



SUMMARY OF THE ELEVENTH SESSION OF THE UNCCD COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: 15-19 APRIL 2013

The eleventh session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 11) of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) took place in Bonn, Germany, from 15-19 April 2013. The meeting was preceded by the third Special Session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST S-3) and the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, whose outcomes and recommendations were conveyed to CRIC 11.

In line with earlier decisions of the Conference of the Parties (COP), most of the plenary sessions at CRIC 11 were conducted in an interactive format to facilitate the sharing of country and regional experiences and lessons, with a half-day devoted to dialogue with civil society organizations (CSOs). The approximately 375 participants at CRIC 11 took part in interactive panel discussions that covered: communication strategies to mobilize action on desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD); crucial issues of alignment of national action programmes (NAPs); constraints and opportunities for the implementation of national monitoring systems on DLDD; input from the *ad hoc* Advisory Group of Technical Experts (AGTE) on “operationally delineating affected areas”; current UNCCD funding flows and future prospects, including the role of CSOs; and data access tools and policy frameworks for enhancing accessibility to best practices. CRIC 11 also took note of the input from CST S-3 on how best to measure progress in the implementation of the Convention’s 10-Year Strategic Plan for 2008-2018 in a session on scientific input to the CRIC.

During the closing session, CRIC 11 delegates adopted the final report of the meeting. The report contains a synopsis of parties’ views and recommendations noted on the floor in plenary, and a background document summarizing deliberations and recommendations submitted to the CRIC for consideration at its next session, which is scheduled to take place in September 2013, in parallel to COP 11.

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 195 parties. The UNCCD recognizes

the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of desertification, the importance of redirecting technology transfer so that it is demand-driven, and the involvement of

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local communities in combating desertification and land degradation. The core of the UNCCD is the development of national, subregional and regional action programmes by national governments, in cooperation with UN agencies, donors, local communities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

NEGOTIATION OF THE CONVENTION: In 1992, the UN General Assembly (UNGA), 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 the 4th Conference of the Parties (COP 4) in December 2000. Pending the UNCCD's entry into force, the INCD met six times between January 1995 and August 1997 to hear progress reports on urgent action for Africa and interim measures in other regions, and to prepare for COP 1.

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

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

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

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

COP 6 met from 25 August-6 September 2003, in Havana, Cuba. Delegates, *inter alia*, designated the GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD, decided that a comprehensive review of the Secretariat's activities would be undertaken by the UN Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), and requested the Secretariat to facilitate a costed feasibility study on all aspects of regional coordination.

COP 7 took place in Nairobi, Kenya, from 17-28 October 2005. Among their decisions, delegates reviewed the implementation of the Convention, developed an MoU between

the UNCCD and the GEF, and reviewed the recommendations in the report of the JIU assessment of the Secretariat's activities. Discussion on regional coordination units ended without the adoption of a decision, and an Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group was established to review the JIU report and to develop a draft ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention.

COP 8 convened in Madrid, Spain, from 3-14 September 2007, and, *inter alia*, adopted a decision on the ten-year strategic plan (the Strategy). Delegates also requested the JIU to conduct an assessment of the GM for presentation to COP 9. COP 8 delegates did not reach agreement on the programme and budget, however, and an Extraordinary Session of the COP convened at UN Headquarters in New York on 26 November 2007, to conclude this item.

COP 9 convened in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 21 September-2 October 2009. Delegates focused on a number of items that were called for by the Strategy and adopted 36 decisions, which addressed topics including: four-year work plans and two-year work programmes of the CRIC, CST, GM and the Secretariat; the JIU assessment of the GM; the terms of reference of the CRIC; arrangements for regional coordination mechanisms (RCMs); the communication strategy; and the programme and budget.

COP 10 convened from 10-21 October 2011, in Changwon City, Republic of Korea. Delegates adopted 40 decisions, addressing, *inter alia*, the governance structure for the GM, by which parties agreed that the accountability and legal representation of the GM shall be transferred from IFAD to the UNCCD Secretariat. A decision related to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD or Rio+20) requested the UNCCD Executive Secretary to actively prepare for and participate in the UNCSD.

COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION: The CRIC held its first session in Rome, Italy, in 2002, during which delegates considered presentations from the five UNCCD regions, and considered information on financial mechanisms in support of the UNCCD's implementation and advice provided by the CST and the GM.

CRIC 2 met concurrently with COP 6 in 2003 to review implementation of the UNCCD and of its institutional arrangements, and review information on the financing of UNCCD implementation by multilateral agencies and institutions.

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

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

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

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

CRIC 7 convened in Istanbul, Turkey, from 3-14 November 2008, during which delegates considered: the work plans and programmes for the Convention's bodies; the format of future meetings of the CRIC; and indicators and monitoring of the Strategy and principles for improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and format of reports submitted to the COP.

CRIC 8 convened concurrently with COP 9 in 2009 and, *inter alia*, reviewed the workplans of the institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention and reporting guidelines and indicators. Delegates also recommended adoption of the proposal for a Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS).

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

CRIC 10 met concurrently with COP 10 in Changwon, Republic of Korea, from 10-21 October 2011. Delegates discussed the strategic orientation of the Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies, adopted four operational objectives to assess the implementation of the Convention against performance indicators, and approved an iterative process on reporting procedures and the refinement of methodologies for the review and compilation of best practices, including by CSOs.

CRIC 11 REPORT

On Monday morning, 15 April 2013, CRIC 11 Chair Mary Rowen (US) welcomed delegates and highlighted the importance of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) issues at a time of intense global discussion about food security and environmental change. She challenged participants to foster a discussion on how to improve reporting so it is useful at the country level, measurable at the Convention level and tells a compelling story for the global community. Stefan Schmitz, Head of Division, Rural Development and Food Security, Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany, stressed that land and soil need to take center stage in the post-2015 development agenda framework, which will require enhancing synergies among the three Rio conventions and emerging global initiatives to address DLDD. Kwang-Su Ryu, Director General of International Affairs, Korea Forest Service, welcomed the UNCCD Secretariat's efforts since the tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP 10) and called on the international community to commit itself to achieve a land degradation neutral world.

Jürgen Nimptsch, Lord Mayor of the City of Bonn, welcomed CRIC participants and recognized their demanding task to monitor and assess the Convention's implementation and the achievement of its targets worldwide. UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja noted that delegates will: complete the first assessment since the adoption of the 10-Year Strategic Plan (the Strategy), which incorporates consideration of both performance and impact indicators; review financial flows against the impact indicators for strategic objective 4 of the Strategy; and consider a draft advocacy policy framework (APF) on drought, including water scarcity. He stressed the benefits of

the (PRAIS), and noted that the reports received have helped to start setting baselines for the strategic indicators and a trend analysis of progress.

Pohamba Shifeta, Deputy Minister for Environment and Tourism, Namibia, formally announced that his country will host COP 11, from 16-27 September 2013. He stressed that Namibia had established a national programme to fight desertification even before it had ratified the UNCCD, and expressed hope that hosting COP 11 would offer a snapshot of a country that "has grown from strength to strength."

Ireland, for the European Union (EU), noted "concerning issues" in the reporting process, including data quality, reliability and comparability, inadequate capacity and funding, and complex templates. Burkina Faso, for the African Group, noted the region needs more financial and technical support in building capacity for reporting and for aligning national action programmes (NAPs) with the Strategy.

Iran, for the Asian Group, urged seizing the opportunity offered by recommendations of the AGTE of the UNCCD CST to refine the indicators, and called for: more funds for DLDD under the sixth Global Environment Facility (GEF-6) replenishment; more financial and technical support for reporting through PRAIS and aligning NAPs with the Strategy; consideration of the role of the Changwon Initiative in facilitating UNCCD implementation; greater use of the regional coordination mechanisms; and exploiting synergies among the three Rio conventions.

Belarus, on behalf of the Central and Eastern European Group, noted the region has established working groups to refine and improve indicators and welcomed the role of PRAIS, as well as efforts of the AGTE in this regard. Underlining the importance of regional meetings ahead of CRIC sessions, he called for greater efforts to support all countries to effectively participate in the process.

Peru, on behalf of the Latin America and Caribbean Group (GRULAC), noted the global scope of DLDD and expressed regret at the lack of sufficient funding. Underscoring the role of regional and subregional planning processes in facilitating alignment of NAPs, he called for addressing the delay in staffing the regional coordinating units. He also emphasized GRULAC's concerns with regard to the status of the GM and procedures for the selection of the next Executive Secretary, and called for a clear decision on this issue at COP 11.

Confederation des ONGs d'environnement et de développement de l'Afrique Centrale (CONGAC), on behalf of CSOs, lamented the slow progress in developing a meaningful assessment of the Convention's impact, particularly its human dimensions, and suggested that weak linkages with other environmental conventions and international DLDD initiatives are major weaknesses. She stressed the need to improve interaction between UNCCD National Focal Points (NFPs) and CSO networks.

The Committee then proceeded to adopt the provisional agenda (ICCD/CRIC(11)/1), as orally revised to reflect the Bureau's decision to move consideration of agenda item 10 on relationships with other conventions and international bodies to Friday morning, to enable parties' views to be adequately reflected in the final outcome document.

CRIC Chair Rowen, recalling COP 9 decision 11 containing the Terms of Reference of the CRIC, informed delegates that, as an intersessional meeting, CRIC 11 would be an experience-

sharing and lesson-sharing exercise in an interactive format and its outcome would consist of a final report identifying successes, obstacles and recommendations on further steps to improve the implementation of the Convention. In this regard, she noted that the text would not be negotiated before its adoption at the last plenary meeting, but the Chair and Rapporteur would hold several informal consultations based on the notes from the sessions to facilitate the finalization of the draft report. The Committee then approved the appointment of Luis Estuardo Rios González (Guatemala) as Rapporteur for the 11th and 12th sessions of the CRIC, and proceeded to work through its five-day agenda.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION AGAINST PROVISIONALLY ADOPTED PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

On Monday morning, CRIC Chair Rowen invited delegates to begin consideration of this item, relating to operational objective 1 of the Strategy. The UNCCD Secretariat introduced three documents relating to this agenda item: a preliminary analysis of information contained in the Secretariat’s report on operational objective 1 of the Strategy (ICCD/CRIC(11)/2); a preliminary analysis of reports from regional and subregional reporting entities (ICCD/CRIC(11)/7); and a glossary on performance indicators, financial flows and best practices (ICCD/CRIC(11)/INF.3).

Chair Rowen introduced the discussion theme “Are communication and participation sufficient to mobilize action on DLDD?” and invited John McKenzie, Communications Expert and former news correspondent for ABC News, US, to moderate the discussions.

