

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

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

Approximately 650 government, intergovernmental and non-governmental representatives gathered for the meetings. The two-day CST S-1 session, from 5-6 November, considered preparations for CST 9, elements of the Strategy related to the CST, the CST's four-year work plan and two-year costed work programme, and advice to the CRIC on measuring progress on the Strategy's Strategic Objectives. CRIC 7, which convened from 7-14 November, considered: the work plans and programmes for the Convention's bodies; the format of future meetings of the CRIC; and indicators and monitoring of the Strategy and principles for improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and format of reports submitted to the COP.

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

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

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

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNCCD

The UNCCD is the centerpiece in the international community's efforts to combat desertification and land degradation in the drylands. The UNCCD was adopted on 17 June 1994 and entered into force on 26 December 1996. Currently, it has 193 parties. The UNCCD recognizes the physical, biological and socioeconomic aspects of desertification, the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand-driven, and the involvement of local communities in combating desertification and land degradation. The core of the UNCCD is the development of national, subregional and regional action programmes by national governments, in cooperation with donors, local communities and NGOs.

NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION: In 1992, the UN General Assembly, as requested by the UN Conference on Environment and Development, adopted resolution 47/188 calling for the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee for the elaboration of a convention to combat desertification in those countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa (INCD). The INCD met five times between May 1993 and June 1994 and drafted the UNCCD and four regional implementation annexes for Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Northern Mediterranean. A fifth annex, for Central and Eastern Europe, was adopted during COP 4 in December 2000. Pending the UNCCD's entry into force, the INCD met six times between January 1995 and August 1997 to hear progress reports on urgent actions for Africa and interim measures in other regions, and to prepare for COP 1.

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

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

COP 3: Parties met for COP 3 in Recife, Brazil, from 15-26 November 1999, with the CST meeting in parallel to the COP from 16-19 November. The COP approved a long-negotiated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding the GM. It decided to establish an *ad hoc* working group to review and analyze the reports on national, subregional and regional action programmes and to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the

UNCCD. In addition, on the CST's recommendation, the COP appointed an *ad hoc* panel on traditional knowledge and an *ad hoc* panel on early warning systems.

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

COP 5: COP 5 met from 1-13 October 2001, in Geneva, Switzerland, and the CST met in parallel from 2-5 October. Delegates established the CRIC, adopted modalities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, and supported a proposal by the GEF to designate land degradation as another focal area for funding.

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

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

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

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

CRIC 5: The fifth session of the CRIC convened in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 12-21 March 2007, to review implementation of the Convention in affected country parties in regions other than Africa. The meeting also addressed how to improve information communication and national reporting, reviewed the 2006 International Year for Deserts and Desertification, and conducted a Global Interactive Dialogue with stakeholders on investments in rural areas in the context of combating land degradation and desertification.

COP 8: The eighth session of the COP convened in Madrid, Spain, from 3-14 September 2007. UNCCD parties also attended CRIC 6 from 4-14 September, and CST 8 from 4-7 September. The COP approved 29 decisions, with the decision on the ten-year strategic plan attracting the most attention. The CRIC decision requesting the Secretariat, in consultation with the GM, to revise the format of national reports as well as the CST decision to convene future sessions in a conference-style format contributed additional efforts to reform the UNCCD. Decision 3/COP8 on the ten-year strategic plan called on CRIC 7 to review a number of multi-year work plans as well as to review the format of reports. COP 8 delegates did not reach agreement on the programme and budget, however, and an Extraordinary Session of the COP convened at UN headquarters in New York on 26 November 2007, to conclude this item. The final decision amounted to a 4% euro value growth in the budget for the biennium 2008-2009, with 2.8% to be assessed from all parties and 1.2% to be provided as a voluntary contribution by the Government of Spain.

CST S-1 AND CRIC 7 REPORT

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

JOINT OPENING PLENARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CST S-1

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT AND CLOSING OF CST S-1

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

CRIC 7

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

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

INTERACTIVE DIALOGUES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CLOSING PLENARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chair Torres closed the meeting at 5:58 pm.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF CST S-1 AND CRIC 7

A TIME FOR CHANGE?

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

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

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

GETTING THE MANAGEMENT RIGHT

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

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

BALANCING MANAGEMENT, SCIENCE AND POLITICS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE ROAD AHEAD

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

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

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

UPCOMING MEETINGS

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

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

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

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

DRYLANDS, DESERTS AND DESERTIFICATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GLOSSARY

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