general agreement on the proposed reporting principles, as they related to the content of reporting, its format and the reporting process. Parties shared the view that: the new reporting should be based on simple, quantitative and measurable indicators; information systems should be established and/or improved at the national, subregional, regional and global levels; and a global assessment on capacity needs is necessary. The Secretariat is requested to produce new reporting guidelines for consideration at appropriate preparatory processes leading up to COP 9.

ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES OR INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS TO ASSIST THE COP IN REGULARLY REVIEWING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: CONSIDERATION OF THE FORMAT FOR FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE CRIC

On Tuesday, 11 November, the Secretariat introduced options for the future format of CRIC meetings (ICCD/CRIC(7)/4), proposing that performance indicators be reviewed every two years and impact indicators every four years.

Concerning the process leading up to the review, proposals highlighted that: CRIC define its required activities and outcomes prior to each meeting; regional coordination meetings be held before the CRIC; lessons from the other Rio Conventions be used to develop national reporting guidelines; and financial support for CRIC reviews be provided directly to national coordination bodies.

Proposals concerning the timing and structure of the CRIC highlighted: devoting two of the CRIC's five segments to evaluating national performance; addressing all regions simultaneously, with a review of the implementation of the Strategy every two years and of the Convention using impact indicators every four years; a learning forum for CRIC intersessionals and reviewing implementation at CRIC sessions held during the COP; and reviewing different sets of indicators across the four years, while the same indicators are reviewed for all the UNCCD bodies and parties during each review session.

With regard to content, the options focused on the institutional focus, namely: the Convention's implementation, including at the regional level; the Strategy's implementation; both Convention implementation and the functioning of its bodies; GM reporting concurrently with other Convention bodies; and GEF, GM and Secretariat reporting during the CRIC. Other options discussed included; annual reporting on the Operational Objectives and four-year reporting on the Strategic Objectives; a focus on the Strategic Objectives at the CST meetings held during CRIC intersessionals; evaluation of gender aspects in national reports; and the establishment of the reporting guidelines by COP 9 to ensure alignment with the GEF Regional Allocation Framework's mid-term reallocation.

On CRIC duration, Thailand, Canada and GRULAC supported back-to-back or parallel CRIC and CST intersessionals, and Peru, the G-77/China, Japan and others supported reducing the number of days for the intersessionals. Concerning CSO participation, Peru reminded participants that the UNCCD is a convention of parties. Argentina, Canada, Brazil, the EU and others supported CSO involvement, with Brazil suggesting that their involvement should occur early in the session's agenda.

Contact Group on Work Plans: Contact Group 1, chaired by Maria Mbengashe (South Africa), also considered a draft compilation of the "Review process: conducting a global review on implementation of the Strategy and the Convention." Delegates expressed general support for the proposed format and reporting processes. The report, which contains a summary of the proposals offered during the initial discussion of this agenda item, was not intended to be a negotiated consensus document, and delegates did not enter into major debate. The Group forwarded the summary for inclusion in the final report, which was adopted by plenary.

Final Report: During the closing plenary, delegates adopted the report, contained in the CRIC 7 Report's (ICCD/CRIC(7)/L.1) conclusion and recommendations subsection C, entitled "Review process: conducting a global review of the implementation of the Strategy and the Convention." It compiles the delegates' views highlighted above in sections on: general recommendations, "review across regions and over time, and inputs from the Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies," and proposals on the "frequency and type of review." On general recommendations, delegates ask the Secretariat to prepare a revised version of the document on the proposed format for future CRIC sessions. On "review across regions," parties suggest ending the current alternation by region for reporting, identify the benefits and concerns about holding CRIC and CST sessions in parallel, and underline the need for clear terms of reference for the involvement of CSOs. On "frequency and type of review," some parties proposed that the CRIC should focus on a smaller number of key topics and key elements of the Strategy in order to prepare better for COP deliberations.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUES

Delegates engaged in interactive dialogues on three issues during formal sessions, addressing: UNCCD strategic orientations; the TOR and programme of work of the JIU on the Assessment of the GM; and the national reporting process.