Interactive Panel Discussion on “Are communication and participation sufficient to mobilize action on DLDD?”:

Moderator McKenzie invited the lead discussants to make opening statements. Zalia Yacouba Boubacar (Niger) reported on her country’s public communication strategy, which involves working with a network of journalists for the environment to help raise public awareness on environmental issues as a whole, including DLDD and climate change. Wilfredo Alfaro (Chile) said the UNCCD still lacks political and financial support compared to its sister Rio conventions and observed how targeting high-level policy makers, coupled with a recent drought crisis, have enhanced public awareness and political commitment. Anneke Trux (Germany) stressed the importance of, *inter alia*: paying attention to the timing of DLDD messaging; establishing a network of multipliers and ambassadors that can bridge the gap between science, policy and advocacy; and linking DLDD with issues that directly affect consumers and other stakeholders, notably its effect on food prices and links to migration and security.

Moderator McKenzie highlighted data from the Secretariat’s preliminary analysis of reports, which indicate 39% of the global population is informed about desertification and loss of biodiversity. He asked delegates to share views on the reliability of these figures and what they mean in day-to-day practice.

Argentina said that although 75% of his country is drylands, outside these zones awareness of DLDD issues is low and climate change receives much more attention, in part due to flooding a few years ago. The US suggested it might be a better use of resources to collect information on indicators where such information exists and can be assessed and applied. Mexico

discussed how it engaged in dialogue with its major television networks, but noted news reporting and public awareness increased significantly when his country experienced a major drought that, among other things, affected the production of corn, a major food staple.

Ukraine asked how other countries assess public awareness of DLDD issues specifically, and whether such awareness is changing behavior. Israel noted that, as a recipient of refugees from other countries affected by DLDD, a key thrust in the country’s awareness-raising strategy is to demonstrate these interlinkages to explain the value of investing resources in technology transfer and capacity building to enable affected countries to benefit from Israel’s expertise in dryland management.

Fundacion Agreste (Argentina) discussed how it allied with a famous football club, Boca Junior, to raise awareness of the need to care for land and its linkage to protecting water resources. Panama said information sharing can help and is feasible, but there is a need to implement effective communication strategies, and noted the country’s focus on raising awareness among youth through changing school curricula. Jordan agreed that a focus on young students is an effective strategy.

McKenzie asked delegates to delve deeper into what is needed to ensure effective messaging for different target groups, and the role of the media in this effort. Tunisia stressed the need for simpler messages. The Philippines emphasized the need for context-specific messages, highlighting his country’s success in linking land and soil issues to the notion of “seasonal aridity” through recurring cycles of flooding and drought. Mauritania noted the difficulty of quantifying the impact of outreach programmes. Concurring, Côte d’Ivoire noted that “affected communities do not need education on DLDD, what they need from us are effective responses.” He called for targeting messages at policymakers and development partners to ensure that they understand the real issues at the local level. Guinea Bissau emphasized that a key challenge in framing effective messages is how to communicate the interlinkages among different drivers of DLDD.

China outlined the timing and target audience of awareness programmes. On timing, she noted that campaigns conducted during the seasonal sandstorms in spring have ensured that the links between these phenomena and DLDD were clearly understood. On audiences, she highlighted continuous awareness raising through: primary and secondary school education; extension and capacity building programmes for affected communities; regular farmer exchanges for a deep understanding of shared problems; and annual training programmes for government officials.

Colombia outlined messages for key decision makers, including the need to explain the Convention’s goals to the general public and highlight the consequences of DLDD on food security and livelihoods. Ghana stressed continuous awareness raising and involving local authorities and traditional leaders.

Costa Rica called on the CRIC to revisit the concept of desertification, echoing views that it is difficult to communicate how it affects people’s lives and communities that are not directly affected. He called instead for a conceptual focus on land degradation as “loss of productivity.”

Stressing that desertification is a complex issue with no simple message, a CSO representative stressed the need to involve CSOs in a more systematic way, noting their expertise in

sharing best practices and engaging public attention, for instance through such slogans as “no soil no bread.”

Wrapping up the session, McKenzie commended delegates for their work, observing that “... you deserve a much larger and more engaged audience and I hope you will achieve this.”

ASSESSMENT OF ALIGNMENT OF ACTION PROGRAMMES AND THEIR IMPLEMENTATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE STRATEGY

On Monday afternoon, ICRC Chair Rowen invited the Committee to begin consideration of preliminary analysis of information contained in reports from affected and developed country parties, subregional and regional entities, and UN agencies and intergovernmental organizations, with a focus on NAP alignment.

The Secretariat introduced the three relevant documents: ICCD/CRIC(11)/3, on operational objectives 2 and 4 of the Strategy; ICCD/CRIC(11)/5, on operational objective 4 of the Strategy; and ICCD/CRIC(11)/6, on the alignment of action programmes and their implementation in accordance with the Strategy. Discussions focused on the latter document, which underscores the need for integrated financing strategies (IFS) and integrated investment frameworks (IIF) to ensure adequate, predictable and sustainable financing for sustainable land management (SLM).

Panel Discussion on “Crucial issues of alignment of National Action Programmes”: Introducing the panel topic, co-moderator Philbert Brown, NFP, Jamaica, invited delegates to reflect on the fundamental question of how to improve NAPs, with a focus on partnership building. Co-Moderator George Kafumu, NFP, Tanzania, presented key findings from the assessment of the alignment of NAPs and their implementation in accordance with the Strategy, including: slow progress in the process of aligning them with the Strategy due to data collection difficulties and skepticism about the benefits of alignment; weak institutional and human capacity; lack of policy prioritization and political leadership; lack of an overall strategic policy framework for aligning NAPs to budget processes; and insufficient financial resources. Opening the floor for discussions, he urged parties to focus on means to support alignment beyond this financing issue.

Peru explained how taking a more proactive approach to NAP alignment had contributed to a variety of partnerships and increased awareness among high-level policy makers that using SLM as an overall alignment framework enhances synergies with the other Rio conventions. South Africa expressed hope that his country will meet the 2014 NAP alignment deadline and stressed that success of its NAP implementation depends on the involvement of different organizations, including the private sector and civil society. Emphasizing that implementation cannot be left to the local level alone, he called for adequate and timely funding, noting also that “as governments change, so do their priorities.”

Honduras highlighted the multi-regional and multi-sectoral approach taken by his country with the support of GEF funding, and stressed the involvement of civil society, private business and academia in national workshops. Burkina Faso highlighted the importance of capacity building for government officials to implement a multi-sectoral approach. Outlining its experience with other environmental management processes, Ukraine stressed the need for a thorough stakeholder analysis to define priority areas and responsibilities of different partners.

Georgia suggested that the Secretariat could help develop regional consultations and analysis, noting the diversity of multiple NAPs as well as difficulties in infrastructure and financial resources in her region. Panama, supported by Argentina, called for more work on indicators to accommodate different baselines for degradation, highlighting his country’s experience in developing policy frameworks to provide incentives for financial institutions to promote SLM in their rural development portfolios. He noted, however, that the use of such economic instruments is not included in the Strategy.

On specific opportunities linked to the NAP alignment process, Jordan noted that working with the private sector, civil society and universities can help address weak human and institutional capacities. Argentina characterized NAP alignment as a learning process that is providing insights on how to break down institutional barriers and build better linkages with other stakeholders. Algeria said its alignment process, completed in 2011, had revealed the value of a bottom-up approach and the need for political commitment to bring this about.

Uganda said its NAP alignment process focuses on building ownership at the national level by developing an inter-ministerial cooperation framework. Lesotho emphasized the need to safeguard national development priorities during the alignment process. South Africa highlighted that its resource mobilization strategy has successfully led to the launch of a public-private partnership to fund DLDD programmes. Swaziland expressed concern that decisions taken at the next COP on modifying benchmarks for measuring progress might affect its alignment process, remarking that “we are running ahead of the car we’re supposed to be boarding.”

A CSO representative noted that alignment should take account of all existing national development strategies and called for partnerships with CSOs at an early stage, emphasizing that this will ensure that aligned NAPs are stronger, more effective, and more likely to be implemented. Turkey highlighted its collaboration with CSOs to raise public awareness on DLDD issues.

The EU welcomed the contribution of CSOs and research institutions in filling the data gap, noting the growing number of affected countries that have established a baseline of DLDD information as a promising sign, but stressing that the reported achievement of 38% global awareness may mask regional variations and methodological differences.

Co-moderator Brown requested the Secretariat to respond to questions raised by Brazil with regard to recommendations 64 (a) and (b) in ICCD/CRIC(11)/6, calling on the COP to review the NAP alignment process in the context of the mid-term evaluation of the Strategy and adjust it accordingly, and for the CRIC to agree “on a clear unequivocal definition of NAPs and IFS/IIF processes and their relationship.”

The Secretariat clarified that the recommendation to adjust NAPs aims to establish and tackle the underlying reasons for the low implementation rates, pointing out that only 11 countries, or 6.5% of the total 168 affected countries, have met the target of 80% NAP alignment by 2014.

Wrapping up the session, Brown summarized the session’s recommendations, stating that they included: involve CSOs in the capacity-building process; involve the private sector in the NAP process; adopt a multi-faceted, multi-sectoral approach;

reinforce the bottom-up approach; analyze the timing of financial support and mobilize more financial support to meet the 2014 target; and establish a monitoring system.

Interactive Panel Discussion on “Constraints and opportunities for the implementation of DLDD national monitoring systems”: On Thursday afternoon, the Secretariat introduced documents containing the preliminary analysis of information on operational objective 3 of the Strategy relating to science, technology and knowledge submitted by parties and other reporting entities (ICCD/CRIC(11)/7 and ICCD/CRIC(11)/4), and the glossary for performance and impact indicators, financial flows and best practices (ICCD/CRIC(11)/INF.3). She said the documents: provide updates on the five relevant performance indicators from the global, regional and subregional perspectives; identify possible trends towards reaching the targets set for these indicators; and offer recommendations for consideration by the CRIC on the need to adjust, streamline and strengthen measures aimed at achieving this objective.

Introducing the session, moderator Asghar Fazel, UN Environment Programme (UNEP), asked parties to address preliminary recommendations calling on both affected country parties to increase their efforts in establishing DLDD-specific national monitoring systems and for developed country parties to provide additional support towards that end.

Adamou Bouhari, UNEP, reported on the GEF-supported pilot project on Integrated Processes and Approaches to Facilitate National Reporting to Rio conventions in Afghanistan, Eritrea, Laos PDR, Liberia, Mauritius and Palau. He said the project has highlighted the need for capacity building in: coordinating NFPs; sharing data and knowledge; improving mechanisms for collecting and disseminating data; and coordinating large numbers of stakeholders and agencies. He recommended: gathering more experiences and scaling up testing of methodologies; mobilizing more resources and partners to support integrated approaches; and providing incentives for champions and volunteers. He explained that requesting guidance and approval for integrated approaches by the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) would, however, require a specific mandate by UNFCCC parties. Bouhari said the UNEP project identified overlaps in reporting templates for the three conventions that could result in about 25% reduction in reporting effort.

At the invitation of moderator Fazel, France reported that it supported 11 monitoring systems at the regional and subregional levels in Africa partially dedicated to DLDD during 2010-2011, and suggested ways to improve monitoring systems that include: supporting monitoring systems dedicated to several objectives, not just DLDD; encouraging regional cooperation; and promoting institutional appropriation by countries of subregional systems.

Germany outlined some lessons from 20 years of supporting monitoring system in 20 countries, highlighting that, *inter alia*: donors often underestimate the challenges inherent in monitoring DLDD; monitoring should be undertaken by credible and independent institutions; global reporting can sometimes be more efficiently organized at regional or subregional levels; it is not always necessary to aggregate data at all levels in order to meet the identified needs; and donors should harmonize their interventions. She concluded that investing in environmental monitoring systems is worthwhile, if done right.

Turkey suggested budgets might be better spent actually combating desertification on the ground than in monitoring. Morocco stressed the importance of geospatial mapping of key ecosystems as a way to better target interventions, rather than a focus on national aggregated data. Peru expressed interest in possible regional or subregional monitoring systems in Latin America.

ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION AGAINST THE PROVISIONALLY ADOPTED IMPACT INDICATORS

On Tuesday morning, 16 April, the Secretariat introduced document ICCD/CRIC(11)8-ICCD/CST(S-3)/6, which presents the results of the preliminary analysis of general information on affected areas, rural areas and human population estimates, and analyzes the state of affairs with regard to two mandatory impact indicators: proportion of population living below the poverty line and land cover status. The Secretariat noted that a total of 71 countries, 42% of all affected country parties, provided information on impact indicators, enabling a first set of baseline data to be derived, but observed that due to insufficient quantitative information, the coverage and comparability of the data was not sufficient.

Following the Secretariat’s introduction of document ICCD/CRIC(11)/9, containing input from the CST relating to the review of scientific information for strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the Strategy, CRIC Chair Rowen invited CST Chair Antônio Rocha Magalhães to make a statement regarding the annex to the document (ICCD/CST(S-3)/L.3), which contains a compilation of ideas, suggestions and proposals offered by various delegations during CST S-3 for consideration by CRIC delegates. Magalhães outlined the CST’s efforts to improve reporting templates and bridge the reporting gap, noting that the CST had also made recommendations related to the lack of a common definition and criteria for delineating areas affected by DLDD.

PANEL DISCUSSION ON “OPERATIONALLY DELINEATING AFFECTED AREAS”: CRIC Chair Rowen invited Michael Cherlet, Joint Research Centre and Coordinator of the World Atlas of Desertification, to facilitate a panel discussion on scientific input to the CRIC.

Introduction of AGTE Report on “Operationally Delineating Affected Areas”: Matthias Magunda, AGTE, presented the preliminary recommendations of the Group on how to operationally delineate affected areas, highlighting four main categories: “potentially affected,” where desertification is possible but SLM strategies are sufficient; “at risk (of being affected),” where a concentration of desertification drivers has been detected or with high drought incidence or concentration of socio-economic drivers, requiring prevention measures to increase options and deactivate drivers; “(actually) affected” areas, where growing evidence of land degradation can be reported and drivers of desertification are active, requiring explicit adaptation to remove drivers and implement land rehabilitation; and “inherited (desertification),” where desertification drivers have disappeared and land rehabilitation or restoration is only necessary in those areas where natural recovery is impossible or too slow.

Noting that observations can be undertaken directly through surveys and mapping techniques, or through proxy indicators, all of which have advantages and disadvantages, Magunda presented a three-layered approach for developing a set of

integrative indicators that limit the use of progress indicators as much as possible to facilitate reporting. He described the first layer as climatic drivers that provide the basis for delineating affected areas, proposing the use of the widely used Aridity Index as the best candidate to define the dryland area within the UNCCD-accepted limits of potential desertification. In the second layer, Magunda highlighted socio-economic drivers that describe human pressure on the land, citing data on rural population trends as a key source for an integrative indicator for this layer. Regarding the third layer, which he described as the “innermost core where land degradation and its local factors should be assessed,” he recommended combining the latest geostatistical tools, such as the World Atlas of Desertification or Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA), with “storylines” of sample hotspots/coldspots that are built up from field information.

During the discussion, India highlighted its use of composite indices, while Bhutan wondered whether adopting the new indicators would require “imposing” these layers on existing survey processes and the implications for countries’ implementing capacity. Togo said that as the main driver for desertification, land use was not explicitly mentioned in the AGTE recommendation.

Responding to the issues raised by delegates, Magunda reiterated that the AGTE proposals were preliminary ideas at this stage and called for feedback from parties for further improvement.

Presenting a country experience, Mohamed Ghanam, Morocco, discussed how his country adapted the MEDALUS method to build vulnerability maps for eight zones to identify needed preventive measures, and the selection of zone observatories. Responding to questions, Ghanam said: the periodicity for renewing measurements varies, but allows for a complete evaluation every four years; and Morocco used two pilot sites, both in priority zones with land use problems. Tunisia, noting it also uses the MEDALUS method, cautioned sensitivity maps indicate what might happen, not what is happening, urged that poverty levels be integrated into parameters, and stressed that some factors require longer-term measurement beyond 2-4 years.

In his presentation, Muhammad Khalid Siddiq, Ministry of Climate Change, Pakistan, explained several criteria used to delineate affected areas in Pakistan, and described national and provincial institutional arrangements established for data collection. Noting that several other projects had to be cut down to mobilize finance, he shared other challenges, including: repetition and redundancy of data; data compatibility; inappropriate technology; data sharing; data standardization; lack of coordination; and capacity building and funding issues.

General Discussion: Moderator Cherlet then invited country parties to share concrete experiences and recommendations for improving the impact indicators.

Jordan lamented the lack of technical assistance from technical agencies at regional and subregional levels, describing it as a major barrier to building sufficient monitoring capacity. Pakistan stressed the need for predictable funding from the GEF and other international partners.

Switzerland reiterated his concern about technical access problems to PRAIS, stressing that it is “excessively complicated and time consuming” and remarking that to do the reporting correctly one needs to delegate “at least two experienced persons

for several months to do the job.” Noting that the AGTE only looked into two compulsory indicators, he called for, with Mexico, a mandatory indicator on soil organic carbon (SOC) content, emphasizing that SOC is considered to be the best stand-alone indicator for soil quality and a key factor of terrestrial ecosystem resilience.

Morocco mentioned it had partly addressed its “capacity” deficit by creating a multidisciplinary team of technical experts to help set up a national database as part of the PRAIS reporting process.

The EU stressed the need for improving data coverage and comparability by integrating the AGTE’s work on impact indicator refinement with nationally generated data and assessments. He stressed the need to address the significant remaining challenges in reporting at both CST S-3 and CRIC 11, including insufficient capacity, funding delays, complexity of the reporting template and a lack of common definitions.

Mexico called for continued incorporation of improved indicator information in PRAIS, noting it is using satellite imagery to compile additional data. He also noted the need for additional indicators to link DLDD with deterioration of related indicators such as water scarcity, and increased soil and water salinity. While welcoming efforts to delineate affected areas, the US expressed concern that the complexity of the AGTE’s conclusions might “discourage and delay” implementation, rather than promote and accelerate action. He suggested asking two core questions when assessing what information is necessary to act: “do we need to classify drylands as affected and non-affected in order to report?” and “do we need to subdivide drylands to act?” He recommended considering the possibility of simply acknowledging that all drylands are threatened by current and future human activities, to turn the focus on developing, implementing and monitoring the impact of actions to combat desertification.

In other contributions: Algeria supported calls for a simpler reporting template; Iran highlighted the importance of a strong institutional framework at national and higher levels to address socio-economic drivers; Ukraine called for more space to be given to the use of national indicators that are managed by existing data frameworks, stressing that new data systems are “expensive, time consuming and may not deliver better data”; and Peru said inclusion of PRAIS indicators during the first reporting rounds has yielded encouraging results, and called for PRAIS to reflect data at the district level during the third reporting round.

Swaziland stressed the need for more work on classification, definition of terms, adoption of a minimum set of indicators, and greater financial and technical support for capacity building. Brazil said indicators should align with each country’s realities, and lamented that UNCCD reporting currently does not allow for the useful social indicators that Brazil has developed. Italy stressed the importance of carbon soil data. Honduras described its use of open data sources. Argentina described how it uses preparations for its national observatory to design, develop and harmonize methodologies for national indicators. Niger noted problems it has had in collecting data, making it accessible and harmonizing its indicators. Azerbaijan noted that the poverty indicator does not represent its poor since, as an oil and gas exporter, Azerbaijan has a high GDP per capita figure but the poor have income nowhere near as high. He also noted the difficulty in generating soil data since the existing

data is based on the old Soviet system and is not compatible with the rest of the world. China suggested having a clearer and more simplified method for preparing national reports. Guinea raised its difficulties in getting reliable and up-to-date data, and complained that its national report was not accepted by PRAIS simply because it was two hours late. A CSO representative called on parties to consider the possibility of giving up PRAIS and adopting simplified biennial country reporting, using the cost savings for training and implementing projects.

Interactive Panel Discussion on “Translating impact monitoring into action”: On Tuesday afternoon, CRIC Chair Rowen invited Chencho Norbu, Bhutan to moderate this interactive session.

Barron Orr, University of Arizona, US, emphasized the potential of participatory approaches to monitoring and evaluation and provided examples of tools and methods used around the world. He stressed the need for inclusion of local relevant information, but noted challenges of integrating information from local to global levels, including: the variation across local land degradation and local solutions; engaging and ensuring representation of all stakeholders; scaling up; and harmonizing and combining potential different indicators. He suggested employing multi-stakeholder platform (MSP), chain referral and cross-scale monitoring as methods and potential solutions. Responding to questions by Tunisia and Tanzania on stakeholder harmonization and participation, Orr stressed that multiple stakeholders must be engaged at the same time, suggested using multi-criteria analysis to determine differences among them, and explained expert input can be combined with local participation, adding to existing approaches.

Wilfredo Alfaro, NFP, Chile, shared his experiences with linking impact monitoring with planning and implementation in its NAP alignment process. Emphasizing limited investment instruments compared to climate change issues, he underlined that “in Chile, it would be impossible to have a monitoring system without partnerships and international cooperation,” such as through support from the World Bank and UNEP. He stressed the need to harmonize data and noted employing a PRAIS system remains one problem area where data entry and output still need improvement. Responding to a question from Panama, he explained that, in identifying priority areas, Chile includes several agriculture-related indicators, including concentration of smallholdings, stocking rates and status of the degradation of the land cover. Responding to a question by a CSO representative, he described how Chile involves people affected by desertification by making resources available to stakeholders and by employing extension officers, who work in affected areas and reach affected people.

Sakhile Koketso, Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Secretariat, presented lessons learned from the CBD experience in setting the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, underscoring that setting targets and indicators was a 15-year process and refinement is still ongoing, and the CBD COP has asked the Executive Secretary and the Biodiversity Indicators Partnership to, *inter alia*, provide technical guidance materials, provide capacity building, further develop global indicators to fill gaps, and promote further harmonization of global indicators.

In response to delegates’ questions, panel members said: Aichi targets 5, 11 and 15 offer the best opportunities for synergies with UNCCD indicators; countries without baseline data can set targets based on what they know, refining the target

as the data evolve; despite its long struggles to set targets and indicators, CBD has attracted funding in part because it has linked biodiversity protection with improved human wellbeing; bringing the three Rio conventions together usually bears fruit and should be encouraged at all scales; SLM concerns should be integrated into National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs).

During the discussion, Lesotho noted the similarities and complementarities between NBSAPs and NAPs, and, with the Philippines, pointed out that funds for CBD projects can be used to progress SLM aims.

Moderator Norbu asked each panelist for “take home messages.” Koketso urged emphasizing synergies and integrating SLM concerns in NBSAPs. Alfaro urged following the CBD example and seeking to establish global targets in the UNCCD, and cautioned against losing the UNCCD’s identity in the pursuit of synergies. Orr urged planning, at local levels, monitoring and evaluation requirements.

Closing the session, Norbu remarked that, while current levels of reporting may not be impressive, things have changed in tangible ways that may not be obvious or reflected in the reporting. He said the Strategy and preparation of NAPs have brought major stakeholders together, identified gaps and needs and changed awareness about DLDD.

INPUT FROM THE CST ON HOW BEST TO MEASURE PROGRESS MADE WITH REGARD TO STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES 1, 2 AND 3 OF THE STRATEGY

On Tuesday afternoon, CRIC Chair Rowen invited delegates to begin their consideration of agenda item 9, regarding input from the CST on assessing progress made in refining the impact indicators for strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3. The Secretariat introduced the preliminary recommendations of the AGTE on impact indicator refinement and proposed refinements to the minimum set of provisionally adopted impact indicators for strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 from the Strategy (document ICCD/CRIC(11)/14).

CST Chair Antônio Rocha Magalhães informed parties that, in line with decision 17/COP.9, the CST has been working on the refinement of the indicators using an iterative process. He explained this process has been brought forward by the AGTE, which by decision 19/COP.10 was tasked with continuing the iterative participatory contribution from the scientific community, NFPs and science and technology correspondents (STCs) on impact indicator refinement and the monitoring and assessment of impacts. He reported that CST S-3 took note of the progress report and that a complete version of the AGTE preliminary recommendations was submitted to all NFPs and STCs by the UNCCD Secretariat at the beginning of April 2013 for their review. He reminded that parties were encouraged to provide their comments to the AGTE on these recommendations by 5 May 2013.

In the subsequent discussion, the US stressed the need to shift the focus from data acquisition to data interpretation and the compilation of knowledge that can be used to support actions right now. He proposed: using globally existing data and indicator sources such as the Atlas and the work presented by ISRIC - World Soil Information; making these indicators available to all through pre-populated PRAIS forms for the core indicators; and understanding them as “default indicators” that parties could accept, reject or replace with locally generated

indicators based on their own data sources. He suggested that a party would then interpret the implications of whichever indicators it opts to use for progress on and modifications to its NAP. He also highlighted the benefits of such an approach, including: reducing reporting costs; increasing the number of countries reporting; facilitating standardization; placing emphasis on the capacity to interpret and use available data rather than generate data; and supporting locally generated indicators, as proposed by the AGTE, Brazil and other countries, without requiring the Convention to wait for these to be generated.

Italy underlined the need to improve indicator “representativity” for the situation of developed affected countries, suggesting elaborating on an *ad hoc* pathway for both affected and developed countries that takes into account: human, scientific and financial resource availability; access opportunity; and economic impacts of desertification on quality of life. She suggested improving guidelines and using appropriate and well-recognized systems for land cover data.

REVIEW OF FINANCIAL FLOWS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

On Wednesday morning, CRIC Chair Rowen opened consideration of this item, noting parties would review preliminary analysis relating to: strategic objective 4 on partnerships between national and international actors; operational objective 5 on financing and technology transfer; and financial flows for the implementation of the Convention.

Simone Quatrini, GM, introduced a joint note from the Secretariat and GM synthesizing documents ICCD/CRIC(11)/10 and ICCD/CRIC(11)/11 and ICCD/CRIC(11)/12. He noted that the three documents: provide an overview of resource mobilization globally, with updates on the five relevant performance indicators from the global, regional and subregional perspectives; identify possible trends towards reaching the targets set for these indicators; and offer some recommendations for CRIC on the need to adjust, streamline and strengthen measures. Quatrini further noted that considerations regarding the reporting process, including possible refinement in the set of impact indicators and associated methodologies, are included in document ICCD/CRIC(11)/15 feeding the iterative process.

Panel Discussion on “Current UNCCD funding flows and future prospects”: Introducing this panel, moderator Harald Heubaum, University of London, remarked that “whether there are deserts in your country or not – we all have skin in the game.” Noting the dearth of private-public partnerships, he asked panelists to focus on ways to attract finance and investment.

Yao Bernard Koffi, Côte d’Ivoire, discussed resource mobilization in the African Region, noting dissatisfaction arising from: insufficient financing from multilateral sources; the absence of reports from international entities other than the GEF; a sharp reduction of bilateral funding sources; and little transfer of technology. He emphasized that observed positive performance indicators were linked to an increase in funding and technical support from various institutions including the GM, noting establishment of 23 investment frameworks in the reporting period.

Jia Xiaoxia, State Forestry Administration, China, described institutional arrangements and financial mechanisms to combat DLDD, with the bulk of funding coming from the central government, with some co-financing from provincial and local

governments. She also outlined some of the payments made to farmers and pastoralists, and policies and programmes to engage the private sector.

Luis Estuardo Rios González, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, Guatemala, presented a preliminary analysis of financial flows to Latin America and the Caribbean, emphasizing that these have dropped drastically, resulting in fewer proposed projects. He noted the difficulty of accessing GEF funds in the region and, as a result, 66% of UNCCD projects are funded through domestic sources. He added that Guatemala is bridging the funding gap by forging synergies with other GEF programme areas, such as biodiversity.

Reporting on financial trends in the Northern Mediterranean region, Anna Luise, Ministry of Environment, Italy, noted that only four affected countries had submitted reports, with a decrease in the number of submitted projects and levels of funding for the region as a whole. She speculated that this was due to the perceived reporting burden, stressing there are more projects on the ground than reported, most of which are targeted at strategic objectives 1 and 2, with a focus on forest scrub management, water conservation, forestry, and emergency responses. She further noted opportunities to enhance synergies with CBD and UNFCCC initiatives.

Vesna Indova, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, presented a preliminary analysis from the Central and Eastern European region. She reported that only four countries had submitted reports during this cycle, which also saw a sharp decrease in total domestic financial allocations as well as official development assistance (ODA) flows. She attributed the latter to non-reporting by key developed country partners during this round. At the same time, she highlighted the high level of satisfaction in the region regarding international institutional arrangements for the Convention.

Mohamed Bakarr, GEF, reminded parties that preparations for the upcoming comprehensive report for COP 11 are underway. He welcomed the high response to the 5th GEF replenishment and reported that the GEF has established innovative strategic partnerships with countries, notably China, but also many African countries, and is currently restructuring partnership modalities for the Latin America and Caribbean region that will be reflected in the next reporting cycle.

Responding to the panel presentations, Pakistan called for deeper reflection on the reasons for poor reporting by some affected countries and reporting entities, as it is undermining implementation, suggesting the lack of “compulsion” to submit reports, limited funding and low prioritization by the GEF as possible reasons.

Argentina, on behalf of GRULAC, explained that activities in her region have been affected by the lack of adequate, predictable and timely finance. She linked this to the prevailing uncertainty around the future of the GM and called for conclusion of this issue at COP 11 to ensure a fully operational GM as soon as possible. She suggested that the CRIC make a recommendation calling on the Secretariat and the GEF to facilitate and streamline the process to access resources.

In response, Bakarr urged more parties than the 92 that have already requested GEF assistance to seek funds using one of the modalities the GEF has presented

The EU emphasized that further reporting is required to confirm initially encouraging trends, calling for further work to: create an enabling environment for investments at the local level; promote economic and financial incentives together with policy and legal incentives; make progress in the establishment of IFS by countries; and better define and harmonize the impact indicators. He regretted the poor representation of multilateral funding institutions at the meeting.

Interactive discussion: India suggested that securing better data, especially data linking desertification with poverty, could help policymakers target where best to spend funds. Swaziland suggested that GEF funds go to countries with the technical capacity to speedily prepare proposals and programmes. China noted it provides training on SLM policies and technologies to African countries. Noting that UNCCD NFPs are the only ones among the Rio conventions not currently funded by GEF, Thailand said addressing this gap can contribute to more effective use of resources. South Africa, echoing Tunisia, Libya and others, stressed that adequate funding is critical for realizing the goals of the Strategy.

On the role of the private sector, Jordan highlighted opportunities through public-private partnerships. China explained that a core role of government is to mobilize all stakeholders to invest in SLM by exploring win-win solutions that provide economic incentives for both enterprises and farmers. She mentioned tax policies as one tool available to governments, adding that to encourage investment in restoration of degraded land, the government provides longer land use permissions for private companies in such areas. Quatrini said the GM has in place tools and approaches to help engage the private sector in SLM work, and noted that operational objective 5 actually requires governments to explore financing partnerships. Burkina Faso proposed that the next COP include an interactive session with the private sector to understand the constraints they face. Cuba stressed that the focus on partnerships needs to look beyond the private sector.

With regard to enhancing effectiveness on the ground, China outlined how all provincial and local governments are required to include DLDD activities in their five-year development plans, and heads of local governments are evaluated against targets and indicators. Samoa reported it was one of the few countries to have devoted all its GEF funding to SLM, noting this was possible because it has combined all projects under a multifocal programming approach that was initially implemented in 26 project sites but is to be scaled up to more areas.

Addressing the role of UNCCD bodies in supporting reporting efforts, India said the CRIC should call on multilateral development banks to submit reports. Morocco proposed a country-to-country information system to allow countries to identify collaboration opportunities. Colombia called for a greater focus on standardization of data and capacity building in assessment and reporting methodologies, but wondered what the repercussions would be for future reviews, remarking: "will we have to back pedal and reassess the information received so far?" Underscoring the importance of reliable data for scaling up promising local actions, Peru urged the Convention bodies to review existing processes as "we are having a hard time."

Supporting these views, Costa Rica remarked that this Convention is "in need of major surgery" and, with South Africa, China, and others, called for arrangements to provide more funding for restorative activities, including capacity building on

impact indicators, under the 6th GEF replenishment. Ukraine suggested that since multilateral partners and bilateral donors also have to report their funding of programmes and projects, immediate publication of such information on the GEF website could facilitate countries' data collection, avoid duplication and expedite reporting.

Responding to the issues raised, UNEP stressed that a key lesson is the need to align UNCCD reporting processes with the GEF funding cycle, while Bakarr encouraged NFPs to work more closely with GEF focal points to "better understand our processes." Quatrini highlighted the GM is building on lessons learned to develop a two-pronged "second generation" partnership approach that includes capacity building for national stakeholders as well as initiatives to increase and diversify funding sources, including through enhanced synergies with the other Rio conventions. He highlighted the role of the Economics of Land Degradation initiative in making a compelling case for funding agencies as well as governments to invest in DLDD activities.

INCLUSION OF ACTIVITIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS WITHIN THE OFFICIAL PROGRAMME OF WORK OF THE CRIC: OPEN DIALOGUE SESSION

On Wednesday afternoon, Chair Rowen invited the Committee to begin its consideration of CSOs' role in the mobilization of financial resources. UNCCD Executive Secretary Luc Gnacadja pointed out that the UNCCD is the only multilateral environmental agreement that devotes special sessions to facilitate interactions with CSOs and urged parties to boost their voluntary contributions to the special trust fund to facilitate participation of eligible CSO representatives.

Panel discussions on the role of Civil Society Organizations in the mobilization of financial resources to support implementation of the UNCCD, Segment I - The National

Level: Introducing the session, moderator Patrice Burger, Centre d'Action et de Réalisation Internationales (CARI), France, said the session would present the issue of resource mobilization from the broadest possible perspective, highlighting not only the means of implementation for the Convention but the human, time, technical and knowledge needed to do actual work on the ground

Griselda Marrero, Fundación Agreste, Argentina, described how the foundation mobilizes tools that can help access funds, such as mobilizing volunteers for project work, conducting direct fundraising campaigns and awareness-raising events, and forging strategic partnerships. She also discussed the foundation's efforts to engage enterprises in DLDD work projects as part of their corporate social responsibility activities.

Nahideh Naghizadeh, Centre for Sustainable Development (CENESTA), Iran, discussed how CENESTA has worked with indigenous communities to organize indigenous community conservation areas (ICCAs), with their own objectives and action plans, to create sustainable livelihoods while conserving lands, and help them get recognized by the central government.

Jacqueline N'koyok, Confédération des ONG d'environnement et de développement de l'Afrique Centrale (CONGAC), Cameroon, described how the confederation works with international NGOs to mobilize co-financing as well as support in managing support funds, lamenting that this sometimes means aligning with the international NGOs' programmes of action rather than local priorities.

Ines Chaalala, GM, explained GM's integrated financing strategy, promoting SLM projects that address desertification and land degradation through the integration of SLM into national investment plans. She noted variety among instruments, based on public and private financing and originating from sources at both the national and international levels. She described CSOs as fundamental partners and centers of technical and local knowledge that are important for: planning and decentralization; capacity building in local authorities; resource mobilization; effective implementation on the ground; and efficient integrative processes building bridges with national ministries.

In response to a US inquiry, Marrero said there is no magic formula for engaging the private sector, each corporation is different, that the key is dialoguing with them to find out what they need and how the two can work together, many times in cooperation with a local government.

Iran noted that CENESTA's work on establishing ICCAs involves promoting synergies between biodiversity and SLM. Naghizadeh added that CENESTA works directly with local communities to build their capacity to raise fund by themselves.

During discussions, in response to Chad's remark that the GM should help build capacity among CSOs in Central Africa, N'koyok said CONGAC is appealing to parties and financial institutions to build national funds reserved for community-based CSOs. In response to a request from Burger, Brazil described how its national commission on desertification brings together several stakeholders, implements actions and engages in political dialogues, noting it has enabled CSOs to access national environmental funds that were originally instituted for and previously accessible only to government agencies. She expressed regret that due to "miscommunication with the Secretariat and lack of financial support," Brazil's representative from a CSO network of over 2000 affiliates could not attend this meeting.

Several parties acknowledged the importance of engaging CSOs in national plans and activities to combat DLDD. With regard to the GM's role in building CSO capacity, N'koyok emphasized that providing in-kind support—such as support for watershed protection and marketing—is more effective than cash funding.

Segment II – The International Level: Moderator Tanveer Arif, SCOPE, noted the decline in accredited NGOs at the UNCCD, the lack of current active participation in UNCCD work by large NGOs such as Greenpeace, and the limitation on NGO participation in GEF funding under the Small Grants Programme and, in some cases, medium-sized projects.

Stéphanie Faure, CARI, described how her group has worked with French ministries and the French Development Agency to ensure stable and long-term funding of its work, CARI's co-financing efforts, a French fund to support community projects in arid zones, and CARI help in creating a regional network that finds funding for specific projects. She said CARI's experience shows that most donors want to support projects on the ground, rather than network activities, even though the latter help projects on the ground.

Emmanuel Seck, ENDA Tiers Monde, noted his network was one of the first to promote synergies between the Rio conventions, and that it also works to integrate desertification issues into national development plans. He said that much has been done on the ground but is not being shared at the international level. He urged partnering with others to: stabilize

financing; develop more medium-sized projects that CSOs can become involved in; and improve the knowledge of CSOs on where to find financing. "Finance is becoming more and more difficult to catch like water in the desert," he commented.

Elena Bivol, NGO Bios, shared her experiences from Moldova and listed requirements NGOs must meet to access project funds, including: possessing a good structure, a responsible board and public relations skills; providing transparency and capacity building; and practicing participatory approaches.

Mohamed Bakarr, GEF, noted the GEF's aim to broaden the engagement of CSOs. He observed that CSO networks are dominated by the biological diversity and climate change community and there is need to boost expertise in natural resource management. He explained that while NGOs are not eligible for direct funding they can nevertheless access GEF funds through their governments and partnerships with agencies. He further encouraged NGOs to illustrate their competitive advantage and commitment to a project, especially at the grassroots level. He also stressed the GEF's flexibility to allow countries to choose funds for multiple or in single focal point areas.

A CSO representative lamented that the Central African region faces huge problems of land degradation, which are exacerbated by uncontrolled activities of multinational corporations (MNCs) in the region, and called for enhanced GEF support in this regard. Côte d'Ivoire called on developed country parties to ensure that their MNCs adhere to corporate social responsibility principles, suggesting that this could include contributing to SLM initiatives in their areas of operation.

In the ensuing discussion, Peru explained how it met its targets through institutionalizing CSO participation. Recognizing the qualities of CSOs, many delegates stressed the need to explore what and how the Convention can support CSOs on the ground.

Expressing concern about the impact of decisions 5/COP.10 and 5/COP.9, which reduced participation in the selection panel to accredited CSOs from affected country countries, the EU proposed including a reference to "regional groups" to the next COP decision on CSO involvement. Switzerland noted that donors often overlook the efficiency of policy work done through CSOs at the international and national levels.

CONSIDERATION OF BEST PRACTICES

The Secretariat introduced its notes on accessibility of information on best practices (ICCD/CRIC(11)/13 and (ICCD/CRIC(11)/13/Add.1), explaining that they respond to decisions 15/COP.10 and 13/COP.9, which called for future CRIC sessions to review the accessibility of information on best practices, and to identify recommended databases for SLM best practices with a view to transferring those stored in the PRAIS portal to the recommended database. He informed delegates that the addendum contains a roster of institutions and organizations interested in supporting the CRIC in the compilation and dissemination of best practices.

Panel Discussions on "Is information on best practices really accessible?" Segment I – Identification of

Recommended Databases of Best Practices: Introducing the session, moderator Sally Bunning, UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), noted that a call for expressions of interest was opened from 21 November 2012 to 30 January 2013 to identify organizations interested in supporting the CRIC in

the compilation and dissemination of best practices on SLM technologies, including adaptation, and on funding and resource mobilization. She explained that the five institutions participating in the panel had met the selection criteria in the call for expressions of interest.

Emmanuel Seck, ENDA Tiers Monde, described ENDA's work in collecting and disseminating best practices on such topics as agriculture, biodiversity conservation, water and sanitation, and medicinal plants.

Pietro Laureano, IPOGEA, described his group's work with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to serve as an international center for documenting traditional knowledge, collecting and organizing it in a user-friendly manner. He said IPOGEA proposes building a global database on SLM best practice using a wiki-like system, so that local people can contribute directly in building it and in the process contributing to the broader diffusion of local knowledge.

Hervé Trebossen, Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS), described how the North-South-South platform works within the 2020 Strategy to emphasize synergies among the Rio conventions. He discussed the OSS knowledge base on land and water management practices that has generated more than 400 online publications, and its training of more than 800 scientists and experts on best practices for water and soil conservation.

Adamou Bouhari, UNEP, highlighted the organization's experiences in best practices: data management is crucial for awareness raising and decision making; organic agriculture in developing countries links best practices with food security; a new resource center supports humanitarian actors to take environmental factors into account; and the UN Global Compact aims at getting businesses to align their activities with best practices relating to labor, environment and anti-corruption.

Hanspeter Liniger, World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), highlighted WOCAT's contribution to dissemination of good SLM practices through developing standardized tools and methods and a global knowledge base. He noted that in addition to published reports, the database contains a variety of technologies and approaches already in use, including 470 SLM technologies; 230 approaches from 50 countries; a Google Earth application; and maps from 20 countries.

In the ensuing discussions, Tajikistan called for the PRAIS portal to be made more accessible to a broader audience. Switzerland asked for discussion on the six criteria that were used in the call for expressions of interest for disseminating best practices, explaining this would enable UNCCD NFPs to evaluate the applicant agencies. The Philippines called for improvement of existing systems but cautioned against reinventing the wheel. China reported it had benefited from utilizing the approach used by WOCAT and LADA in its screening and compiling of good practices. She praised WOCAT for providing good technology and also showing the links to policy recommendations so as to apply best practices on a larger scale. South Africa expressed concern about institutional fragmentation. Uganda asked for information on SLM and renewable energies activities.

Responding to delegates' questions, Liniger agreed there is no single "silver bullet solution," that all SLM best practices have to be adapted to specific environments, so WOCAT instead tries to provide a many different options selected through criteria set by the user. On translating its best practices database into all

UN languages, Liniger explained WOCAT currently works in three official languages and receives contributions in seven other languages.

In other interventions, Israel proposed a follow-up mechanism to see what items in the database have been accessed, how and by whom, and what results were achieved by using the best practice. Jordan and Italy urged striking a balance in the database between traditional knowledge and new technologies. Tanzania called for reviewing SLM best practices to ensure they account for climate change. The US proposed that the CRIC recommend that the UNCCD request the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) to review strategies for ensuring best practices can be matched with land potential and local capacities at appropriate scales based on local and scientific knowledge.

Segment II – Policy Framework for Data Access:

Introducing the session, co-moderator Amy Heyman, FAO, welcomed the focus on how to make data and information submitted by parties accessible to the wider public; and how the CRIC and the CST can promote the analysis and dissemination of best practices.

Noting the absence of a formal policy, Sakhile Koketso, CBD Secretariat, shared CBD's data access approach that involves: following UN rules; refraining from publishing anything with a copyright; only publishing public information; exploring the use of works under creative and conservation commons; and indicating sources. She also explained that the CBD passes on private information such as national reports or information documents as submitted and noted the information owner's responsibility for all aspects of data management, including monitoring and updating.

Sergey Kononov, UNFCCC Secretariat, illustrated how the Convention applies data access principles, explaining that because UNFCCC data is used both for reporting and for review, and because UNFCCC reporting requirements are complex, clarity is important to parties and to the public in general, as is updating the latest scientific guidance of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). He noted that UNFCCC respects confidentiality with certain tools; provides comprehensive data as submitted in live data form; stores information in its data warehouse; includes extensive numerical information in a standard data management system; and provides an online guide and query system to allow people to access the information they want.

During the interactive session, Co-Moderator Fabio Grita, FAO, highlighted elements to consider in a policy framework for data access including: objectives of data access are recognized; data to be shared is clearly identified; information is reliable; the repository of the information is known; the data access is public; and the data access policy is applied gradually. Jordan, with Pakistan, stressed data accuracy.

Zimbabwe voiced concern about protecting the intellectual property rights of the communities providing traditional knowledge. The UNCCD Secretariat explained that only accredited reporting officers can upload best practice case studies, and they are asked if the information submitted is copyrighted and if so, they must provide information on who holds the copyright.

Honduras asked about the feasibility of creating a common database among the Rio conventions. Koketso said it was possible and noted the CBD COP had requested common

databases with UNFCCC. Kononov cautioned that in practice a common database would be complicated, with questions about who manages the system, which COPs control its contents, who pays for it, and how to keep track of where data originated and which data has been validated.

The EU urged consideration of the World Bank's Open Data Initiative as a possible model for PRAIS.

IMPROVING THE PROCEDURES FOR COMMUNICATION OF INFORMATION AS WELL AS THE QUALITY AND FORMATS OF REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

The UNCCD Secretariat summarized the preliminary analysis of the feedback that reporting entities provided on performance and impact indicators as the basis for the iterative process requested by the COP in decision 13/COP.9 (ICCD/CRIC(11)/15).

Argentina, on behalf of GRULAC, and supported by Japan, Jordan, Lesotho, Iran and India, called for consideration of its proposal, calling for: refining and improving the quality of PRAIS; sharing successes and failures in analysis; reviewing and enhancing the template, tools and indicators; and recommending that the CST refine methodologies and provide enabling guidance to parties. Thailand, supported by Brazil, called for extending the reporting period. Ukraine, supported by India, Brazil and Columbia, suggested transforming reports to allow their utilization for national awareness raising and engagement. A CSO representative noted the need to advise parties on effective awareness-raising strategies. Eritrea asked the Secretariat to prepare for COP 11 a reflection on how PRAIS helps reporting countries. Noting convergence between US and GRULAC proposals on the need to use globally available data as default indicators, the US supported proposals to include photos and additional narrative and supplementary indicators, despite the technical challenges entailed in doing so.

In response, the Secretariat explained that on-going revisions to the template and format aim to meet parties' expectations and acknowledged the value of multi-purpose reports. He noted that the COP could assign the task of changing indicators to AGTE. Bhutan encouraged parties to help each other to move the focus from process to substance.

PROMOTION AND STRENGTHENING OF RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER RELEVANT CONVENTIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, INSTITUTIONS AND AGENCIES

On Friday morning, the Secretariat introduced: its proposed standard approach and process for the formulation of an APF (ICCD/CRIC (11)/16); a draft APF on the thematic issue of drought, including water scarcity (ICCD/CRIC(11)/17); and a complementary note containing additional information on issues that may require an additional APF (ICCD/CRIC(11)/CRP.1). The Secretariat also invited parties to take note of related initiatives, including a concept note for an action plan for a UN system-wide response emanating from the UN Environment Management Group (ICCD/CRIC (11)/INF.5) and outcomes and recommendations of the High-Level Meeting on National Drought Policy held in March 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland (ICCD/CRIC (11)/INF.6).

Introducing the session, Bongani Masuku, Swaziland, invited Richard Mwendandu, Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources, Kenya, to discuss the country's integrated

approach to drought management, which takes the most affected sector—livestock—as an entry point to address the root causes of vulnerability. He said the response strategy involved investing in infrastructure, human capital, and risk management and strengthening institutional and financing frameworks and partnerships.

Explaining how the UNCCD contributes to capacity building for developing APFs, the UNCCD noted that at COP 10 the issues of gender, food security and climate change were addressed.

Argentina called on the GEF and international financial institutions to take a gender-based approach in their requirement and proposed the CRIC recommend that the COP establish a capacity-building scheme. Brazil opposed broadening of any multilateral environmental agreement, explaining that synergies are best leveraged at the national level.

Niger, Mauritania, Morocco and Libya stated drought is a priority issue, linked to climate change and affecting food security. Noting that drought has not been adequately addressed in the implementation of the Convention to date, Benin welcomed the call from the High-Level Meeting for more focus on this issue. Chile noted the APF on drought is an important step forward in meeting the Convention's objectives. Côte d'Ivoire suggested a specific drought protocol could be useful.

Supporting Brazil, the US suggested the Convention should focus limited resources on core issues rather than seeking new work programmes on issues already being addressed by other organizations. Ghana expressed interest in addressing drought preparedness planning. Panama said work on drought should be undertaken at the national level. Portugal suggested that not everything can be handled under the Convention or even under NAPs.

Asked by Moderator Masuku if drought and water should be considered outside the scope of the Convention, the UNCCD Secretariat responded that its work in these issues followed the instructions in Decision 9/COP.10, drought is in the title of the Convention, and water scarcity was listed as a priority for the development of NAPs.

Norway stressed that parties should consider taking advantage of IPBES' role in science and technical matters and capacity building, noting that IPBES is taking requests for needs by a deadline of 5 May 2013.

REVIEW OF INFORMATION REGARDING THE MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY

On Friday morning, Chair Rowen invited Chencho Norbu, Chair of the Intersessional Working Group for the Mid-term Evaluation of the Strategy (IWG) to update delegates on its work (ICCD/CRIC(11)/INF.2) and called for comprehensive feedback that engages all stakeholders.

Panama urged the IWG to propose dynamic changes in direction and approach. Burkina Faso suggested that the evaluation is premature, as resources to help developing countries implement the Strategy are only now coming in. Côte d'Ivoire said the evaluation is timely since parties need to find out what remains to be done, even if they do not like the answers.

Iran urged a COP decision to have countries create two NFPs, one for high political questions, the other in charge of practical leadership in Convention implementation. Mexico proposed

making obligatory the reporting on indicators in objective 3, especially carbon content of soil. Thailand suggested reordering the Strategy's objectives.

IWG Chair Norbu said that the IWG would take CRIC delegates' comments into consideration at its next meeting. UNCCD Executive Secretary Gnacadja encouraged all NFPs to invite and mobilize stakeholders to contribute to the evaluation so that the IWG has a maximum number of inputs.

GOVERNANCE AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OF THE GLOBAL MECHANISM: PROGRESS MADE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION 6/COP.10

Chair Rowen invited the Secretariat to update the CRIC on progress made in the implementation of decision 6/COP.10 (ICCD/CRIC(11)/18). The Secretariat reported that frequent consultations with relevant stakeholders have taken place and the transfer of accountability and legal representation of the GM from the International Fund for Agricultural Development to the UNCCD has occurred.

Several parties expressed concern that the continuing uncertainty around the GM's future will further impact funding for affected country parties, and stressed that this matter must be put to rest at COP 11. The EU, supported by Jordan and Norway, called for a better analysis of all liabilities connected to some locations. Expressing its interest in continuing to host the GM in Rome, Italy highlighted benefits, including from the GM's co-location with other relevant international bodies.

Japan asked for an analysis of institutional and human resource costs regarding the GM's future location. Executive Secretary Gnacadja invited parties to provide similar specific inquiries to enable comprehensive analysis for consideration at COP 11.

CLOSING SESSION

On Friday evening, Luis Rios González, Rapporteur, introduced the draft report of CRIC 11, containing a synopsis of parties' views and recommendations noted on the floor in plenary. (ICCD/CRIC(11)/L.1 and ICCD/CRIC(11)/L.2). He also introduced an additional document, ICCD/CRIC(11)/L.2/Add.1, containing a summary of the deliberations and recommendations submitted to the CRIC for its consideration.

Chair Rowen reminded delegates that the report is not a negotiated document, and should only accurately reflect what was actually stated during the week's deliberations. After adding a paragraph noting that some states encouraged the UNCCD and its member states to take advantage of the opportunities provided by IPBES by the 5 May 2013 deadline, the Committee approved the report with minor editorial amendments.

After closing statements from the EU, GRULAC, Japan, Central and Eastern European region, the African Group, the Asian Group, the Republic of Korea and CSOs, UNCCD Executive Secretary Gnacadja thanked delegates for their contributions and invited them to COP 11 in Namibia. In concluding remarks summarizing the achievements of CRIC 11, Chair Rowen commended delegates for their active participation, noting it had yielded valuable information on what works and doesn't, what is missing, what is available and what needs to be developed. Chair Rowen declared the meeting closed at 7:53 pm.

FINAL OUTCOME

The adopted report of CRIC 11 (ICCD/CRIC(11)/L.1, L.2 and L.2/Add.1) contains conclusions and recommendations that are a compilation of ideas, suggestions and proposals offered by participants to further the implementation of the Convention and the Strategy.

Regarding the **review and assessment of scientific information pertaining to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of the Strategy**, the report notes that, *inter alia*:

- Many recommended methodologically and technologically improving the PRAIS portal, including reducing its complexity and increasing its user-friendliness. Some recommended that PRAIS should be reorganized and the templates simplified.
- Many requested that development partners and financial institutions, particularly the GEF, consider extending further financial and technical assistance in developing the capacity of affected country parties in reporting impact indicators.
- Some recommended that the AGTE consider proposing a simpler methodology for the delineation of affected areas.
- Some recommended that the CST increase efforts toward harmonizing data and methodologies as a prerequisite to establishing a baseline for global assessment.
- Some recommended using readily available and internationally recognized datasets and building synergies with other Rio conventions in order to reduce the costs of data collection.
- Some recommended that the AGTE continue working on the development of clear terminology, classifications and definitions for impact indicators.
- Some recommended working towards a better balance between quantitative and qualitative assessment/indicators.
- Some recommended that global institutions provide further methodological guidance for reporting on the mandatory indicators on land cover status and proportion of the population living below the poverty line.
- Some recommended the adoption of an indicator on soil organic carbon to measure progress on strategic objective 3.
- Some encouraged all country parties to fully leverage synergies among the Rio conventions at the national level, particularly with regard to NAPs and NBSAPs.

On the **assessment of implementation on the provisionally adopted performance indicators regarding operational objective 1 of the Strategy**, the report notes that, *inter alia*:

- Some expressed concern about the reliability and representativeness of the information on total percentage of populations informed.
- Some recommended that the mid-term evaluation consider revisiting the operational objective 1 indicators to consider more effective and reliable tools for measuring awareness-raising efforts.
- Some suggested the need to set up a repository of information within the UNCCD on lessons learned in advocacy, awareness-raising and education.

With regard to the **assessment of the alignment of action programmes and their implementation in accordance with the Strategy for operational objectives 2 and 4**, the report notes that, *inter alia*:

- Many noted that preliminary analyses of SLM options, including economic valuation, should be conducted, and priorities consistent with national development policies,

particularly in agriculture, food security, natural resource management, climate change, biodiversity and poverty reduction, where applicable, should be set before the alignment process starts.

- Many noted that specific internal coordination mechanisms for NAP alignment should be established, such as inter-ministerial cooperation frameworks and steering committees, to drive the process and ensure coherence.
- Many recalled that the alignment process should be participatory and inclusive of all stakeholders.
- Many said the IWG should pay particular attention to the alignment process and the review of relevant indicators.
- Parties welcomed GEF funding for supporting NAP alignment, although many expressed concern about the level and timeliness of funding in the alignment process.
- Parties raised concerns about funding for NAP implementation. Several parties noted a need to facilitate direct access to financing, including the GEF and climate financing, at local and national levels.
- Several recalled the need for NAP streamlining to address specific gaps rather than all land management aspects.
- Several noted that the Secretariat should develop effective tools to guide the alignment process.

On **assessment of implementation of the provisionally adopted performance indicators for operational objective 3 on science, technology and knowledge**, the report notes that, *inter alia*:

- Many recommended increasing national ownership and leadership with regard to DLDD monitoring systems.
- Some recommended building upon lessons learned by donor countries.
- Some recommended that donors investing in DLDD monitoring systems harmonize their interventions at the national and local levels.
- Some recommended using ecosystem-based monitoring that integrates socio-economic land degradation drivers as an effective DLDD monitoring approach.
- Some recommended strengthening coordination and communication among the Rio convention focal points.

Concerning the **review of strategic objective 4 and operational objective 5 on financial commitments and investments related Convention implementation**, the report notes that, *inter alia*:

- Many urged developed country parties, the GEF and the GM to increase their financial contributions to enable affected developing country parties to improve their reporting systems and increase their understanding and use of impact indicators.
- Many called upon the GEF to assess and improve its internal processes to ensure the timely disbursement of funds to eligible countries, and called upon the Convention's institutions to facilitate access to such funding by communicating to GEF implementing agencies efficiently and in a timely manner to ensure that they are aware of the financial needs of the UNCCD process.
- Many called on the GEF to secure additional resources and facilitate access under the sixth GEF replenishment.
- Many asked the GEF, the GM and other partners to increase efforts at building the capacity required in resource mobilization.

- Many recommended focusing on implementing decisions related to institutional arrangements in order to make the GM operational as soon as possible.
- Many highlighted the importance of involving private financing in Convention implementation.
- Some requested the Convention's institutions to explore new financial mechanisms to enable countries to meet their reporting requirements.
- Some recommended that NAPs aligned with the Strategy be given priority in resource allocation, and requested the GM to facilitate resource mobilization for initiatives included in NAPs.
- Some recommended that the mid-term evaluation should pay particular attention to the assessment and evaluation of the subsidiary bodies and institutions of the Convention, with a view to making the Convention processes more dynamic and effective. Other parties requested to assess the financial implications of implementing the Strategy.

As for the outcome of the open dialogue session on **the role of CSOs in the mobilization of financial resources in support of UNCCD implementation**, the report notes, *inter alia*:

- Many parties and other stakeholders recognized the major role played by CSOs.
- Many recommended involving CSOs in national coordinating bodies.
- Some parties recommended that CSOs could share their knowledge and success stories with regard to the private sector with national authorities.
- Many expressed concern with the low number of CSOs attending CRIC 11 and accredited to the COP, and recommended looking into ways of ensuring increased participation of civil society actors at UNCCD meetings.
- Many stressed the need to involve CSOs in the reporting process.
- Some parties and CSOs expressed the need to build capacity among CSOs, particularly with regard to resource mobilization and access to funds, including the GEF.
- Some called for the GM, GEF and other donors to provide funds for CSOs to implement projects at the national level.

As for identification of **recommended databases and institutions for best practices**, the report notes, *inter alia*:

- Some requested more information on the work and achievements of the institutions responding to the call for expressions of interest to identify organizations interested in supporting the CRIC in the compilation and dissemination of best practices on SLM, including adaptation.
- Some recommended that information on SLM best practices be consolidated and made available in centralized best practice repositories or through a data sharing initiative.
- Many parties called for an integrated approach by leveraging synergies and cooperation among the institutions participating in the call for expression of interest.
- Some recommended that best practices be reviewed by experts, local communities and end users to validate that the submissions are indeed best practice in the local context.
- Some recommended that IPBES be invited to conduct a review of strategies to address linking best practices with land potential and local capacities and knowledge.

On the **accessibility of information on best practices**, the report notes, *inter alia*:

- Many welcomed the identification of elements in a data access policy and requested the Secretariat to continue looking at the practices and policies of other conventions and multilateral bodies.

- Some highlighted the need to use and protect the intellectual property rights of innovations submitted as best practices.

Regarding the **consideration of the iterative process relating to the assessment of implementation, including performance indicators, methodology and reporting procedures**, the report notes, *inter alia*:

- Many requested the CST and CRIC to look further into refining the indicators, paying particular attention to e-SMART (economic-Specific-Measurable-Achievable-Relevant-Time-bound) criteria, and to simplify the reporting templates to reduce the overall reporting burden.
- Many recommended further engagement in the mid-term evaluation as an opportunity to rectify difficulties encountered in operationalizing the Strategy and reporting on its implementation.
- Some requested the reporting period to be longer and for the amendment of the frequency of reporting to better respond to the reporting requirements, reporting cycles and indicator sensitivity.

- Some recommended the establishment of special sections within PRAIS to report on supplementary indicators and/or specific actions taken by countries to combat DLDD.

Concerning the **proposed standard approach and process of elaborating APFs and the proposed APF on drought and water scarcity**, the report notes, *inter alia*:

- Many recommended that the Secretariat and UNCCD bodies strengthen the science-policy interface with a focus on drought, including water scarcity.
- Many called upon development partners, the GEF, international and regional development banks, and other financial institutions to assist the Secretariat and Convention process by providing adequate, accessible and timely resources to implement the APF on drought, including water scarcity.
- Many recommended that the COP approve the APF on drought, including water scarcity.
- Many acknowledged the importance of developing national drought management policies and mainstreaming these in existing plans and mechanisms, especially NAPs.
- Many underlined the need to put policies and mechanisms in place to address disaster risk management related to drought.
- Many stated that synergies between conventions should be encouraged at the national level, but that, at the global level, multilateral environmental agreements should maintain their independence.
- Some expressed concern that adding areas for exploration could distract parties from the main focus of fostering Convention implementation on the ground and increase costs.

A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF CRIC 11

As CRIC 11 delegates gathered in Bonn at the halfway mark of the UNCCD's 10-year strategic plan, expectations were high that the recommendations of the 2nd Scientific Conference the previous week would inject new life into parties' efforts to implement the Convention. But it quickly became apparent that reaching agreement on the diagnosis, let alone a prescription to

restore degraded lands, was proving elusive. Was the Convention "in need of major surgery," as one delegate put it, to survive beyond its 20th birthday, or was this perhaps a classic case of hypochondria? This brief analysis highlights the challenges of diagnosing and treating the Convention's ailments that CRIC delegates faced as they sought to identify the most cost-effective tools for monitoring progress on the ground.

SYMPTOMS

The CRIC is the UNCCD subsidiary body charged with monitoring the Convention's impact on the ground. With this in mind, it did not escape the attention of most delegates that the disappointingly low level of reporting this year would further undermine the CRIC's abilities to nurse a potentially ailing Convention back to health. At COP 10 in Changwon, Republic of Korea in 2011, the CRIC emerged with an improved set of monitoring tools—an iterative process to ensure that the Committee would continue to improve its efficiency and its reporting procedures and continue to draw on the best scientific advice, as well as best practices from a broad range of actors on the ground. But the preliminary report of the Convention's vital signs made for disturbing reading.

According to the Secretariat's projections, only 11 countries, or 6.5% of the total 168 affected countries, will meet the target of aligning national action programmes by 2014, a far cry from the 80% called for in the Strategy. Given that NAP alignment is the cornerstone for enhanced action at the country level and a prerequisite for developing subregional and regional action plans to scale up action, the Secretariat's analysis of the reasons as including, "data collection difficulties and skepticism about the benefits of alignment; weak institutional and human capacity; and lack of policy prioritization and political leadership," did not augur well for the mid-term assessment of the Strategy. It also did not escape attention of some that there was a surprisingly low turnout of multilateral institutions and other stakeholders that are obliged to report on their funding, capacity building and other support activities. The Convention's vital signs looked bleak indeed.

The Secretariat revealed that only 42% of the 168 affected country parties provided information on two provisionally adopted impact indicators, which was a prerequisite for developing a first set of baseline data to monitor the Convention's impact on the ground. Given that the two indicators—population living below the poverty line and land cover status—touch at the heart of UNCCD's mandate of contributing to poverty reduction in affected areas, this was a critical gap that left the CRIC with insufficient quantitative information on the coverage and comparability of the data to enable it make concrete recommendations for parties' follow up at the next COP. It was this concern that led to a request to the CST to provide input to improve reporting templates and bridge the reporting gap. The preliminary CST report presented to the Committee included recommendations related to the lack of a common definition and criteria for delineating areas affected by DLDD.

DIAGNOSIS

However, during a session dedicated to discussing scientific input on how to refine the impact indicators that included a proposal from the AGTE on a methodology for "operationally delineating affected areas," it became apparent that parties were divided on the treatment plan proposed by their own

“consulting physicians.” The AGTE report contained a proposal for developing a set of integrative indicators bringing together geophysical and socio-economic data, supported by geostatistical tools and local “storylines” built up from field information. But parties’ responses to these proposed solutions appeared lukewarm at best, with many stressing that the real issue was not further refining of methodologies but ensuring that countries have sufficient means of implementation to build their technical and institutional capacities for conducting regular assessments of their own action plans. A number of speakers called to question the focus on developing one global set of indicators, with several suggesting that the iterative process itself was hampering their efforts to move ahead with implementation.

Observing these interactions, one was left wondering what was really ailing the CRIC. For some observers the problem lay with the blurring of the role of the CST in providing scientific advice to the CRIC. There were suggestions that the CST had “no business dishing out advice” and needed instead to relay knowledge needs from the CRIC to independent scientific bodies, such as the IPCC and IPBES, or the Economics of Land Degradation Initiative. But others pointed to failures in the PRAIS reporting system, blaming the complex data entry and output structure for discouraging reporting, or making it difficult to properly analyze the data provided by countries. With the proposed plan to further open up PRAIS to other stakeholders, including CSOs, many expressed doubt about the system’s ability to cope.

TREATMENT

Given such a broad mix of symptoms, perhaps it was worth “triaging” the challenges ahead to enable a critical assessment of process-management options available to the CRIC and, as many delegates pointed out, reorient the Secretariat’s and countries’ scarce resources to the most useful knowledge and tools to help heal the Convention. For some, this meant making greater use of monitoring systems at the national and regional levels and focusing on building synergies here, rather than at the global level. A number of countries pointed out that they were already using available tools quite successfully and would benefit most from open-ended and flexible recommendations from the CRIC to enable them to “mix and match” the funding and technical options at their disposal. Others wanted a stronger role for the CRIC in developing a more sophisticated database and building monitoring and reporting capacity at the national level. Yet some argued that the continuing efforts to perfect CRIC’s diagnostic tools were hemorrhaging momentum away from implementation on the ground.

The final outcome of CRIC 11 was a compilation of views and suggestions rather than a negotiated document, and it is unclear which of these options has most support. This could promise a major headache for negotiators at COP 11 later this year to narrow these options down to a few priority areas for action. But there also seemed to be some common threads in the proposals that might help draw out some priorities for action and point the way to recovery. Most delegates praised the new interactive panel discussion format at CRIC 11 that yielded a rich stock of best practices, empirical data and innovative policy solutions. They highlighted the range of qualitative tools and best practices showcased at the meeting as offering alternative approaches for tracking progress on the ground and validating quantitative analyses at the global and regional levels. Other

promising treatment options highlighted the opportunities to leverage existing resources, such as the GEF funding windows, to enhance synergies among SLM activities that are currently split across the Rio conventions. In this regard, many noted that resolving the long-standing issue of the GM’s relationship with the Secretariat will be critical to opening up new flows of funding for implementation activities, as well as making a strong effort to encourage greater exchange with international financial institutions and the private sector.

RECOVERY?

Will these emerging proposals be sufficient to jumpstart negotiations at CRIC 12? One encouraging signal is that despite a tendency at CRIC 11 to focus on national and regional issues and priorities, there was also a high level of “empathy” that was particularly evident during the session on communicating the Convention’s key messages. Participants were left with a real sense of their shared interest in addressing the impact of DLDD to safeguard ecosystems, ensure food security and mitigate conflict. If this positive spirit prevails in Windhoek there is a chance that the next CRIC session could move forward on some of the specific proposals that were put forward on simplifying the PRAIS portal, introducing new useful indicators, such as soil organic carbon, and building institutional capacity at the national level to manage the GEF funding application process.

In conclusion, what treatment regime should the CRIC recommend to the COP at Windhoek? CRIC 11’s attempt at triage did not provide clear answers because the consulting physicians disagreed on what needs to be fixed in what sequence and which treatment offers the best therapeutic value (best efficacy at lowest risk and cost). Perhaps it will be up to the IWG to point the way within the context of the mid-term evaluation. This, however, is incumbent on accelerating the current slow response pace to the online survey to gather insights from parties on what is needed to realize the objectives of the Strategy by 2018.

Ultimately CRIC 11’s outlook for recovery depends on answering these questions, and can be taken from Chair Mary Rowen’s closing statement “Efficiency is doing things right and effectiveness is doing the right things.”

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Third meeting of the UNCCD Intersessional working group for the mid-term evaluation of the Strategy (IWG):

The third meeting of the IWG will be held immediately following CRIC 11. **dates:** 22-24 April 2013 **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228 815-2800 **fax:** +49-228 815-2898 **email:** arce@unccd.int **www:** <http://www.unccd.int>

2013 Global Land Forum and Assembly of Members: Organized every two years by the International Land Coalition (ILC), the 2013 meeting will consider the theme “Inclusive and Sustainable Territorial Governance for Food Security,” and will focus on: the future of family farming and the geo-political economy of food; land grabbing and land access; indigenous peoples’ territory; effective land institutions; environmental aspects of territorial disputes; open data, monitoring and accountability; and learning and strengthening collective action. **dates:** 23-26 April 2013 **location:** Antigua, Guatemala **contact:** ILC Secretariat **phone:** +39 06 5459 2445 **fax:** +39

06 5459 3445 **email:** info@landcoalition.org **www:** http://www.landcoalition.org/events/global-land-forum-and-assembly-members-2013-inclusive-and-sustainable-territorial-governance-

Soil Carbon Sequestration: A Solution for Climate, Food Security and Ecosystem Services: This conference will review the state of science and needs for further knowledge and discuss, *inter alia*; land use and land restoration practices; how to verify carbon sequestration and linkages with the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and other global goals, agreements and negotiations; and how to increase the flow of climate-linked funding for land and soil restoration. Organizers include the European Commission, the Global Soil Partnership and UN University. **dates:** 26-29 May 2013 **location:** Reykjavik, Iceland **contact:** Organizing Committee **email:** arna@land.is **www:** http://www.fao.org/globalsoilpartnership/events/detail/en/c/154385/

World Day to Combat Desertification 2013: This day is celebrated on 17 June annually, to mark the conclusion of negotiations on the UNCCD. This year's theme of drought and water scarcity, with the slogan "Don't let our future dry up," takes into account that 2013 is also the International Year of Water Cooperation. World Day to Combat Desertification 2013 will seek to create awareness about the risks of drought and water scarcity in the drylands and beyond, and to call attention to the importance of sustaining healthy soils as part of the post-Rio+20 agenda and post-2015 development agenda. **date:** 17 June 2013 **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228 815-2800 **fax:** +49-228 815-2898 **email:** arce@unccd.int **www:** http://www.unccd.int/en/programmes/Event-and-campaigns/WDCD/WDCD2013/Pages/default.aspx?HighlightID=168

Fourth meeting of the UNCCD Intersessional working group for the mid-term evaluation of the Strategy (IWG): The fourth meeting of the IWG will take place in June, in preparation for COP11. **dates:** to be announced **location:** Bonn, Germany **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228 815-2800 **fax:** +49-228 815-2898 **email:** arce@unccd.int **www:** http://www.unccd.int

Sixth International Ecosystem Services Partnership Conference: The purpose of this conference is to exchange experiences and learn about the practical application of the "ecosystem services" concept, including the identification of main incentives and obstacles and the suggestion of practical solutions to key problems. The conference is organized with the UNEP World Conservation Monitoring Centre, the Global Mechanism and The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, among others. **dates:** 26-30 August 2013 **location:** Bali, Indonesia **contact:** Beria Leimona **email:** l.beria@cgiar.org **www:** http://www.esconference.org/ESP_Conference

Second Global Soil Week 2013: This event will convene under the theme "Losing Ground?" It is organized by the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies (IASS) in Potsdam, Germany, and will bring together practitioners, policy makers, scientists and representatives from civil society organizations to share knowledge and experience on soil and land-related issues and make plans to advance the global agenda for sustainable development. A call for proposals will be posted soon. **dates:** 27-31 October 2013 **location:** Berlin, Germany **contact:** IASS Potsdam **phone:** +49 331-288223-00 **fax:** +49 331-288223-10 **email:** info@iass-potsdam.de **www:** http://www.globalsoilweek.org/

UNCCD COP 11, CST 11 and CRIC 12: The eleventh session of the UNCCD COP is expected to convene in the final quarter of 2013. CST 11 and CRIC 12 will convene in parallel with COP 11. **dates:** 16-26 September 2013 **location:** Windhoek, Namibia **contact:** UNCCD Secretariat **phone:** +49-228-815-2800 **fax:** +49-228-815-2898 **email:** secretariat@unccd.int **www:** http://www.unccd.int/

GLOSSARY

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| APF | Advocacy policy framework |
| AGTE | <i>Ad Hoc</i> Advisory Group of Technical Experts |
| CARI | Centre d'Action et de Réalisation Internationales |
| CBD | Convention on Biological Diversity |
| CENESTA | Centre for Sustainable Development |
| COP | Conference of the Parties |
| 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 |
| FAO | UN Food and Agriculture Organization |
| GEF | Global Environment Facility |
| GM | Global Mechanism |
| GRULAC | Latin America and Caribbean Group |
| IPBES | Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services |
| IFS | Integrated finance strategy |
| IIF | Integrated investment framework |
| IWG | Intersessional Working Group for the Mid-term Evaluation of the Strategy |
| LADA | Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands |
| NAP | National Action Programme |
| NBSAP | National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan |
| NFP | National Focal Point |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |
| PRAIS | Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System |
| SLM | Sustainable land management |
| UNCCD | United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNFCCC | United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change |
| WOCAT | World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies |