

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

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

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONTACT GROUP 1

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

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

IN THE CORRIDORS

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

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

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