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE ON UNCCD STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS: On Friday, 7 November, delegates discussed UNCCD strategic orientations. The Dialogue was chaired by Modou Diange Fada (Senegal) and moderated by Philbert Brown (Jamaica). Participants heard from six presenters. Godert van Lynden (World Soil Information) presented on the Global Assessment of Land Productivity (GLADA), an innovative initiative that uses biomass change as a proxy indicator for land productivity. Sem Shikongo (Namibia) outlined ways that parties can use a RBM approach to ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy. Luca Monterella (EC) presented on losses of terrestrial carbon due to desertification.

Mika Castro Lucic (University of Chile) described the role of the UNCCD in recognizing indigenous peoples' rights in the fights against hunger, poverty and environmental degradation. Cristina Manzano (International Federation of Agricultural Producers) presented on enhancing food security under the Strategy, noting that farmers must be better integrated into the UNCCD. Christophe Crepin (World Bank) outlined the importance of cooperation frameworks for achieving the Strategy, noting their role in improving resource mobilization.

Several developing country parties lamented a general lack of financial resources and pointed to financing gaps. Shikongo highlighted the role of the JIU assessment in ensuring that Convention bodies are aligned with the Strategy. Crepin acknowledged the financing gap and stressed the need for efficiency and partnerships. Some parties asked what strategies could be employed to facilitate such partnerships. The Gambia said the World Bank should fund the NAPs to alleviate poverty and incorporate environmental concerns in their projects. Burkina Faso encouraged the mobilization of additional resources, particularly for arid areas. Benin said legislation should be developed that prioritizes arid areas.

Several parties noted the links between the Rio Conventions. Turkey recommended further attention to sustainable land and water management. Other parties urged partnerships to combat poverty, achieve food security, and work with indigenous peoples. Israel suggested mapping social and political changes using the same time series that was used to map biophysical variables in the GLADA study, with the objective of correlating the changes in order to determine the drivers of change in land productivity. In their summaries, some presenters noted the apparent lack of political will by developed countries to provide resources. Chair Fada stressed that the GEF and all parties have a role to play in mobilizing resources. A full summary of the dialogue can be found at <http://www.iisd.ca/vol04/enb04213e.html>

PRESENTATION OF THE TOR AND PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE JIU ON THE ASSESSMENT OF THE GM:

On Monday, 10 November, the JIU introduced the TOR on the assessment of the GM, including its objectives, intended impact, scope, methodology, missions and expected output, as requested by COP 8 (ICCD/CRIC(7)/INF.5). He said major issues to address include: work and functions of the GM; lack of clarity in institutional arrangements and accountability; and alignment between the GM and Secretariat's programmes.

Developed and developing country parties alike welcomed the assessment. Swaziland highlighted the present "unhealthy environment," in which some parties are labeled supporters of the Secretariat and others of the GM. Many parties said they hoped the assessment would resolve these tensions.

GRULAC, the G-77/China, Morocco and others urged full funding of the review. Nigeria said the GM must do more to finance the assessment. The EU, the Gambia and others stressed that the assessment's costs should be minimized. The EU said the COP Bureau should be more involved in elaborating the TOR and that the review should build on previous ones. China suggested adding an assessment of the GM's organizational structure, staff composition and professional competency in the TOR. South Africa sought clarification on the criteria used to select the study countries.

The US said the review should demonstrate the GM's comparative advantage and examine its undertakings in relation to the organizations and subjects identified in UNCCD Articles 20 and 21 and emerging financial mechanisms. South Africa proposed considering the GM's mandate in the context of the changing financial architecture, institutional arrangements and accountability.

The G-77/China said the impact of funds mobilized by the GM is small. The JIU said it would make efforts to reduce costs, but that the financing for the assessment should be quickly resolved. For a summary of the discussion, see <http://www.iisd.ca/vol04/enb04214e.html>

NATIONAL REPORTING PROCESS: On Thursday, 13 November, Chair Torres introduced a panel discussion on national reporting facilitated by members of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF). The Secretariat explained that the IATF was established following decision 8/COP 8 to provide advice on reporting principles and guidelines.

Anna Rita Gentile (European Environment Agency) said capacity building includes, *inter alia*, building monitoring and assessment systems based on countries' initiatives and institutional networking. She explained that the new reporting process would start in 2010, and the first reporting cycle would be a pilot phase.

Barbara Ruis, UNEP, said the UNCCD has a role in: analyzing reports and synthesizing findings; providing technical assistance for using methodologies; and compiling lessons learned. She highlighted the GM's role in conducting the financial analyses. Ola Smith (Global Forum on Agricultural Research) highlighted that parties have called for finances to build capacity for using indicators to monitor implementation.

Several developing country parties stressed the need to align NAPs with the Strategy. Saudi Arabia urged simplifying national reporting. On capacity building, many developing country parties highlighted the need for funding and the role of the GM, Secretariat and donors in this regard. Thailand noted that staff require capacity building to properly compile, assess, develop and manage data. Gentile emphasized that countries should find national partners to strengthen their technical capacity, and several parties stressed the role that regional networks can play. Chad suggested that all desertification players should be involved in the process of data collection, and that focal points should be involved in centralizing these efforts. Argentina cautioned that building national capacity can encroach on national responsibilities.

Smith reiterated the need for coherence between performance and impact indicators, and between these and the RBM indicators and indicators used by UNCCD-related institutions such as the GEF. Guinea proposed collaborating with intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), with experience in collecting impact data. Burundi expressed a preference for reporting using results-based indicators, and sought clarity about the apparent overlaps in country-level data gathering by UN entities and IGOs. Thailand proposed that the CST draw on different groups, including social scientists, in developing indicators for the Strategic Objectives. Parties discussed the need for a minimum set of validated indicators. Burkina Faso suggested that country teams, not consultants, be involved in reporting on indicators. CSOs encouraged the inclusion of CSO reports in country reports. Smith observed that the GEF has done work on indicators that is relevant to the UNCCD. For a complete summary of the discussion, see <http://www.iisd.ca/vol04/enb04217e.html>

CLOSING PLENARY

CRIC 7 Chair Torres opened the closing plenary at 10:05 am on Friday, 14 November. He announced that the draft final report of CRIC 7 would be available at 4:00 pm. Chair Torres invited the COP 8 President to address delegates, and thanked Spain for its contributions in the agreement reached between the JIU and GM.

Francisco Jarabo Sanchez, COP 8 President (Spain), said he had received a written statement from the JIU informing him that agreement between the GM and JIU had been reached on the assessment of the GM. Christian Mersmann (GM) thanked the Spanish Presidency for supporting the agreement with the JIU. He reported: the budget for the assessment would remain US\$388,000; the GM would contribute US\$290,000, which

excludes the inspectors' time, to be paid by the JIU; the TOR would be revised according to the comments made by parties at CRIC 7 and finalized within one week; and the assessment would begin in December 2008. He committed to working closely with the JIU.

The Secretariat expressed satisfaction with the progress made on the agreement to conduct the assessment of the GM and expressed its belief that the assessment would enhance the Convention's implementation. The plenary adjourned at 10:30 am and resumed at 4:00 pm, after the draft CRIC report was distributed.

CRIC 7 Rapporteur Nasrallah introduced the draft report of CRIC 7 (ICCD/CRIC(7)/L.1). CRIC Chair Torres opened the floor for comments. Syria and Morocco urged the GM and the Secretariat to resolve their issues. The Gambia, for the African Group, said focal points should be strengthened to facilitate the Strategy's implementation. Sudan drew attention to the definition of desertification and the Convention's focus on poor people in least-developed countries. Pakistan said more responsibility now rests with parties, particularly science and technology correspondents, to build on progress made. Egypt stressed that the GM should work under the umbrella of the Secretariat and lamented that his proposal for the development of a new global trust fund was not included in the report. Brazil, for GRULAC, suggested that specific comments made by regions on the work plans, not included in the report, be annexed to it or compiled in an information document and forwarded to COP 9.

Argentina said the process leading to COP 9 should start right after CRIC 7, and emphasized the need to analyze the CRIC 7 report in depth and take steps to implement what was agreed. The EU said the Istanbul meetings had been important milestones in the history of UNCCD. He said the agreement on indicators was positive and called for taking steps to ensure the success of the international scientific conference. He also highlighted: the importance of future working modalities and implementation of the work plans of the Convention's bodies; full cooperation of the parties; implementation of NAPs; sustainable land management; and the role of CSOs. He expressed the EU's commitment to contribute to the process leading to COP 9.

Antigua and Barbuda, for the G-77/China, said the CST should become more scientific, indicated that her group is willing to examine what an "Intergovernmental Panel on Land Degradation, Desertification, and Drought" would do for the UNCCD, and called on the Executive Secretary to prepare a concept note on the formation of an independent scientific body that would guide the Convention's work. She said the CRIC's future work should concentrate on the review of the implementation of the work plans and strategy. She stressed that the Convention and Secretariat should meet the needs of the parties, and expressed concern about abolishing the regional facilitation units as a result of the Secretariat's restructuring. She noted that the current level of funding cannot meet the needs of Convention implementation, and called for new approaches to funding, such as reforming the GM, obtaining more funding from the GEF, and establishing a special fund. She welcomed the JWP and looked forward to seeing the JIU report on the assessment of the GM. She stressed the need to assess the

impact of the implementation of the Strategy both by developing and developed country parties, and expressed the Group's commitment to implement the Strategy.

Ukraine, for CEE, said the meeting's outcomes could be considered a success. Turkey, for the Northern Mediterranean, expressed the belief that delegates' efforts in Istanbul would be remembered as a milestone for the Convention. Myanmar, for the Asian Group, said he would like the GM to be more responsive to the needs of the countries in the region, the necessary budgets to be allocated to regional coordinating mechanisms, and the Secretariat and GM to work more cooperatively.

Jamaica said he would raise his concerns on paragraph 18 of the CRIC report (some parties underline that UNCCD focus remains on drylands) on another occasion. He highlighted delegates' new appreciation for the role that science must play in determining indicators, which calls for an improved CST process and effective CRIC. He said the JWP should be made distinctly collaborative, and urged delegates to make COP 9 an event of "fundamental renewal."

TEMA Foundation, on behalf of participating CSOs, stated that: CSOs have scientific and technical expertise and should be included within the DSD; indicators are needed to measure the participation of CSOs; the Secretariat should revitalize the Thematic Programme Networks; the GM should comply with its primary mandate on financial mobilization and technology transfer; and the JWP is more important than individual GM and Secretariat work plans.

In response to Brazil's and the EU's concerns, the Secretariat said it would prepare an information note to forward to COP 9. He highlighted edits that the Secretariat would make to the draft report, which the CRIC then adopted.

Executive Secretary Gnacadja said the two sessions had provided critical guidance to the UNCCD's institutions and bodies, the Secretariat had noted all views on the draft work plans and operational programmes, and the Strategy establishes common but differentiated responsibilities. Turkey, on behalf of his country, hoped the meeting would be a milestone for the Convention and wished parties luck in combating land degradation.

Chair Torres closed the meeting at 5:58 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF CST S-1 AND CRIC 7

A TIME FOR CHANGE?

If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got. – Sem Shikongo, Namibia, Interactive Dialogue Presentation at CST S-1

At the eighth Conference of the Parties (COP) in September 2007, parties adopted the ten-year strategic plan (the Strategy) and sent a strong message that they no longer wanted what they already had; they wanted change. Tired of making limited progress in attracting attention and resources to the Convention, parties adopted the Strategy in an effort to raise the profile of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and chart a new direction.

While it was easy for parties to agree on the need for change, agreeing on what it should look like is complex. The Strategy calls for results-based management (RBM) and the development of a sound scientific basis as two key elements for achieving change. RBM and sound science hold great promise, but both depend on managing the politics in which they are framed. This analysis examines the challenges of achieving real change in the UNCCD, including the proper navigation of the fragile interplay between management, science and politics, and explores where this has been successful and where it may need to be reconsidered in the lead up to COP 9, and beyond.

GETTING THE MANAGEMENT RIGHT

RBM, which was recommended by the UN's Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) following an independent evaluation of the UNCCD Secretariat, has been introduced to a number of UN bodies to help them achieve efficiency, effectiveness, transparency and accountability. It does not in itself create change. Rather, it provides the potential to create change, if properly implemented. While most parties supported the application of RBM to the Convention's operational bodies and institutions, they acknowledged that its potential to generate change could be constrained by risks of ineffective implementation, a tendency to underplay the political compromises of the past, and differences in parties' interpretation of RBM itself.

RBM requires that the Convention bodies' work programmes and plans be guided by the enumeration of expected outcomes and indicators. While many parties applauded the Secretariat's efforts to draft the many work plans and programmes tasked to it by COP 8, some questioned whether the causal links that connect objectives to performance indicators were thoroughly considered. These participants observed that the drafting of the two-year plans and four-year programmes should have been guided by a consideration of the long-term results that each body hopes to achieve over the next 10 years in order to eschew gaps that may impede implementation. While RBM advocates the linkage of objectives and results, it became clear that it could not do so without the backing of scientific linkages between the causes and effects of desertification. However, because these linkages are difficult to ascertain, political compromises are inevitable. In fact, the need to balance RBM, science and politics is not unique to the work programmes.

BALANCING MANAGEMENT, SCIENCE AND POLITICS

THE SECRETARIAT: The Secretariat itself has tried to institutionalize RBM through substantial organizational restructuring. Many donor parties welcomed this restructuring, and some confessed their surprise when they learned at the seventh meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 7) that several regional annex groups were dissatisfied. A reduction in the capacity for regional support, through a consolidation of the regional facilitation units into the Facilitation, Coordination, Capacity Building and Monitoring of Implementation Unit, upset many regional annex groups and exacerbated the already contentious issue of regional coordination. The regions noted that the Convention is structured around regional annexes, and that a strong channel of communication with the Secretariat is necessary to ensure that their distinct circumstances, assets

and needs are addressed and represented. The communication channel, they argued, was lost in this new organizational structure. It appears that in focusing too much on efficiency, the Secretariat and donors may have underestimated the lasting impact of the sensitive history and politics of regional coordination.

While this tension could block effective change, some delegates recognized legitimate arguments on both sides of the issue. Several donor parties privately indicated a willingness to embrace more efficient and effective regional coordination mechanisms that are region-oriented and COP-mandated. A task force comprising representatives of the regional annex groups was established at CRIC 7 to develop proposals on regional coordination mechanisms for presentation to COP 9. Their development will be critical, as many believe that the issue of regional coordination will continue to be a controversial one.

SECRETARIAT-GM RELATIONSHIP: The tension between the Global Mechanism (GM) and the Secretariat is as old as the UNCCD itself. Many concurred with the Central African Republic's assertion that the Convention has two drivers in one car and that parties are divided over which driver they prefer. The RBM approach is intended to address this issue by clearly defining each body's mandate. The Joint Work Programme and impending JIU review of the GM, including its relationship with the Secretariat, both aim to facilitate this process. However, it is not clear if parties are truly ready to leave the thorny GM-Secretariat history behind. Much of the debate at CRIC 7 centered around two issues: the GM and Secretariat's respective mandates and GM allocation of funds to parties.

Contention over these issues was fuelled in part by several developing country parties' view that the GM only works with a limited number of affected parties. This has created tension between those who receive support and those who don't. Given that even in an ideal world of abundant resources the GM would still not have the capacity to offer national-level support to all affected parties, there was no consensus on appropriate solutions. Some suggest that financial tools developed by the GM could be implemented by other institutions, with GM support, while others suggest that the GM should focus instead at the subregional level. This ties the Secretariat-GM relationship to the issue of regional coordination, and it is likely that both the Secretariat and GM will have to play an important role in resolving this broader issue.

CRIC: RBM and politics merged more successfully in many of the discussions on the future format of the CRIC, yet some viewed this as the "calm before the storm" that they expect to unfold at COP 9. Broad agreement emerged that the CRIC should review implementation of the Convention in all regions simultaneously, with a focus on performance indicators to measure the implementation of the Strategy's Operational Objectives every two years and use of impact indicators to measure the implementation of the Strategic Objectives every four years. Moreover, the same indicators would be measured across all countries during each review session. Participants generally agreed that the objectivity of the reports would best be served by the identification of a small set of simple, quantitative and measurable indicators. This approach could render measuring implementation across regions easier and lead

to the generation of more robust datasets on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). This could, in turn, deliver reliable and harmonized results that may boost the mobilization of political interest – and resources – for the Convention.

For critics, however, this consensus offers a false sense of calm, as the CRIC did not tackle in depth the more contentious issue of reporting guidelines. In response to demands for reports with quantitative measures demonstrating the nature of change taking place in affected country parties as a result of the Convention's implementation, cash-strapped developing country parties called for indicators on donor country contributions, with evidence of the impact these contributions have had. Some appreciated the establishment of a diverse Inter-Agency Task Force bringing vast institutional experience in the development and use of indicators. However, critics claimed the exercise was a duplication of efforts in view of the Global Environment Facility's work over the last two years to develop indicators for its sustainable land management financing window, under which the UNCCD falls.

CST: RBM and politics ran head on into science at the first special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-1), where participants' discussions again demonstrated that the science behind DLDD is not apolitical. Some participants have long expressed concern that the lack of a robust scientific base has hindered the Convention's success. They claim that a scientific body with a level of authority similar to the IPCC could raise the Convention's profile. Many speakers expressed support for an independent scientific body that efficiently produces the best possible science, but the neat RBM-type design for such a body became more complex when examining the details. Affected country parties argued that regional representation is necessary to ensure that their various interests are taken into account. This includes the geographic heterogeneity of DLDD, the importance of traditional knowledge and the recognition of relevant non-scientific expertise, as well as diverse socioeconomic realities. Despite this tension, many said CST S-1 made good progress in clarifying its agenda on how to provide input on science and technology into UNCCD implementation. Whether positive change can be achieved at CST 9 may depend on the ability to balance the political ownership of science with its objectivity.

Given the difficulties inherent in a scientific body that is firmly embedded in a political process, participants also discussed alternative ways to draw attention to dryland issues. Some drew links between continued land degradation in the Convention's mandated areas, and developments in land use and land-use changes and soil management in non-mandated ecosystems. Others suggested that a Stern-like review of the economic costs of desertification could help to re-frame the debate, just as the 2006 Stern Review did for climate change. Others still suggested that the IPCC and UNCCD could develop a joint drylands report. Some participants cautioned that while lessons should be learned from successful scientific bodies, the unique nature of desertification must be accounted for. While some good ideas seem to be making their way to the table, some scientists observe that until the UNCCD captures a greater level of public interest, scientists are unlikely to direct their research questions to matters that would help the UNCCD.

THE ROAD AHEAD

RBM makes change possible by imposing responsibilities not only on the Convention's bodies, but also on parties. Some donors indicated they have demonstrated their confidence in the restructured Secretariat by resuming some financing. Nevertheless, they have said that, while results will encourage increased funding, they would like to see positive change in the domestic allocation of financial flows towards the Convention's mandate areas. Moreover, they argue that affected country parties will have to demonstrate the impact of resources allocated to them under the Convention. On the other side, affected country parties stress that the Convention imposes new obligations on them, for which they need additional and predictable resources. While they had ceded ground to satisfy donor demands for good management through the adoption of the Strategy and RBM, they said they had yet to see changes in financial flows. There is growing recognition that donors and affected country parties alike will have to show increased political will if they are to implement the RBM and robust science they endorsed under the Strategy.

In Istanbul, Spain again demonstrated that the leadership of parties remains critical to moving the Convention forward; the COP 8 President helped to broker the deal between the JIU and the GM regarding the financing of the assessment, just as it saved the budget negotiations from stalemate at the Extraordinary COP one year ago. However, more parties will need to show their commitment to the Convention if change is truly to occur. Many observers note that parties have been calling for change since the Convention was conceived and that in continuing to do so, they are "doing what they have always done." Only in creating change will they "get something different from what they've always got." RBM and sound science can help, but CST S-1 and CRIC 7 reminded all stakeholders that the best management strategies and science will only succeed if parties buy into them. In fact, it is not yet clear if the Strategy adopted the right management structure – one that permits the flexibility required for the political and scientific inputs that will drive the Convention.

The next year will present a critical test of their commitment to change: the view that "we cannot afford to fail at CST 9/ COP 9" was often heard in the corridors in Istanbul. Yet, parties are cognizant of just how much work remains to be done before COP 9. Both CST S-1 and CRIC 7 have enabled parties to have a better understanding of each other's positions on key issues. The will and skill they mobilize over the next year will dictate whether they are truly ready to create change.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

AFRICAN CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS IN CHARGE OF ENVIRONMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE FOR POST-2012:

This meeting will convene in Algiers, Algeria, from 19-20 November 2008. The African Conference of Ministers in Charge of Environment on Climate Change for post-2012 is expected to discuss and adopt outcomes related to: the Bali Action Plan; international cooperation basis or obligation of the share of commitments; the meaning and scope of the concepts "comparable efforts" and "shared vision" for developing countries; sectoral approaches: impacts and consequences on African countries' development; and the meaning and scope of the concepts of Measurable, Verifiable and Reportable for developed and developing countries. For more information, contact: Angele Luh Sy; tel: +254-20-762 4292; e-mail: amcensec@unep.org; internet: <http://www.unep.org/roa/Amcen/>

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE OF THE AFRICAN MINISTERS' COUNCIL ON WATER (AMCOW):

This meeting will convene from 24-28 November 2008, in Nairobi, Kenya. The AMCOW Executive Committee and AMCOW Technical Advisory Committee will consider approaches to carrying forward the Sharm El Sheikh Declaration and Commitments on Water and Sanitation. For more information, contact: AMCOW Secretariat; e-mail: info@amcow.org; internet: <http://www.amcow.org/>

DRYLANDS, DESERTS AND DESERTIFICATION

2008: The Second International Conference on Desertification, scheduled for 14-17 December 2008, will be hosted by the Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research of Ben Gurion University of the Negev and co-sponsored by UNESCO, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Netafim. For more information, contact the Blaustein Institutes; tel: +972-8-659-6781/6997; fax: +972-8-659-6772; e-mail: desertification@bgu.ac.il; internet: <http://www.desertification.bgu.ac.il>

FAO HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE ON WATER FOR AGRICULTURE AND ENERGY IN AFRICA: THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE:

This meeting will convene from 15-17 December 2008, in Sirte, Libya. The conference will analyze the present situation and needs in relation to water for agriculture and energy, and the potential, costs and sources of financing, with a view to proposing to Heads of State and Government the policies, strategies and programmes for effective use and management of water resources. For more information, contact: FAO Secretariat; e-mail: SirteWater-Secretariat@fao.org; internet: <http://www.sirtewaterandenergy.org/>

UNCCD ASIA-AFRICA REGIONAL MEETING: This meeting is expected to take place in mid-January 2009, in Beijing, China. The meeting will consider how to best utilize the available resources in African countries. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; internet: <http://www.unccd.int>

INTERGOVERNMENTAL PREPARATORY MEETING FOR CSD-17: This meeting will convene from 23-27 February 2009, at UN headquarters in New York. Participants will prepare

for the May 2009 policy session of CSD-17, which will focus on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. For more information, contact: DESA Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd>

FIFTH WORLD WATER FORUM: This meeting will convene from 15-22 March 2009, in Istanbul, Turkey. Organized every three years by the World Water Council, in collaboration with the authorities of the host country, the main theme of the fifth forum will be "Bridging Divides for Water." For more information, contact: World Water Council Secretariat; tel: +33-4-91-99-41-00; fax: +33-4-91-99-41-01; e-mail: m.giard@worldwatercouncil.org; internet: <http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/>

CSD-17: This meeting will convene from 4-15 May 2009, at UN headquarters in New York. This policy session will focus on agriculture, rural development, land, drought, desertification and Africa. For more information, contact: DESA Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd>

UNCCD COP 9: UNCCD COP 9 is expected to convene in the final quarter of 2009 at a location to be announced. For more information, contact: UNCCD Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-2800; fax: +49-228-815-2898; e-mail: secretariat@unccd.int; internet: <http://www.unccd.int>

GLOSSARY

CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CST	Committee on Science and Technology
DLDD	Desertification, land degradation and drought
DSD	Dryland Science for Development
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GLADA	Global Assessment of Land Productivity
GM	Global Mechanism
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit
JWP	Joint Work Programme
NAP	National Action Programme
RAP	Regional Action Programme
RBM	Results-based Management
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
SRAP	Subregional Action Programme
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification