

SUMMARY OF THE FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNCCD: 12-21 MARCH 2007

The fifth session of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification's Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 5) met in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 12-21 March 2007. The main focus of the review was the implementation of the UNCCD in affected country parties in regions other than Africa. The Committee discussed national experiences and the results of regional meetings in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Northern Mediterranean, and Central and Eastern Europe. Most of the session was devoted to panel presentations and discussions on selected topics, including: participatory processes, legislative and institutional frameworks, linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions, measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land, drought and desertification monitoring and assessment, financial resources, know-how and technology transfer, improving information communication and national reports, and investments in rural areas in the context of combating land degradation and desertification. The meeting also reviewed the 2006 International Year for Deserts and Desertification and the draft ten-year strategic plan for the Convention.

The CRIC adopted a report that will be used as a basis for its next session to produce a series of recommendations for the eighth Conference of the Parties (COP 8) to the UNCCD, to be held from 3-14 September 2007, in Madrid, Spain.

Two intersessional groups established during COP 7 in 2005 also convened on the sidelines of the CRIC. The Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG) worked on a draft ten-year strategic plan for the Convention, and the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on National Reporting (AHWG) met and agreed on the structure and schedule for its report.

CRIC 5 was characterized by a positive atmosphere, where delegates exchanged information on national initiatives to conserve soil, manage arid lands sustainably and prevent desertification. Panel presentations generated lively discussions, showing that sufficient knowledge and adequate technologies

to address desertification exist, but parties are still encountering barriers to the large-scale expansion and replication of best practices needed to achieve visible impacts on the ground.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNCCD

The UNCCD is the centerpiece of the international community's efforts to combat desertification and land degradation in the drylands. The UNCCD was adopted on 17 June 1994, entered into force on 26 December 1996, and currently has 191 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.

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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 COP 4 in December 2000.

Pending the UNCCD's entry into force, the INCD met six times between January 1995 and August 1997 to hear progress reports on urgent actions for Africa and interim measures in other regions, and to prepare for COP 1. The preparations included discussion of the Secretariat's programme and budget, the functions of, and administrative arrangements for the financial mechanism under the Convention, known as the Global Mechanism (GM), and the establishment of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST).

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. 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. 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: COP 3 met 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 *ad hoc* panels on traditional knowledge and 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 notable achievements were 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 for 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. 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, most notably in the establishment of the CRIC, identification of modalities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, and in the enhancement of the UNCCD's financial base following strong support for a proposal by the GEF to designate land degradation as another focal area for funding.

CRIC 1: The first meeting of the CRIC was held in Rome, Italy, from 11-22 November 2002. The CRIC was established to regularly review the implementation of the UNCCD, draw conclusions, and propose concrete recommendations to the COP on further implementation steps. CRIC 1 considered presentations from the five UNCCD regions and addressed the seven thematic issues under review: participatory processes; legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements; linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies; measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land; and drought and desertification monitoring and assessment; early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought; access by affected country parties to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how; and resource mobilization and coordination. The meeting also considered information on financial mechanisms in support of UNCCD implementation, advice provided by the CST and the GM, and the Secretariat's report on actions aimed at strengthening relationships with other relevant conventions and organizations.

COP 6/CRIC 2: COP 6 met from 25 August - 6 September 2003, in Havana, Cuba, and marked the UNCCD's transition from awareness raising to implementation. Among the issues marking this transition were the designation of the GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD and identification of criteria for the COP 7 review of the CRIC. Progress was also made on a number of other issues, including: activities for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies; enhancing the effectiveness of the CST; and follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development. CRIC 2 convened from 26-29 August 2003, and addressed the review of the implementation of the UNCCD and of its institutional arrangements, and the review of financing of UNCCD implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions.

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 concrete recommendations for the future work of the Convention for consideration and decision at COP 7.

COP 7/CRIC 4: COP 7 took place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 17-28 October 2005. Nearly 1000 participants gathered to review the implementation of the Convention, develop an MoU between the UNCCD and the GEF, adopt the programme and budget for the 2006-2007 biennium, and review the recommendations

in the report of the Joint Inspection Unit of the UN, among other agenda items. The proposal to include an additional agenda item on the procedure for the selection of an Executive Secretary was not accepted and the discussion on the regional coordination units ended without the adoption of a decision. The fourth session of CRIC was held from 18-27 October and reviewed: UNCCD implementation; the GM's performance; available information regarding financing of the UNCCD; and the programme of work for CRIC 5.

CRIC 5 REPORT

UNCCD Executive Secretary Hama Arba Diallo opened CRIC 5 on Monday, 12 March 2007, and reported on the Secretariat's activities since COP 7, highlighting the successful celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD), which concluded in December 2006. He urged participants to work towards ensuring that COP 8 can promote effective and timely implementation of the Convention and said that CRIC 5 will move the UNCCD "from assessment to action."

Romina Picolotti, Argentina's Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development, emphasized the human dimension and the suffering of people affected by desertification. She noted the role of international organizations and financial institutions, including the Clean Development Mechanism of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), in forging strategic partnerships to support countries' efforts in the fight against desertification.

Daniel Scioli, Vice President of Argentina, welcomed participants and highlighted the link between the fight against desertification and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals to eradicate poverty and improve the quality of life. CRIC 5 Chair Franklin Moore (US) noted that this session completes the third review of reports from affected country parties.

Delegates then considered the agenda and organization of work (ICCD/CRIC(5)/1) and adopted both with a minor correction in the provisional agenda, and the addition of an item on the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG) on the draft "Ten-Year Strategic Plan and Framework to Enhance Implementation of the UNCCD (2008-2018)".

Vice-Chair Giselle Beja (Uruguay) was elected rapporteur. The other Vice-Chairs, who were all elected at COP 7, are Bulat Bekniyazov (Kazakhstan), Evgeny Gorshkov (Russian Federation), and Bongani Masuku (Swaziland).

Pakistan, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China (G-77/China), noted that desertification and land degradation continue to threaten sustainable development, highlighting barriers to the Convention's implementation, including institutional weaknesses and the lack of financial and human resources. The G-77/China called for a strengthened Secretariat to improve interaction with other international actors and funding facilities and strengthening the GEF land degradation focal area, including through increased donor funding.

Germany, for the European Union (EU), questioned whether the seven thematic topics used by the CRIC to evaluate and report on UNCCD implementation should continue to guide its future work. He emphasized, *inter alia*: the need for targets

and timeframes; the promotion of more structured civil society involvement; and greater priority for regional coordination meetings.

Syria, for the Asian Group, reported on the results of the regional consultation meeting for Asia and the Pacific held last year, which facilitated the national reporting process. He also requested continued financial support for national reporting, stressing that the CRIC is a forum both for exchanging experiences and facilitating UNCCD implementation.

Ecuador, for the Latin American and the Caribbean Group (GRULAC), pointed out that, notwithstanding insufficient funding for the Convention's implementation, important steps have been taken at the global level to address desertification. He concluded that most actions under national action programmes (NAPs) and subregional and regional action programmes require further international financial support by developed parties and financial institutions.

Canada, for JUSSCANNZ, emphasized that IYDD events have been instrumental in raising awareness of desertification and land degradation as a serious development issue. While recognizing the extent of land degradation issues in African drylands, he noted that land degradation is a global problem and urged delegates to share lessons learned and find solutions to common challenges.

Uganda, for the African Group, underscored the need to maintain a focus on addressing the main barriers to UNCCD implementation such as the lack of adequate resources and institutional capacity at local and national levels. He expressed his region's willingness to learn from other regional approaches, in particular the measures being put in place to: address challenges of decentralization; involve civil society and the private sector; and empower local people threatened with loss of livelihoods. He also called for: identifying opportunities for South-South cooperation; looking for synergies with the UNFCCC and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD); and enabling the GEF to provide sufficient resources to support action programmes, particularly in African and least developed countries.

Albania, for the Central and Eastern European Group, reported on the national reports presented by his region and reiterated the importance of national reporting.

During the meeting, the plenary addressed agenda items through panels on thematic topics featuring presenters from all the main regional groups, and open discussions among participants. Chair Moore compiled proposals and suggestions from the floor, sometimes representing divergent views, and reflected all of them in a final report that was reviewed by a Friends of the Chair Group and adopted during the closing plenary session. The following report summarizes the panels and discussions that took place, as well as the main proposals considered in the CRIC 5 report, all of which will be taken up at CRIC 6 to elaborate concrete recommendations for COP 8.

REVIEW OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

The review of the implementation of the Convention was addressed throughout the week, noting experiences gained and results achieved in the preparation and implementation of action programmes (ICCD/CRIC(5)/2, ICCD/CRIC(5)/3, ICCD/CRIC(5)/4, ICCD/CRIC(5)/5, ICCD/CRIC(5)/6 and

addendums to these). This agenda item was addressed through panel presentations and discussions. The agenda item on the consideration of necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of action programmes, including review of the enhanced implementation of the obligations of the Convention, was not specifically addressed, although some references to it were made during the panel discussions.

PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES: On Monday, 12 March, the Secretariat introduced and facilitated the thematic panel on participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). Panelists described lessons learned regarding participation in NAP preparation.

Ernesto Reyna (Dominican Republic) described the use of consultations, dialogues and workshops at national and local levels in developing his country's NAP. Viorel Blujdea (Romania) presented a systematic approach for strengthening the involvement of the scientific and technical community in sustainable land management, which includes a national land resource monitoring programme, targeted research to assist policy making and technical guidelines and kits for sustainable land management.

Ana Almeida (Portugal) highlighted the contribution of participatory processes to the identification of priorities and the dissemination of results at the community level, but noted that few NGOs and CBOs are currently working on desertification. The Secretariat, presenting on behalf of Bhutan, identified the need for consensus in determining the root causes of land degradation and highlighted challenges to participatory involvement, including traditional values and beliefs in subsistence farming systems and the widely varied needs of stakeholders. Juan Luis Meregá, Fundación del Sur (Argentina), stressed that active civil society participation is enabled by a sufficient level of democratization, strong political will to ensure participation over time, and adequate institutional support.

Participants agreed that the reports and presentations to CRIC 5 suggest that participation remains low in NAP preparation and implementation and suggested that COP 8 should consider ways to strengthen the participatory process. Some African delegates cited lack of resources, facilities, awareness and education, as well as low purchasing power as major barriers to participation in Africa's rural areas. Suggestions for increasing participation included linking NAPs to national development strategies and continuity in policymaking to overcome stakeholder mistrust. Several participants recommended strengthening the role of specific groups, including women, youth, enterprises and scientists. NGOs noted that participation, although expensive, is a key to effective implementation of the Convention.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- including farmers as a major group within civil society in the bodies and work of the Convention; and
- dedicating special funds to support and promote the participation of NGOs, CBOs and other civil society organizations in the UNCCD process.

LEGISLATIVE AND INSTITUTIONAL

FRAMEWORKS: The thematic topic on legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements was considered on

Tuesday, 13 March. The Secretariat noted that relevant national institutions require legal bases to carry out activities related to the UNCCD and that national coordination bodies (NCBs) must have the mandate to coordinate national-level activities and need support from high-level government officials, adding that NCBs often face a lack of resources and manpower for normal operation.

Sudhir Mital (India) presented the recently-adopted National Environment Policy, which serves as an umbrella framework for already-existing policies and legislation in India. Octavio Perez Pardo (Argentina) presented strategic alliances which aim to, *inter alia*: achieve sustainable development in the dryland rural areas; combat poverty; achieve synergy between environmental programmes under the Rio conventions; develop indicators; develop provincial-level action programmes; and strengthen donor, regional, South-South and international agency alliances.

Sajmir Hoxha (Albania) outlined measures to address land degradation, including strengthening of land management and environmental legislation, adoption of integrated river basin management strategies, and a National Council on Environmental Protection chaired by the Prime Minister. Ashot Vardevanyan (Armenia) described his country's Land Code, the State Policy on Land Management, intended to empower local self-administration bodies, and land management projects undertaken with GEF and World Bank support.

In the ensuing discussion, China asked how to motivate participation by local governments and local people, and Guinea noted that transferring power to grassroots levels through decentralization can amount to transferring responsibility but not financial means. In response, panelists suggested establishing and funding joint management committees which: include local people, municipalities and national government representatives; ensure respect for cultural diversity; and make use of local knowledge. Delegates also discussed, *inter alia*: achieving coordination within governments; promoting sustainable land use practices through incentives and regulation; and resolving land tenure issues.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- strengthening existing legislative frameworks and institutional capacity to promote sustainable agricultural practices;
- improving land tenure entitlements, reducing negative incentives and promoting UNCCD implementation through national legislative acts and regulatory codes; and
- ensuring that focal points serving NCBs have sufficient authority and resources to impact project portfolio management and coordination among ministries.

LINKAGES AND SYNERGIES WITH OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONVENTIONS:

The thematic topic on linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies was considered on Monday, 19 March, with four panelists addressing the issue. Tarik-ul-Islam (Bangladesh) identified cross-cutting issues among different conventions and highlighted constraints to making use of synergies, including: low levels of awareness; lack of synchronization among national policies; and lack of financial resources. Conrod Hunte (Antigua and Barbuda) described his country's mechanism for coordination among different ministries

and agencies, and emphasized the need for national governments to implement the various conventions' mandates in a holistic manner. Uriel Safriel (Israel) explained that not all linkages entail synergies, and proposed a concerted research effort on the topic, including on possible links between soil erosion, desertification, climate change and biodiversity loss. Ivana Bikova (Czech Republic) presented on national coordination of commitments under approximately 25 environmental agreements and protocols.

A number of countries, including Algeria, Niger, South Africa and Burkina Faso, reported on national efforts to achieve coordination and synergies. Tunisia recommended that work on the three Rio conventions should be hosted and guided by a single ministry in each country to ensure synergies. At the project level, Italy, Argentina and China highlighted reforestation projects that achieve synergies by sequestering carbon, restoring degraded lands, and creating job opportunities and environmental awareness in local communities.

In the ensuing discussion, China noted that synergy should not be pursued as an end in itself, but as a means to achieve greater efficiency in sustainable development and, with South Africa, said synergies should be pursued at international, national and local levels.

On synergies at the international level, the African Group stressed that the UNCCD cannot be implemented in isolation, and called for linking and giving equal weight to the three Rio Conventions, and applying a shared approach to implementation at programme and project levels. Canada cautioned that the UNCCD must achieve the same level of scientific strength as the biodiversity and the climate change conventions, if synergies between the three conventions are to be achieved. Many participants, including Chile, Argentina and the Secretariat, highlighted the potential links between the UNCCD and UNFCCC processes on climate change adaptation and mitigation, including the potential to tap adaptation funds under the UNFCCC. India added the importance of synergies with the Ramsar Convention, explaining that wetlands are a buffer against droughts and desertification. The US and Brazil stated that, when developing synergies, the mandate of each convention should be respected. A large number of participants called for integrating implementation of the conventions with economic development and poverty eradication activities.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- considering synergies between all sustainable development instruments, including the Rio conventions, the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and poverty reduction strategy papers;
- adjusting relevant mechanisms to recognize the UNCCD's potential to contribute to climate change adaptation, and investigating the scientific links with biodiversity, carbon sequestration and wetland protection;
- developing national frameworks in developing countries to bring together actions that implement the three Rio conventions, to combine their strengths and leverage increased financial resources in light of their complementary nature; and

- building capacity for synergies at the systemic, institutional and human levels, both nationally and locally, and ensuring that the rural poor are part of the process.

MEASURES FOR THE REHABILITATION OF DEGRADED LAND: Participants addressed the thematic topic on measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought on Thursday and Friday, 15-16 March, dividing it into three subtopics: new and renewable energy; sustainable land use; and early warning systems.

New and renewable energy: Introducing the subtopic on new and renewable energy, the Secretariat reported that most country parties have struggled to link the promotion of new and renewable energy to the prevention of land degradation. Anneke Trux (Germany) presented case studies on linkages between the promotion of renewable energy to combating desertification. She urged the UNCCD to intervene in the debate on renewable energy and to advocate the assessment of the risks and benefits for sustainable land management. She encouraged the exploration of appropriate political frameworks for public-private partnerships to promote renewable energy.

Many developing countries shared their experiences in developing renewables, including geothermal, solar, wind, biofuel, hydroelectric and tidal sources. Others pointed to measures to encourage the use of renewable energy, including tax incentives and promoting biofuel production on deforested lands. On biofuels, developing countries asked for advice on: incorporating community and small farmers' needs within biofuel promotion policies; selecting the right species for biofuel production in drylands and on communally-managed lands; and replacing firewood with renewable energy sources in dryland areas.

Brazil stated that growing biofuel crops helps keep food prices stable and provides the opportunity to raise income in rural areas. Other participants raised concerns regarding biofuels, including that clearing forests to plant crops for biofuel production causes deforestation and land degradation and that tensions can exist between land use for food versus biofuel production. They also discussed: the cost of biofuel relative to fossil fuel production; whether biofuels are suitable for commercial- or community-scale production; and the impacts of biofuel production on land ownership. Many agreed that the positive and negative aspects of biofuels must be carefully considered, taking into account the interests of agricultural producers.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- promoting development of new and renewable energy sources such as sustainable biofuels to reduce pressure on forest resources;
- promoting private sector investments in new and renewable energy sources; and
- increasing energy efficiency, and promotion of energy conservation and new energy sources through joint efforts of the public and private sectors.

Sustainable Land Management: Participants discussed the subtopic on sustainable land management (SLM), particularly of water, soils and vegetation, in affected areas. Mevlut Duzgun (Turkey) outlined major causes of land degradation in the

Northern Mediterranean region, including: the fragility of natural vegetation; inappropriate soil and water management practices; and deforestation and forest fires.

Ramón Cardoza (Mexico) presented Mexico's SLM efforts, including: training courses and an SLM manual for rural people; adopting an integrated watershed management approach; using traditional knowledge; including SLM in academic curricula; and integrating SLM with poverty eradication and national development programmes.

Uladzimir Sauchanka (Belarus) presented his country's programme for the restoration and development of rural areas, noting the need for territorial development and planning. He suggested the GEF's small grants programme as a valid tool to help communities remove barriers to SLM.

Maryam Niamir-Fuller, UNDP, presented on rangeland degradation, with causes including: population growth; destruction of common property systems; increased density of livestock; and cultivation in marginal lands. She stressed the need for policy reform, such as: moving from a common land-use approach to regrouping ranching individuals into cooperatives and communes; increasing pastoral mobility; developing insurance schemes; encouraging a diversity of land uses, including tourism; and developing sustainable biofuels, biogas and carbon sequestration above and below ground. She also recommended: developing sustainable and secure financing for land management; combining and sequencing financial resources for achieving UNCCD objectives in rangelands; and expanding the UNCCD thematic coverage from "ranching" to "sustainable rangelands."

Jack Wilkinson, International Federation of Agricultural Producers, appealed to delegates to consider farmers' profit margins as the main driver for SLM and to engage farmers in the process of achieving the fundamental change in agricultural practices needed to address desertification and the impact of climate change.

During discussions, developed and developing countries alike shared country initiatives to address land degradation, including: use of drought-resistant crops; livestock management; soil and water conservation; reforestation; community pasture management; sustainable energy laws; the introduction of high efficiency fuel stoves in rural areas; the provision of machinery for pastoralists to rehabilitate grasslands; natural resource inventories; and programmes for water-use licenses, protected areas and reforestation. Developing countries sought advice on gaining access to clean technologies for small and medium-sized producers and on realistic short-term initiatives to kick-start land rehabilitation in very poor areas. The US and Cuba agreed that rehabilitating areas that are not yet fully degraded is less costly and more likely to result in recovery than focusing efforts on fully-degraded lands.

Several African parties noted that although African communities have indigenous knowledge and will, they lack the resources to undertake land rehabilitation. Switzerland pointed out the linkages between income generation from agricultural production, farmers' ability to invest in natural resources, and desertification. Wilkinson said that attention should be devoted to ensuring that producers achieve the maximum possible benefits from trade but that issues such as physical access to

markets must be addressed in addition to trade reforms to make this happen. The World Initiative for Sustainable Pastoralism held that mobile pasture systems are more productive than other systems, and advocated the use of traditional knowledge and management systems in grazing. Some Latin American participants underlined the need for harmonized policies between environmental, agricultural and forestry institutions and recommended that the CST evaluate the potential impacts of imminent climate change on land management and degradation.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- giving priority to preventive policies and specific activities in the areas of agriculture and forestry, land tenure and promotion of agricultural trade;
- promoting customary land tenure systems of local communities, strengthening and legalizing their traditional institutions and facilitating their access to financial resources to help prevent land degradation; and
- achieving sustainable management of rangelands through measures including promotion of secure pastoral livelihoods, research in effective stockbreeding of pasture animals, and offering incentives to reduce the number of herders in pasture lands.

Early Warning Systems: Participants discussed early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought. Naser Moghaddasi (Iran) reported that a drought early warning system was developed in his country and six indicators of desertification identified, namely precipitation, water flow, climate, soil, energy and vegetation. He pointed out the need for meteorological and geological data sharing and an integrated approach among different agencies.

Several developing countries shared their experiences in developing early warning systems. Jordan outlined a drought early warning system allowing drought monitoring and the rapid formulation of workplans with the participation of all social and government sectors. Belize noted that his country's emergency early warning system, originally dedicated to tropical storm warnings, now also deals with floods and droughts.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- making resources available for the establishment/expansion of networks of weather stations for early warning of climate-related natural hazards at subregional and regional levels to facilitate observation and forecasting; and
- creating an international policy environment to generate the political will for the provision and transfer of technology to establish effective monitoring and assessment systems in affected country parties.

DROUGHT AND DESERTIFICATION MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT: On Monday, 19 March, the Secretariat introduced the thematic topic on drought and desertification monitoring and assessment, noting the need for harmonized benchmarks, methodologies and indicators for monitoring drought and its impacts. Participants continued discussions on Tuesday, 20 March.

Chunlin Zang (China) outlined his country's system to monitor land use, vegetation type, soil moisture and aridity in order to identify the status and trends of desertification as a

basis for decision making. Andreja Susnik (Slovenia) described plans to develop a drought management center for Southeastern Europe. Giorgi Kolbin (Georgia) proposed the establishment of a drought management center for the Transcaucasus to provide timely information to Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Robert Stefanski, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), presented on the WMO's efforts to improve drought monitoring and assessment and emphasized that there are different types of droughts such as meteorological, agricultural or hydrological, each of which needs a separate set of indicators. Wilfredo Alfaro Catalan (Chile) described monitoring the causes and socioeconomic and environmental impacts of drought in his country. He said that, in addition to monitoring droughts, it is important to evaluate the effectiveness of responses to drought, and listed three indicators: the amount of public investment and government support received; the geographic area covered by management responses; and the number of users who have benefited.

Participants discussed the importance of good and relevant data in monitoring and assessment. Guinea stressed that reliable statistics on changes in land degradation over time are needed to assist planning and attract resources. The US highlighted the importance of incorporating local-level data into national databases in order to verify satellite information and improve the accuracy of regional assessments. India stressed that land degradation mapping must both incorporate areas affected by land degradation and identify the processes leading to that degradation.

Developing countries recommended several means for improving monitoring and assessment, including: the development, with GEF support, of a monitoring and assessment system covering all affected countries; the expansion of the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands project to enable the thorough assessment of the impacts of management on land degradation; and mobilization of resources by the GM to facilitate more effective functioning of Thematic Programme Networks (TPNs).

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- identifying measurement tools for the major aspects of land degradation arising in the various eco-geographical zones and to measure their severity in order to find appropriate solutions; and
- accelerating the CST's efforts to establish links with scientific communities to provide technical support to the affected countries.

REGIONAL AND SUBREGIONAL ACTION

PROGRAMMES REPORTS: The Secretariat introduced the panel on the review of reports on implementation by subregional and regional groups.

Mihajlo Markovich (Bosnia and Herzegovina) reported on activities in the Northern Mediterranean region, providing an overview of coordination efforts, including regional thematic networks, capacity-building activities, publications and technical workshops.

Ilie Boian (Moldova) reported on activities in Central and Eastern Europe, noting the approval of guidelines for regional cooperation, and future work on addressing deforestation

and integrated watershed management. He highlighted: the establishment of a regional center in Belarus to disseminate information on land degradation; a training programme in Armenia on implementation of the Convention; and a regional network in Romania for restoration of forests in areas affected by drought.

Sergio Zelaya, Secretariat, reported on activities in Latin America and the Caribbean, noting progress on the identification of indicators, but pointing to the need for financial resources to achieve objectives set out in NAPs.

Rui Zheng, Secretariat, presented the report on Asia, outlining similar findings to other regions regarding the need for additional resources. He focused on technology needs, dissemination and transfer, and highlighted the harmonization of benchmark indicators for the region, the first regional status map and a large-scale national desertification map for India.

During the ensuing discussions, participants noted the need to improve the knowledge base of the Convention and to make the best use of TPNs in accordance with available resources, with some questioning the future role of TPNs. Several developing countries highlighted the benefits of Regional Coordination Units (RCUs), including for facilitating information exchange and capacity building, sharing lessons learned, and assisting national focal points, with China suggesting that RCUs be supported within the core budget of the Convention, and Viet Nam stressing that RCUs should be strengthened in order to improve UNCCD implementation.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include inviting the UNCCD to support RCUs from its budget.

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The agenda item on review of financial resources including the GEF and GM (ICCD/CRIC(5)/7) and the thematic topic on resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusion of partnership agreements, were considered in two panel discussions on Wednesday and Thursday, 14-15 March.

During the first panel, Christian Mersmann, GM, summarized the GM's recent work and announced it would be increasing support to country parties through the provision of knowledge, strategic instruments and financial advisory services. The report emphasized that mobilizing resources for SLM is difficult unless countries articulate the UNCCD as a national priority.

Muhamet Durikov (Turkmenistan) introduced the Central Asian Countries Initiative for Land Management (CACILM), a ten-year multi-country multi-donor partnership to address SLM in five Central Asian republics. He cited country and donor coordination among the keys to the success of CACILM and stressed the need for country ownership of activities, reliable and simple processes for monitoring and evaluation, and expanded financing sources.

Kenneth Roach (Trinidad and Tobago) presented his country's national reforestation and water rehabilitation programme, including resources for the reforestation of areas subject to land degradation and soil erosion, and a Green Fund to assist community groups in protecting the environment.

Leopoldo Rojo Serrano (Spain) outlined his country's century-long policy on desertification, noting that the UNCCD has helped to bring desertification to the attention of the highest levels of government and allowed the consolidation of activities that were already being implemented.

Yuriy Kolmaz (Ukraine) introduced his country's efforts in mobilizing resources to address land degradation and undertake environmental rehabilitation, including a land tax system, environmental protection funds, fees and fines levied on environmental pollution, and voluntary contributions.

Giorgio Sfara (Italy) described his country's activities to support developing countries in combating desertification. He said that Italy supports the GM, which should become the center for mobilizing resources to combat desertification. Regarding the GEF, he said that activities should be intensified to increase the resources available under Operational Programme 15 (OP15) for land degradation while utilizing other GEF focal areas including biodiversity and climate change, and establishing partnerships with other organizations.

In the second panel, James Warren Evans, Chair of the GM Facilitation Committee and Director of the World Bank's Environment Department, announced that the Facilitation Committee has met twice since COP 7 and noted that the World Bank continues to finance UNCCD implementation through various channels. He suggested ensuring synergies with measures to adapt to climate change, gender mainstreaming in SLM, and demonstrating the outcomes of investing in SLM.

Walter Lusigi, GEF, outlined short-term priorities that the GEF has adopted to channel resources quickly to developing country parties following the delayed adoption of its focal area on land degradation. He said that the GEF supported preparation of national reporting and NAPs, and hopes to expand links with relevant institutions and initiate more country partnership programmes in its next phase. He added that, with GEF support, more than US\$1.3 billion worldwide has been invested in SLM over the past four years, of which over US\$1 billion came from co-financing.

During discussions, many developing countries emphasized a lack of financial resources as the major obstacle to their UNCCD implementation and urged developed countries and international agencies to provide adequate financial resources. Some participants highlighted innovative financing including developing incentives to attract private sector investment.

India, for the Asia-Pacific Region, stated that mainstreaming NAPs into development strategies may dilute the NAPs, especially at the preparatory stage. He called for: enhanced voluntary contributions from developed countries; augmentation of the dedicated portfolio for SLM under the GEF; and the creation of a specific desertification fund to meet the special needs of Asia-Pacific country parties.

Algeria asked donor countries why they are not investing resources and cautioned that the UNCCD should not become an implementing mechanism for other conventions but rather that conventions should work together. Canada argued that parties must not look at land degradation in isolation and that resource mobilization can be facilitated when desertification is addressed alongside climate change and biodiversity. ACICAFOC, representing a network of grassroots and indigenous

organizations in Central America, advocated better use of existing funds, as well as investment in communities rather than mere donations that can create dependence.

On mobilization of financial resources by multilateral agencies, delegates from affected country parties urged the GEF to allocate more funds to OP15 on land degradation, and requested the GM to strengthen its resource mobilization efforts and provide more support. Guatemala commented on the excessive time that GEF project approval is taking for some Central American projects. The GEF responded that simplifying and accelerating the project approval process are at the center of current reforms to improve resource mobilization.

The African Group emphasized that funding mechanisms, including the GEF and the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism, should be made easily accessible to Africa and that while synergies with other conventions are important, funding specifically allocated to combating desertification should not be overlooked.

Opinions on the GM were divided across regions. While the Asia-Pacific Region as well as most donors welcomed the enhanced role the GM intends to play in mobilizing resources, others like Central and Eastern Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean lamented that despite requests for assistance, the GM has not delivered on the expected resource mobilization. Nigeria asked the GM to quantify the funding it has mobilized, and the amount that has benefited Africa. The GM responded that mobilization efforts have yielded some success by linking UNCCD priorities to countries' development priorities, and that the GM will report to COP 8 on how mobilized funds could be quantified.

GRULAC also contended that the GM should carry out activities as instructed by the COP and not go beyond that mandate into capacity-building activities, while China asked it to pay attention to geographic distribution in fund allocation. Conversely, Iran and Jordan called for strengthening the GM's capacity-building role, and urged the GM to continue playing a facilitating role in strengthening country capacities for UNCCD implementation.

The GM responded that its new strategy and enhanced role was endorsed at COP 7 and work is underway to determine modalities for its implementation. He said that its mandate is to mobilize substantive resources, rather than very small amounts, adding that the GM is not a mere fundraising body, but also works to support capacity building in country parties. He also indicated that human resources available for the GRULAC region have more than doubled recently. The GM emphasized that it is a facilitator and technical advisor and plays no role in prioritizing between projects, and confirmed that it has clear budget lines to address capacity building.

The European Community said that its experience confirms that most financial resources allocated to desertification-related activities have been channeled to land management. The US outlined US\$6 billion of new and additional development funding over five years through the Millennium Challenge Corporation, adding that US development funding allocation is driven by recipient countries' own development priorities, and encouraging recipients to mainstream UNCCD and sustainable land management activities into their national priorities.

Switzerland argued that national investment to address SLM and to implement NAPs is insufficient because national budgets often commit very few resources to rural development. The African Group noted that resource mobilization from internal sources is limited in Africa, and that combating desertification is still one of the lowest priorities on Africa's political agenda. Several participants also highlighted the role of the private sector and public-private partnerships in resource mobilization to combat desertification.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- developed country parties and agencies are invited to provide adequate, timely and predictable financial resources;
- the GEF is invited to strengthen the focal area of land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation; further, donors and the GEF Council are invited to allocate more financial resources to this focal area in the next replenishment;
- affected country parties are invited to make more consistent domestic budget allocations for rural development and for SLM;
- the GM should play a more active role in mobilizing resources and maintaining a geographic balance;
- the GM must privilege resource mobilization according to its mandate enshrined in the Convention and subsequent decisions of the COP; the GM was not created to prioritize capacity building;
- the GM should be enabled to adequately fulfill its own mandate, which is to act as a broker and as capacity builder;
- there should be enhanced voluntary contributions by developed country parties and multilateral and non-governmental funding agencies to UNCCD processes; and
- the Asia and Pacific country parties recommended creation of a specific Desertification Fund to meet the special needs of the region's country parties.

KNOW-HOW AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER

On Friday and Monday, 16 and 19 March, delegates addressed the consideration of ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought, as well as of promoting experience sharing and information exchange among parties and interested institutions and organizations (ICCD/CRIC(5)/8). The thematic topic on access by affected country parties, particularly affected developing country parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how was addressed on the same days.

Naik Sinukaban (Indonesia) presented on an agro-silvipastoral system introduced in degraded lands in Indonesia to provide farmers with a mixed income source that maximizes the natural synergetic relation of soil, plants, livestock and the atmosphere.

Israel Torres (Panama) presented a software mapping system, developed with international support, to monitor the environment in the humid tropics of Central America, highlighting the potential to establish a similar system in Africa. He explained that the interactive maps are useful for establishing the expansion of the agricultural frontier and the existence of land degradation or forest fires, and to determine baseline data for decision making on longer-term policy objectives for the fight against desertification.

Pavol Bielek (Slovakia) presented his country's web-based soil and land information system, which maps satellite, soil, slope and plant data, enabling users to assess potential land use, productivity, and degradation issues. Describing the system as simple, inexpensive and effective, he encouraged development of similar systems in other countries.

Anna Luise (Italy) described ways in which Italy is promoting traditional knowledge, including through the establishment of an international center in Florence. She stressed the need to, *inter alia*: increase synergies between NCBs, research centers and national decision-making bodies; enhance cost-benefit analyses of actions to combat desertification as well as determine inaction costs; and harmonize terminology.

Ismail Abdel Galil Hussein (Egypt) outlined the work of the Egyptian Deserts Gene Bank, a facility to increase the utilization of plant genetic resources from dry and desert areas. He emphasized the potential contribution of heat-, drought- and salt-resistant plants to efforts to rehabilitate degraded land, improve food security and alleviate poverty.

Luca Montanarella, EC, stated that research programmes should be driven by the research needs of affected countries, and recommended that the CST assist in identifying such needs. He also emphasized the value of traditional knowledge, which he said must be applied alongside modern technology to achieve SLM.

CST Chair Viorel Blujdea (Romania) reported the nomination of science and technology correspondents, and a proposal for a fellowship programme. He highlighted that the CST should be product-oriented, aiming to produce methodologies and tools to facilitate UNCCD implementation, and introduced the CST's Programme of Work, noting that work related to climate change and land degradation is a priority.

Alejandro Leon, on behalf of the CST Group of Experts (GoE), reported the GoE's findings on the review of national reports submitted by country parties. He noted that: most respondents presented their country profile and National Action Programmes; some failed to provide information on monitoring and early warning systems; many missed information on benchmarks and indicators; many reported a lack of financial resources and the need to enhance capacity building and technology transfer; and there was generally no cost-benefit or economic analyses or a scientific understanding of traditional knowledge.

During the discussion, Pakistan, on behalf of G-77/China, appealed for full implementation of the commitment made at the Rio Summit regarding technology transfer, and called for: effectively implementing established partnerships and the Bali Strategic Plan on Technology Support and Capacity Building; narrowing the digital divide between developed and developing countries; developing regional and subregional networks and strengthening such cooperation; establishing information-exchange systems and world-class research institutions to develop advanced technologies and share them with developing countries; developing and sharing traditional technology; and strengthening South-South and North-South cooperation.

Argentina noted the need to restructure the CST in order to accentuate the scientific component of the Convention, while Swaziland suggested that innovative sources of funding, other

than the core budget, should be found to support the CST's operation. NGOs lamented that the current structure of the CST impedes the effective management of scientific and technical knowledge, and said that the GoE should include experts from grassroots, indigenous and NGO groups.

Many participants highlighted the need for on-ground application of technologies by farmers in conjunction with local traditional knowledge. Zimbabwe questioned the EC's approach to intellectual property rights and asked how poor communities can access technologies and the EC acknowledged that intellectual property rights can limit technology transfer in some cases.

Regarding indicators, Brazil and India supported the development of national, but not universal, indicators, Kyrgyzstan advocated practical and economic indicators which can be applied in real conditions and Algeria stressed the need to move from process-oriented to outcome-oriented indicators. China noted that uniform indicators are difficult to develop, and suggested first developing a basic set of indicators that are relevant to all affected country parties, and then elaborating a flexible method for their use. Several African countries noted that they struggled with monitoring, benchmarks and indicators and suggested that countries with strengths in each area should be identified and their successes shared. India and Algeria noted the use of their own satellites to monitor the impact of measures to combat desertification and highlighted that access to technology is difficult without financial resources.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- requesting developed country parties to fulfill their obligations under the UNCCD and provide adequate, timely, predictable resources and cost-effective, proven and appropriate technology to developing countries for SLM;
- establishing innovative options for financing implementation of advanced and appropriate cost-effective and adaptive technologies in developing countries;
- earmarking part of national budgets for technology development; and
- addressing the need for protection, application, and development of traditional knowledge and know-how and the sharing of its benefits.

IMPROVING INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND NATIONAL REPORTS

On Tuesday, 13 March, the plenary considered ways and means of improving procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the COP. The Secretariat submitted a background document (ICCD/CRIC(5)/9) and noted that nine of the 25 members of the AHWG on this topic had made submissions. He highlighted that, *inter alia*: it is difficult to distinguish UNCCD implementation from general implementation of sustainable land management; few submissions refer to the adoption of agreed standards; and more detailed information on the utilization of GEF resources is needed. He urged the AHWG to take on board the recent evolution of CRIC reporting procedures as they prepare its report to COP 8.

During discussions, delegates expressed concerns over time constraints, noting that the AHWG should consider the 10-year UNCCD strategy being prepared by the IIWG in its report to COP 8, and that this strategy is not yet complete. They also highlighted the importance of thorough reporting by NCBs to reflect activities actually taking place at the local level.

The GM reiterated the need to improve national reporting and obtain more accurate financial information. Samoa, for the Asia-Pacific Region, encouraged the Secretariat to organize training sessions to improve understanding of reporting procedures and suggested that information-management systems need to be enhanced, such as Internet-based clearinghouses. The Dominican Republic applauded the improved format for preparing national reports for CRIC 5 but noted that no reference to self-evaluation exercises exists in the document. Belize emphasized that scientific information is unavailable on some key aspects of desertification. Cuba highlighted the need for revitalizing the reporting process every 2-3 years, and other countries emphasized the need for timely provision of funding to improve the quality of reporting. El Salvador suggested a comparative table to allow easy identification of problem areas and Botswana proposed to include national reporting as part of NAPs to ensure that information is ready to submit at reporting time.

Germany requested information from parties on the degree of guidance they need on the reporting system. Romania noted a submission by his region to the Secretariat with a new set of more concise, time-bound indicators that may address some of the concerns expressed. Uruguay, supported by Chile, Tunisia and Argentina, stressed linkages and synergies between the national reporting process under the UNCCD and those under other multilateral environmental agreements such as the climate change and biodiversity conventions.

The first meeting of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group (AHWG) on this issue was held on Saturday, 17 March. Following the election of Ramon Frutos (Belize) as Chair, the AHWG discussed topics including benchmarks and indicators, comparative tables, and linkages to other conventions. The group indicated that the structure of the report and schedule for presentation to CRIC 6 had been agreed. In general, participants expressed satisfaction with the group's intention to design a reporting format that will catalyze parties' progress by ensuring that national reports are not just used to convey national experiences to the Secretariat and other parties, but also to spur coordination among agencies and stimulate the Convention's in-country implementation.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- providing better comparability of financial information between the figures in the national reports of donors and of affected country parties;
- requesting the CST to propose a selection of indicators for the new reporting cycle in order to improve reports from affected country parties; and
- requesting the COP to consider issuing guidance on a revised version of the Help Guide or on new UNCCD reporting guidelines.

GLOBAL INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE: INVESTMENT IN RURAL AREAS IN THE CONTEXT OF COMBATING LAND DEGRADATION AND DESERTIFICATION

This interactive discussion took place on Tuesday, 20 March, and included six expert presentations. Sem Shikongo (Namibia) spoke on the competitive advantages of land that is marginal for agriculture but rich in indigenous biodiversity. He explained that biodiversity-based industries such as ecotourism provide more income, education and job opportunities than farming in Namibia's dry areas, including for women. He stressed the need to maintain environmental quality, stating that policies ensuring a high "tradable value" for indigenous biodiversity create the strongest incentives for wise and sustainable use.

Larwanou Mahamane (Niger) described his country's land rehabilitation efforts over the last 30 years, including through water harvesting and farmer-managed natural resource regeneration projects, and said that land rehabilitation is time-consuming, but Niger is now reaping the benefits.

Rattan Lal, Ohio State University, highlighted the importance of soil organic matter, and noted the linkages between increasing terrestrial carbon sequestration, mitigating desertification, alleviating poverty, increasing biodiversity and improving water and element cycling.

Antonio Rocha Magalhaes (Brazil) noted that conditions for investment in rural areas include entrepreneurship, access to capital markets and prospects of profitability, as well as public policies to create a positive investment environment and reduce the costs of doing business. Christoph Kohlmeyer, Germany, outlined the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development, based on the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, saying that its mission is to harmonize aid interventions and align them with recipients' strategies. He advocated, *inter alia*: untied and predictable aid; incentives for cooperative behavior; simplified procedures; and mutual accountability and transparency. Yannick Glemarec, UNDP, outlined UNDP's work on improving access to carbon finance in drylands, noting in particular the potential for carbon cap-and-trade markets and the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanism to leverage funds for sustainable land management.

Discussions focused largely on issues of development funding. Switzerland questioned how money can reach local populations following the adoption of the Paris Declaration, and Finland added that as a result of the Paris Declaration, the major part of development cooperation will now be allocated to budget support for governments, which in practice means that there will be no more stand-alone projects to combat desertification unless they are part of national policies. Kohlmeyer replied that small-scale farmers are the main investors in charge of sustainable resource management, and if proper policies were put in place, including dismantling agricultural subsidies in developed nations, such farmers would be able to engage in sustainable land use. The European Community said the European Development Fund will increase its grants for rural development, giving rise to opportunities for UNCCD implementation projects.

Other items discussed included civil society engagement and the social impacts of ecotourism.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- achieving country ownership, alignment harmonization and mutual accountability between affected country parties and development partners;
- emulating successful farmer-managed tree-planting schemes in the Sahel; and
- considering potential gender-sensitive income-generating opportunities offered by drylands, such as national parks, community conservancies, wildlife farming, indigenous biodiversity production and ecotourism developments.

CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT ON THE STATUS OF CELEBRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF DESERTS AND DESERTIFICATION

The Secretariat introduced the interim report on the status of celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD) (ICCD/CRIC(5)/10), noting that a complete final report, to be submitted to COP 8, will include full details of all activities and an analysis.

Many participants described activities carried out to celebrate the IYDD, with several developing country parties noting their appreciation to those parties who had hosted events during the IYDD, but also pointing out shortcomings. Swaziland lamented that the IYDD was held at a time in which the donor community appeared reluctant to fully commit to supporting the Convention, resulting in lower visibility of initiatives than expected. Together with Nigeria, he argued that the goal of the IYDD was not simply to raise awareness but that actions carried out often failed to do more than this. Both countries highlighted local-level activities that they undertook to train people to cope with desertification.

CRIC 5 Proposals: Proposals in the final report (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1) include:

- following up to action under the IYDD to promote political engagement, advocacy and awareness-raising and to formulate a stakeholders' alliance in the context of the Convention; and
- making documentaries and other forms of communication of success in combating desertification available to interested parties.

IIWG REPORT ON THE TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Delegates presented their views on the draft ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance implementation of the UNCCD (ICCD/CRIC(5)/INF.6) during a side-event organized by the IIWG and on Monday, 12 March, and Wednesday, 21 March, in plenary.

Sem Shikongo, Chair of the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG), presented the draft strategy, explaining that it was based on: the mandate given to the IIWG by COP 7; the comprehensive review of the UNCCD Secretariat performed by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations; the IIWG meetings held in Bonn in 2004 and 2006; and the work of consultants. He noted that the current draft is composed of: background information; a situation analysis; an outline for a strategic plan; a framework for implementation defining mandates and goals for each institutional actor within the UNCCD structure; and performance monitoring, which may include indicators. He highlighted consultations held with stakeholders during CRIC 5 and spelled out the schedule of

work, including a deadline of 31 March for parties to submit comments to the Chair, and two meetings of the IIWG to be held in Namibia and Switzerland before COP 8.

Pakistan, on behalf of the G-77/China, recalled the IIWG's mandate, and noted the need to address all issues identified by the JIU, including those on adequate funding for UNCCD activities. Issues highlighted by the G-77/China throughout the week in reference to the strategic plan included strengthening the Secretariat and the role of the GM to improve the performance of their respective functions; mobilizing adequate, timely and predictable financial resources; and increasing technology transfer and technical assistance, including for adaptation to the effects of climate change.

Germany, on behalf of the EU, highlighted aspects for further elaboration including: a sound diagnostic of strengths and weaknesses in UNCCD implementation; placing the Convention within the broader context of UN reforms; catalyzing additional finance for the Convention and preventing overlaps in financial mechanisms; clarifying the mandates and expected outputs of institutions like the GM, the CST and the Secretariat; and including clear and operational targets.

Albania, on behalf of Central and Eastern Europe, highlighted the need to strengthen the technical capacity of existing UNCCD institutions, and to support national ministries in charge of combating desertification as national budgets are the major source of resources for implementation. Uganda, for the African Group, said that the IIWG should maintain its focus on supporting national-level implementation of the Convention and on addressing people's suffering. The US highlighted the need to encourage the CST and its associated bodies to provide relevant and user friendly scientific work.

Many participants highlighted that fostering in-depth discussions within all regions and making the process participatory in the coming months is crucial for the adoption of the strategy at COP 8.

CLOSING PLENARY

On Wednesday afternoon, 21 March, Chair Moore convened the closing plenary. The rapporteur introduced the draft report of CRIC 5 (ICCD/CRIC(5)/L.1), and Chair Moore noted that the conclusions and recommendations reflected suggestions made in plenary during the week and did not represent a negotiated text but a compilation of parties' proposals. Following some minor editorial amendments, the report was adopted.

Bruno Dettori, Senator and Vice Minister of Environment, Italy, welcomed the results of CRIC 5, urging country parties to make the fight against desertification a top priority in their political agendas. Romina Picolotti, Secretary of Environment and Sustainable Development, Argentina, reiterated her country's commitment to fighting desertification. Executive Secretary Diallo highlighted the positive outcomes of the meeting, saying that much progress has been made in UNCCD implementation. Leopoldo Rojo Serrano, Spain, announced that COP 8 will be hosted in Madrid, Spain, from 3-14 September 2007.

Representatives from all regional groups thanked the host country and commended the UNCCD Secretariat and Chair Moore for their work at CRIC 5. Chair Moore thanked participants and closed the session at 4:37 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF CRIC 5

When the CRIC was established by COP 5 in 2001, its specific mandate was to regularly review the Convention's implementation in light of experience gained and to facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by Parties. Just how to accomplish this has been a bit of a struggle as the CRIC has experimented with various formats and approaches during its first four meetings. This challenge also faced CRIC 5, which was characterized by an amiable and fruitful discussion on a number of issues relevant to the fight against desertification. Nevertheless, some felt it did not achieve an in-depth analysis of Parties' implementation of the Convention. This analysis will focus on some aspects of the challenges facing both the CRIC and the Convention, through the CRIC's format, NAP implementation review, intersessional working groups and work towards resource mobilization and synergies with other conventions.

A QUESTION OF FORMAT

Participants warmly commended the new format of CRIC 5, noting that it allowed the CRIC to fulfill its role as a forum for information exchange among parties. The meeting's organization as a succession of panels on a range of topics gave the plenary an academic atmosphere filled with motivating question-and-answer sessions, and provided ample opportunity to showcase best practices. Many participants pleasantly noted that they had rarely had time for such an exchange during the previous CRIC sessions and that the panel sessions also kept politically-contentious matters largely at a distance, thus enhancing the discussions.

However, a few seasoned delegates noted that, alongside information-sharing, CRIC has another major task – to review UNCCD implementation by parties – and questioned whether the panels, which focused on individual examples of parties' successes and challenges – had diverted attention away from this broader core responsibility. For example, the review of the national reports was not specifically addressed by any of the panels, a fact that was lamented by those who recognized the significant time, effort and resources that many countries put into preparing those reports.

FROM ASSESSMENT TO ACTION?

Despite familiar calls from the Executive Secretary and others to move "from assessment to action," the meeting revealed little evidence of on-the-ground progress to combat desertification at a significant level. Many parties did portray progress made at the regulatory or project levels, especially through activities such awareness raising, assessing land degradation, setting up early warning systems, and capacity building through workshops and training courses. Despite this progress, however, statements by affected parties made clear that action to prevent and control desertification on the ground is still limited, and small-scale projects are not able to address increasing land degradation and desertification, especially in developing countries.

Unsurprisingly, countries offered a wide range of explanations for the current inability to reverse this trend. Developing countries pointed to a lack of financial, human and technical resources as the major obstacle to effective implementation of their NAPs, as well as lack of political will by developing

countries and donors alike. Donor countries pointed to the need for developing countries to mainstream UNCCD issues into their national development plans and set the fight against land degradation as a national priority. At the international level, a number of observers suggested that UNCCD issues have been less successful in gaining national and international attention than those of the CBD and the UNFCCC because desertification and land degradation are still seen as developing country issues. Some countries also expressed frustration with the UNCCD's own processes, including the work of the GM.

However, such problems are not terminal. Indeed, it can be seen that work is proceeding towards addressing many of the underlying structural challenges that impede the Convention's implementation, including through the work of the International Intergovernmental Working Group (IIWG) on the ten-year Strategic Plan and Framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention, the *Ad Hoc* Working Group (AHWG) on improving reporting and communication procedures, and the extensive discussion on making use of synergies, particularly with the other Rio conventions.

A QUESTION OF STRATEGY: THE AHWG AND IIWG

Just as some pointed to the fact that a good format for the CRIC provided an opportunity to achieve its objective of information sharing, others highlighted that a new strategic approach is needed to "solve" the UNCCD's remaining problems. In this regard, the work on a ten-year strategic plan for the Convention by the IIWG and the work on streamlining and improving national reports by the AHWG are expected to provide a stronger structure for implementing the Convention. The new reporting format is envisaged to catalyze progress by ensuring that national reports are not just used to convey national experiences to the Secretariat and other parties, but also to spur coordination among agencies and stimulate the Convention's in-country implementation. Hand-in-hand goes the ten-year plan which, if done well, is hoped by many parties to reposition the UNCCD in line with the current global aid architecture and enable countries to develop NAPs that are aligned with national development priorities and the work of other MEAs. The two working groups face tight deadlines – both must complete their work in time for COP 8 – as well as complex substantive issues, but if the documents meet expectations, if they are endorsed by COP 8 and if they are implemented at global, national and local levels, it will be a vital step forward for the UNCCD.

A QUESTION OF MONEY

At CRIC 5, as at most meetings related to multilateral environmental agreements, the availability of financial resources was a source of constant concern and discussion. However the picture may not be so gloomy given the increasing sophistication of parties' understanding of GEF processes, an increasing trend towards aid harmonization among many donors, and the possibility of achieving synergies with other issues with stronger financial appeal, like addressing and adapting to climate change.

The Convention relies both on the GEF for resource allocation for projects on sustainable land management and on the GM for the mobilization of additional resources from other sources. The GEF invested US\$218 million in SLM during the past four years, but many developing countries still imply that the

financial mechanisms of the Convention need strengthening and do not perceive that the GM is mobilizing substantive additional resources.

There are also other reasons that some delegates believe that the GM has not achieved its objectives, which are to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms and to promote actions leading to the mobilization and channeling of substantial financial resources to affected developing country parties. For example, the Latin American and Caribbean Group and the Central and Eastern European Group both expressed their dissatisfaction with the support given by the GM to their regions. Furthermore, the GM has been developing a new operational model, saying that its role is not to raise funds for individual projects or small-scale interventions, but to "capacity-build and share knowledge on up-scaling finance for SLM and poverty reduction." While the GM says that it is "strengthening" rather than "redefining" its mandate, and the EU indicated that the GM's role is both "broker" and "capacity builder," the G-77/China clearly stated that the GM's new role should not compromise its mandated focus – resource mobilization – and that the GM was not created for prioritizing capacity building. Parties are likely to revisit this disagreement on the GM's role at COP 8 and in discussions on the ten-year strategy.

A QUESTION OF SYNERGIES

CRIC 5 delegates devoted much discussion to links and synergies between the UNCCD and other environmental conventions, especially with the climate change and biodiversity conventions and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. Most delegates, donors and recipients alike, recognized that well-designed development programmes can certainly simultaneously address the closely-linked issues of poverty alleviation, land degradation, climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation. Such synergistic programmes should lead to less duplication and more effective use of existing funds – always a winning tune for developed countries – while also providing the potential to leverage greater support and funding from a broader range of sources, to the delight of developing countries. Panelists and delegates made it clear that the chief barriers to exploiting such synergies are related to poor coordination – whether between international conventions, within government structures, or within NAPs – and the discussions at CRIC 5 displayed that those responsible for all of the above are beginning to put in place the necessary mechanisms for improvement. Furthermore, through instruments such as the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, where donors agreed to direct cooperation funds to national priorities in developing countries through budget support, many expect a more streamlined and synergetic approach to the implementation of conventions, rather than individual projects addressing these issues in a piecemeal fashion.

IT TAKES TWO TO TANGO

The positive atmosphere during CRIC 5 provided a glimpse of the way forward for the UNCCD, allowing all parties to reflect on their relative responsibilities instead of looking to assign blame. Developing countries recognized the need for a higher degree of political commitment at the national level in order to demonstrate that addressing desertification is a priority that must

be integrated into development strategies. Donors are supporting the work of both the IIWG and the AHWG, which they hope will improve the functioning of the Convention and help to catalyze much-needed funding.

Given the nature of the Convention itself, the complexities of implementation and the interlinkages with other socioeconomic and environmental processes, it is not easy for the UNCCD to move forward quickly. The international community wishes to see steady and continued progress in UNCCD implementation, noting the potential for the Convention to help achieve sustainable development goals, particularly in developing countries. Overall, it could be said that donors and recipients are both recognizing that “it takes two to tango” and that they must do their part to design a strategic, long-term framework for financing and securing a wide-scale implementation of the Convention.

In short, interesting times are ahead for the UNCCD. The big issues affecting the future of the Convention – availability of resources and technology; achieving synergies, particularly with other environment conventions; and ensuring Parties commit to prioritizing implementation – were not intended to be resolved at CRIC 5, which was not a negotiating forum. However, they all will resurface at COP 8 and CRIC 6 in September. While the information-sharing component of CRIC 5 was deemed a success by participants, thanks to the new panel-based format, it is still not clear whether or not the key goal – furthering implementation of the UNCCD – can be achieved. It therefore remains to be seen how the would-be dancers respond once the music starts in September.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

DESERTIFICATION IN AFRICA: The workshop will take place from 2-4 April 2007, in Algiers, Algeria, hosted by the Pan-African Parliament Committee on Rural Economy, Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment. The meeting will raise awareness of desertification among African politicians and define an African framework for combating desertification. For more information, contact: Chara Bachir, Chair, Pan-African Parliament Committee on Rural Economy, Agriculture, Natural Resources and the Environment; fax: +213 (0) 21-73-36-98; e-mail: chara_bachir@yahoo.fr; internet: <http://www.pan-african-parliament.org/>

IPCC WORKING GROUP II: The eighth session of IPCC Working Group II will take place from 2-5 April 2007, in Brussels, Belgium. It will consider the Working Group II contribution to the Fourth Assessment Report, “Climate Change 2007: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability,” including the Summary for Policymakers, the Technical Summary, and the underlying report. For more information, contact: Rudie Bourgeois, IPCC Secretariat; tel: +41-22-730-8208; fax: +41-22-7 30-8025; e-mail: IPCC-Sec@wmo.int; internet: <http://www.ipcc.ch/meet/8sessionwg2.htm>

PACIFIC CONSULTATION MEETING ON LAND AND DROUGHT MANAGEMENT: This meeting will take place from 16–17 April 2007, in Apia, Samoa. It will provide a regional forum for consultation of UNCCD Pacific parties on land and drought management. 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>

SEVENTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS FORUM ON FORESTS: UNFF7 will be held from 16-27 April 2007, at UN headquarters in New York. For more information, contact: UNFF Secretariat; tel: +1-212-963-3160; fax: +1-917-367-3186; e-mail: unff@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/forests>

FOREST RESEARCH MANAGEMENT IN AN ERA OF GLOBALIZATION: This Conference will be held from 18-19 April 2007, in Washington DC, USA. Its themes include: how to develop forest research strategies and prioritize research objectives; acquiring funding and financing; and ensuring quality and efficiency of research institutions. For more information, contact: Konstantin von Teuffel; tel: +49-761-4018-100; fax: +49-761-4018-355; e-mail: Konstantin.teuffel@forst.bwl.de; internet: <http://www.iufro.org/science/divisions/division-6/60000/60600/activities/>

THIRD MEETING OF THE UNCCD IIWG: The third meeting of the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group to the UNCCD is scheduled to take place from 26-28 April 2007, in Namibia. This session will address the draft 10-year strategy for the UNCCD. 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>

FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE UN COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (CSD-15): CSD-15 is taking place at UN headquarters in New York, from 30 April to 11 May 2007. This session will focus on “policy” options for energy for sustainable development, industrial development, air pollution/atmosphere, and climate change. For more information, contact: UN Division for Sustainable Development, tel: +1-212-963-8102; fax: +1-212-963-4260; e-mail: dsd@un.org; internet: <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/policy.htm>

LAUNCHING OF THE THEMATIC PROGRAMME NETWORK ON BEST PRACTICES AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE (TPN5): This meeting is scheduled to be held in May 2007 in Colombia. It will provide a forum for consultation of parties to the UNCCD on best practices and traditional knowledge. 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>

FOURTH MEETING OF THE UNCCD IIWG: The fourth meeting of the Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group to the UNCCD is scheduled to be held in May 2007, in Geneva, Switzerland. This session will address the draft 10-year strategy for the UNCCD. 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>

26TH SESSIONS OF THE UNFCCC SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND KYOTO PROTOCOL AD HOC WORKING GROUP: The twenty-sixth sessions of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change will be held from 7-18 May 2007. The third session of the *Ad Hoc* Working Group on Further Commitments for Annex I Parties under the

Kyoto Protocol (AWG) will be held from 14-18 May. The third workshop under the Dialogue on long-term cooperative action to address climate change by enhancing implementation of the Convention will take place from 16-17 May 2007. For more information, contact: UNFCCC Secretariat; tel: +49-228-815-1000; fax: +49-228-815-1999; e-mail: secretariat@unfccc.int; internet: <http://www.unfccc.int>

THEMATIC PROGRAMME NETWORK WORKSHOP ON ENABLING POLICIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF UNCCD: This meeting is scheduled to be held in June 2007, in Islamabad, Pakistan. It will provide a forum for consultation among parties to the UNCCD on enabling policies for the implementation of the Convention. 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>

AFRICA-LAC PLATFORM FOR COOPERATION: This meeting is scheduled to be held in June 2007, in the Dominican Republic. This meeting provides a forum for dialogue and cooperation between Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa on action against desertification. 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>

EIGHTH ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGIONAL FOCAL POINT MEETING IN PREPARATION FOR UNCCD COP 8: This meeting is scheduled to be held in July 2007, in Ho Chi Minh City, Viet Nam. It will provide a regional forum for consultation among Asian and Pacific parties to the UNCCD prior to COP 8. 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>

GRULAC REGIONAL MEETING IN PREPARATION FOR UNCCD COP 8: This meeting will be held in July 2007, in Trinidad and Tobago. It will provide a regional forum for consultation among Latin America and the Caribbean parties to the UNCCD prior to COP 8. 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>

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY IN DRYLANDS: This workshop is scheduled to be held in July 2007, in Beijing, China. For more information, contact the Chinese Academy of Forestry: tel: +86-10-62-88-9-090; fax: +86-10-62-88-42-29; e-mail: hegs@cat.ac.cn; internet: www.forestry.ac.cn

AFRICAN REGIONAL MEETING IN PREPARATION FOR UNCCD COP 8: This meeting is scheduled to be held in August 2007, in Kigali, Rwanda. It will provide a regional forum for consultation among African parties to the UNCCD prior to

COP 8. 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>

EIGHTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE UN CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION: UNCCD COP 8 will be held from 3-14 September 2007, in Madrid, Spain. The CRIC and the CST will also meet concurrently. 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

AHWG	<i>Ad Hoc</i> Working Group on National Reporting
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CBOs	Community-based organizations
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
CST	Committee on Science and Technology
GEF	Global Environment Facility
GM	Global Mechanism
GoE	Group of Experts
GRULAC	Latin American and the Caribbean Group
IIWG	Intersessional Intergovernmental Working Group
IYDD	2006 International Year for Deserts and Desertification
JIU	UN Joint Inspection Unit
JUSSCANNZ	Japan, US, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, Norway, New Zealand.
NAPs	National action programmes
NCBs	National Coordinating Bodies
RCUs	Regional Coordination Units
SLM	Sustainable land management
TPNs	Thematic Programme Networks
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

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RENEWABLES 2004 BULLETIN

A Daily Report from the International Conference for Renewable Energies

Published by the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD)

DAILY REPORTS AND WEB COVERAGE AT [HTTP://WWW.IISD.CA/SD/REN2004/](http://www.iisd.ca/sd/ren2004/)
VOLUME 95, No. 5, MONDAY, 7 JUNE 2004

SUMMARY REPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGIES - RENEWABLES 2004: 1-4 JUNE 2004

The International Conference for Renewable Energies (*renewables 2004*) took place from 1-4 June 2004, in Bonn, Germany. Approximately 3600 participants from 154 countries attended the Conference, including several Heads of State, 121 Ministers and representatives from governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the scientific community and the private sector.

The *renewables 2004* programme consisted of nine Plenary Sessions, including a Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue and a Ministerial Segment. The Multi-Stakeholder Dialogue addressed: the value of, and opportunities for, renewable energy - policy frameworks and regulatory certainty; and promoting renewable energy - finance and capacity for the future. Other Plenary Sessions addressed best-practice examples and success stories.

The Ministerial Segment included three Ministerial Roundtables that considered policies for renewable energy market development, financing options, and strengthening capacities, research and policy



Members of major groups and delegations in the main plenary room.

developing countries, and the mobilization of financial resources for new and renewable sources of energy. However, it was only following the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) that renewable energy issues began to feature more promi-

"IISD proved to be as professional as their reputation is. The group covered all events taking place at the conference venue itself as well as many side events which were located in the vicinity of the conference hall. IISD produced a well-designed bulletin including informative text and pictures of all important meetings, discussions and results of the main conference events. This bulletin was very useful for participants to follow events they could not attend or were also interested in. IISD also published plenty of information and photos on their web site. This service was a real added value to our own conference coverage. The services of IISD, being an independent organization, were especially appreciated by the conveners of the conference, ie the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety"

Dr. Heinrich Schneider
Conference Secretariat
International Conference for
Renewable Energies, Bonn 2004

This product was developed in 2003 specifically for large conferences that include both substantive discussions and side events. Building on the success of the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin* and *ENB on the Side*, "Your Meeting" Bulletin was created as a conference daily report. IISD Reporting Services was hired to publish in this format at the World Forestry Congress, Renewables 2004 and the IUCN World Conservation Congress. "Your Meeting" Bulletin is a 4-6 page daily report and summary issue that includes coverage of policy discussions and/or negotiations, and extensive reporting from side events and special events during the conference.

For further information or to make arrangements for IISD Reporting Services to cover your meeting conference or workshop, contact the Managing Director:

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