United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
12th Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP12)

Ankara, Turkey
From 12 to 23 October, 2015
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Drafting Committee and Editorial Committee

UNISFÉRA International Centre

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From the Director

The 12th session of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on the Combat Desertification (COP 12) will be held in Ankara, Turkey from October 12 to 23, 2015. The session constitutes an opportunity to identify and implement sustainable solutions for sustainable land management and avoid environmental crises and improve the livelihoods of the most vulnerable communities. The previous session (COP 11), held in Windhoek, Namibia, achieved significant progress on a number of issues, including the Ten-year strategic framework for the implementation of the Convention, governance and institutional arrangements for the GM. But many challenges remain for both issues specific to the implementation of the Convention as well pertaining to the global governance of sustainable development.

Restoration of degraded lands contributes to sustainable development and will be key to the achievement of many Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is therefore timely that COP 12 is being held just a few weeks after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It will address some very critical issues for the further implementation of the Convention. The Conference shall, among other things, define its strategy for the integration of the SDGs and UNCCD implementation.

Increasingly, global financial flows will focus on the SDGs. It is therefore important that developing countries position themselves to take advantage of available resources. The SDGs, which are part and parcel of the new development agenda, take into account the fight against desertification, including land degradation neutrality, as affirmed by the United Nations General Assembly. Hence, Ankara will provide a forum for UNCCD country Parties to address options and means for the integration of the SDGs and UNCCD implementation.

Moreover, from November 30 to December 11, 2015, a month after the meeting in Ankara, the international community will meet in Paris for the United Nations Conference on Climate Change (COP 21) to adopt a new climate agreement. COP 12 on desertification and COP 21 on climate represent an opportunity to strengthen synergies between the fight against desertification and land degradation, and climate change efforts. In this perspective, we welcome the fact that the high level segment of UNCCD COP 12 will include discussions on climate change, water and drought in the context of desertification, and land degradation neutrality.

At COP 12, Country Parties, and other development actors, must continue to discuss ways and means to implement concrete actions to curb land degradation.

The Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF - International Organization of the Francophonie) attaches great importance to the implementation
of the desertification convention as a tool to fight poverty and promote sustainable
development. It is in this sense that in the Final Declaration of the 15th Franco-
phonie Summit held in Dakar in 2014, the Heads of State and Government
emphasized the urgency of making operational the Green Fund to support, among
others, the fight against deforestation and desertification.

Through the IFDD, a subsidiary body, the Organisation internationale de
la Francophonie (OIF - International Organization of the Francophonie), which
is involved in this process through its member-states, hopes this Guide to the
negotiations will shed light on the issues to be addressed at COP 12.

This guide was produced with the support of the secretariat of the UN
Convention to Combat Desertification and in partnership with UNISFÉRA. The
IFDD welcomes this good cooperation.

Dear negotiators, dear partners, I wish you excellent work and successful
results in Ankara.

Jean Pierre NDOUTOUM
This Guide to the negotiations aims at supporting negotiators and other stakeholders of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) who will participate to the 12th session of the Conference of Parties (COP), to the 14th session of Committee for the Review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC) and the 12th session of the Committee on Science and technology (CST), to be held in Ankara, Turkey from 12 to 23 October 2015. The guide will also be useful to those interested in international developments in the field of desertification, land degradation and drought.

At the beginning of the guide, a summary table lists the main issues to be discussed during the various sessions. For each issue, reference is made to the relevant agendas items of the COP, CRIC and CST, and to the sections of this guide that address these issues. Follows a list of acronyms commonly used, both in English and French.

The first part of the guide presents the general context of the UNCCD since the 1992 Rio Summit. It also describes the Convention: its genesis, bodies, main provisions, 10-year Strategy and stakeholders.

The second part of the guide, which opens with a timeline, summarizes past meetings of the UNCCD and its bodies. This section is designed to put into context the various issues to be discussed at COP 12.

The third part of the guide presents the issues to be discussed at the 12th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12), the fourteenth meeting of the Committee for the Review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC 14) and the twelfth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST 12).

The fourth part of the guide contains thematic fact sheets. They address issues relating to Convention itself, such as National Action Plans (NAPs), reports, or 10-year strategic plan, as well as practical issues of interest to COP delegates.

The official classification of UNCCD documents is used throughout this guide to allow readers to find on the UNCCD website the original documents to which reference is made. Fact sheet 4.12 explains the meaning of the classification of UNCCD documents.
## Summary table
of the main issues to be discussed in Ankara

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<td>GEF</td>
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1.1 Introduction to the Convention

1.1.1 Genesis of the Convention

International negotiations on desertification

Recognition by the international community of challenges raised by desertification swelled at the end of the 1970s. The first United Nations Conference addressing the numerous social, economic and environmental problems caused by desertification and drought was held in Nairobi in 1977, ending with the adoption of an Action Plan to combat desertification. This instrument however did not bring the expected results. A UNEP report on implementing the Action Plan found in 1991 that the situation had even worsened overall despite a few “local examples of success”.¹ A need thus emerged clearly for a legally-binding framework to combat desertification and drought supported by sufficient funds to ensure its implementation.

The question of desertification and drought was therefore included in the agenda of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992.² The Conference addressed this problem from a global perspective and advocated a new integrated approach to promote development that was sustainable. Agreement was reached on the need for an international convention on the subject to achieve this. A worldwide sustainable development implementation programme also resulted from the UNCED. This was called Agenda 21. Its Chapter 12, entitled “Managing fragile ecosystems: Combating desertification and drought” contained specific recommendations on combating desertification. The Rio Conference and its Agenda 21 programme thus heralded a new era of integrating environmental and development issues, encouraging international cooperation as support for national actions and favouring participatory approaches.

Following the UNCED, in December 1992 the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution establishing an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for Desertification (INCD). Its mandate was to prepare the text of the

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². A/RES/44/288.
The Convention, its bodies and stakeholders

Before June 1994 (A/RES/47/188). The INCD held five sessions during this period, after which the text entitled “United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Especially in Africa” was adopted on 17 June 1994. The text of the Convention complied with the spirit of the Agenda 21 recommendations and was open for signature on 14 and 15 October 1994. It entered into force on 26 December 1996, ninety days after ratification by the 50th Party. It was agreed that the INCD would continue with its meetings in the meantime. There were five other INCD sessions in total, with the last one split into two sections. The INCD met for the last time in August 1997, shortly before the First Conference of the Parties (COP), held in October of the same year.

At the Eighth Conference of the Parties in Madrid in September 2007, the UNCCD entered a new phase with the adoption of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy). This new development has taken the Convention to new ground. Most importantly, Parties have laid out a clear vision for a period of ten years in The Strategy, which is to forge global partnerships to reverse and prevent desertification and land degradation. These partnerships are also meant to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas. Coupled with the vision is a mission: To provide a global framework to support the development and implementation of national and regional policies that are to contribute to the reduction of poverty.

Issues raised during the negotiations that led to the adoption of the UNCCD

Although unquestionably the UNCCD was negotiated in record time, these negotiations were nevertheless not easy ones. The history of negotiations and their deep-rooted tensions can help to put the adoption of the UNCCD into context and to understand its evolution better.

Firstly, the UNCCD stands out from other environmental conventions given that it results from an express demand from developing countries and especially African countries. Unlike the other conventions resulting from the Rio Summit, which were initiated by the developed countries, the UNCCD met stiff opposition from these countries who felt quite removed from the problem of desertification. Secondly, major disagreements were also apparent within the group of developing countries itself.

Despite the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 44/228 of December 1989, which required special consideration to be given to the subject of desertification and drought under the UNECD, the preparation meetings for this conference only paid it scant attention. One meeting of African Ministers for the Environment was therefore held on the subject, in November 1991, during which the Joint African Position on the environment and development and the Declaration of Abidjan were adopted. Both these texts called for the adoption of an international convention to combat desertification. Whereas the majority of elements used to form Chapter 12 of the Agenda 21 programme – on combating desertification
and drought – were easily agreed by consensus, the request from African countries on preparing an international convention on the subject gave rise to stiff opposition from developed countries. Some were rather reticent to address the question of desertification as a global issue and were against creating new funds allocated to this problem.\(^3\) After some negotiating, all countries finally agreed to prepare a convention to combat desertification.

The INCD was then set up with a short-term mandate to reflect on the urgency of the request from African countries. The developed countries advanced several justifications for this reversal of position, including, among other things, the desire to keep the African countries playing an active part in the Rio process and to make sure their approval was obtained on the other UNCED environmental documents, including the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Framework Convention on Climate Change.\(^4\)

Tensions were felt between the developing countries during the first INCD session, when the question was raised of paying special attention to the situation in Africa via an annex to the Convention. Despite the suggestion that this could be followed in the future by an equivalent annex for the other affected regions, delegates from some regions were against this, arguing that all the annexes should be negotiated at the same time. The disagreement reached such heights that it became the main issue at the first INCD session. The deadlock was finally unravelled at the next session, when the G77 countries agreed to delay negotiating other regional instruments until the interim period between the adoption of the Convention and its entry into force. Note however that regional instrument projects were developed all the same and the Convention, when adopted, included four annexes covering the regions of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean and the Northern Mediterranean.\(^5\) A fifth annex was also adopted in 2001 covering Central and Eastern Europe.

North-South tensions over financing issues took over during the second INCD session and continued during the next three sessions. On the one hand, the developing countries stressed that this new Convention would not allow concrete improvement unless it was supported by new funds and financing mechanisms, whereas the developed countries rejected any idea of additional financing. Agreement was finally reached at the last moment thanks to the compromise based on the idea of instituting a “Global Mechanism” to promote actions encouraging the mobilisation of funds. This idea was accepted based on the anticipation of subsequent negotiations.\(^6\)

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4. Id. p. 63.


Nevertheless, the five INCD sessions that took place during the interim period, between the adoption of the Convention and its entry into force, could not unravel the deadlock over the financing mechanisms. In addition, another dividing subject persisted in terms of the composition and operation of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). These questions were therefore relegated to the Conference of the Parties and indeed have continued to taint subsequent negotiations to this day.7

1.1.2 The objectives and main provisions of the Convention

The aim of the UNCCD is to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in seriously affected countries.

The UNCCD defines desertification as “land degradation” in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities. Desertification therefore refers here to the gradual deterioration of arable land by a complex combination of inter-related natural and anthropogenic factors.

Similarly, according to the Convention, the expression “combating desertification” means activities which are part of the integrated development of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas for sustainable development which are aimed at prevention and/or reduction of land degradation, rehabilitation of partly degraded land and reclamation of desertified land.

The UNCCD takes a holistic view of development and environmental sustainability. It encourages the integration of poverty eradication strategies in actions to combat desertification and recourse to existing multilateral and bilateral financial mechanisms and arrangements. It also puts the emphasis on a bottom-up approach and promotes the participation of vulnerable populations. Several observers believe that this novel approach gives it special status among the other environmental conventions.

Moreover, the UNCCD answers directly to the United Nations General Assembly, unlike many other multilateral environmental agreements, which are politically and administratively attached to the UNEP.

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7. See note 3 for more a detailed analysis of negotiations surrounding the UNCCD.
8. The term “land degradation” means the reduction or loss, in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, of the biological or economic productivity and complexity of rainfed cropland, irrigated cropland, or range, pasture, forest and woodlands resulting from land uses or from a process or combination of processes, including processes arising from human activities and habitation patterns, such as: (i) soil erosion caused by wind and/or water; (ii) deterioration of the physical, chemical and biological or economic properties of soil; and (iii) long-term loss of natural vegetation;” (UNCCD, Art. 1).
The UNCCD banks on effective, concrete measures based on local, sub-regional and regional programmes and supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements. All these measures have been established in the framework of an integrated approach, which is consistent with Agenda 21, with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in affected areas (UNCCD Art. 2, para. 1). Achieving this goal assumes long-term integrated strategies that focus simultaneously on improved productivity of land and the rehabilitation, conservation and sustainable management of land and water. These will then help to improve living conditions, in particular at the community level (UNCCD Art. 2, para. 2).

The five UNCCD annexes facilitate the implementation of the Convention by supplying details on the national, subregional and regional action plans for each of the regions of Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Northern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern Europe.

The Parties must also meet three types of obligation by virtue of the Convention:

- The general obligations imposed on all parties (UNCCD Art. 4) emphasise the need to coordinate efforts and develop coherent long-term strategies based on an integrated approach addressing the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of the processes of desertification and drought, thereby ensuring reduced poverty and environmental sustainability.

- The affected countries must give the desired priority to this problem based on their situation and resources. They must also create a favourable environment for implementing strategies and plans to combat desertification by strengthening their legislative framework and putting together new policies integrated in a sustainable development plan. The preferred approaches must attack the deep-seated causes of desertification, promote awareness and the participation of local populations, particularly women, and of NGOs (UNCCD Art. 5).

- The developed countries undertake to support the developing countries affected in their actions. To achieve this, they must provide financial resources and other forms of support to develop and implement their plans and strategies effectively. They also undertake to seek new and additional funds and to encourage the mobilisation of funds from the private sector and other non-governmental sources. They also undertake to encourage access to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how (UNCCD Art. 6).

UNCCD Article 20 provides for the financing methods for implementation. Thus, according to the UNCCD, developing country Parties affected by desertification are initially responsible for the financing required for implementation of their national action plans (Art. 20.3). This responsibility implies that the affected developing country Parties incorporate the UNCCD objectives in the national development and environmental protection strategies and that they seek additional sources of financing from governments of other countries, international organisations, non-governmental organisations and the private sector. The developed country Parties undertake to promote mobilisation of financial resources based on three criteria, that they are adequate, timely and predictable (Art. 20.2).
Article 8 of the UNCCD encourages the coordination between the activities carried out under the Convention and those linked with the other relevant multilateral environmental agreements. This article is mainly targeting the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Both these Conventions acknowledge the importance of addressing land degradation and deforestation in combating climate change and relatively to the preservation and sustainable use of the biodiversity. To encourage the synergies between these Conventions, Article 8 suggests, for example, the establishment of joint programmes in the fields of research, training, systematic observation and information collection and exchange.

The COP of the UNCCD has also adopted several decisions recognising the importance of strengthening links and the synergies between what has become known as the Rio Conventions (UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC). A Joint Liaison Group (JLG) was set up in 2001 between the UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC secretariats for this purpose. Collaboration initiatives have also been carried out with other environmental conventions, including, for example, the signing of memoranda of understanding with the Ramsar Convention on wetlands and with the Convention on migratory species, in order to define their cooperation modalities.9

Apart from its coordination efforts with the other environmental conventions, the UNCCD has also collaborated on several initiatives by international organisations and institutions, including UNESCO, UNEP, UNDP, World Meteorological Organisation, the Common Fund for Commodities, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid-Tropics, etc.10

1.1.3 The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018)

Designed as the spearhead for renewing international commitment to combating desertification, land degradation and drought, the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018) (The Strategy) is the most significant effort by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) since its creation. Adopted during the 8th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8), it aims to ensure a joint and consistent vision in implementing the UNCCD and improving its effectiveness.

The Strategy seeks to take up a certain number of challenges raised in implementing the Convention. To achieve this, it provides for strategic objectives that must guide the action of UNCCD institutions and Parties and operational objectives defining the action plan for the next ten years.

9. ICCD/COP(7)/5., para. 27-28; Resolution VII.4, (Ramsar, COP(7)).
10. ICCD/COP(7)/5, section IV. See also note 3.
Furthermore, to achieve the fixed objectives, The Strategy provides a framework for considering the role of the Convention’s institutions and operations. The Conventions thus henceforth apply a results-based approach linked to these objectives in scheduling their activities.

Fact sheet 4.6 provides more details on the context and content of The Strategy.

1.1.4 Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS)

The Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS) is an information monitoring and reporting system set up to assess progress made in the 10-year strategy objectives adopted during COP 9.\textsuperscript{11} The cornerstone of this project is an online portal giving public access to information on progress in implementing the Convention.\textsuperscript{12}

PRAIS consists of the following elements:

- assessment of the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy through the review of information provided by Parties and other reporting entities as well as information on the civil society, including the private sector;
- performance review of the Convention’s institutions and subsidiary bodies taking a results-based management approach based on reports on the two-year costed work programmes;
- review and compilation of best practices on the implementation of the Convention; and
- assessment and monitoring of the performance and effectiveness of the CRIC.

Since 2010, reporting entities are invited to provide information on performance indicators for operational objectives and financial flows for the implementation of the Convention every two years, and on progress indicators for strategic objectives The strategy every four years. It should be noted that a simplified reporting system will be considered at COP 12. It provides for the submission, every four years, of national reports primarily focused on the assessment of land degradation and the achievement of concrete objectives at national level. More information on this issue can be found in section 3.2.3 of this Guide entitled “The UNCCD reporting and review process in view of the post-2015 development agenda”.

1.2 The Convention bodies

1.2.1 The Conference of the Parties (COP)

The Conference of the Parties (COP) is the supreme body of the Convention. It comprises all governments and regional economic integration organisations that have ratified the UNCCD and is responsible for promoting its effective implementation.

\textsuperscript{11} Decision 12/COP.9, ICCD/COP(9)/18/Add.1. 
\textsuperscript{12} http://www.unccd-prais.com/.
Section 22(2) of the UNCCD provides that the COP “is the supreme body of the Convention. It shall make, within its mandate, the decisions necessary to promote its effective implementation”.

More particularly, the COP shall:

(a) regularly review the implementation of the Convention and the functioning of its institutional arrangements in the light of the experience gained at the national, subregional, regional and international levels and on the basis of the evolution of scientific and technological knowledge;

(b) promote and facilitate the exchange of information on measures adopted by the Parties, and determine the form and timetable for transmitting the information to be submitted pursuant to article 26, review the reports and make recommendations on them;

(c) establish such subsidiary bodies as are deemed necessary for the implementation of the Convention;

(d) review reports submitted by its subsidiary bodies and provide guidance to them;

(e) agree upon and adopt, by consensus, rules of procedure and financial rules for itself and any subsidiary bodies;

(f) adopt amendments to the Convention pursuant to articles 30 and 31;

(g) approve a programme and budget for its activities, including those of its subsidiary bodies, and undertake necessary arrangements for their financing;

(h) as appropriate, seek the cooperation of, and utilize the services of and information provided by, competent bodies or agencies, whether national or international, intergovernmental or non-governmental;

(i) promote and strengthen the relationship with other relevant conventions while avoiding duplication of effort; and

(j) exercise such other functions as may be necessary for the achievement of the objective of the Convention.

In compliance with paragraph 22(3) of the Convention, the COP adopted its own rules of procedure at its first session. These set out the various modalities applicable to observers, the election of the Bureau, the subsidiary UNCCD bodies, the conduct of debates, etc.13

The provisional agenda for each COP session is sent to the Parties at least six weeks before the session opens. It normally includes (i) items arising from the articles of the Convention, including those specified in its Article 22, (ii) items the inclusion of which was decided at a previous session, (iii) the agenda items from an ordinary session that had not been fully reviewed during that session, (iv) the draft budget and all questions pertaining to the accounts and financial arrangements and (v) any item proposed by a Party and received by the Permanent Secretariat before the provisional agenda is circulated (Rule 10 of the Rules of Procedure, UNCCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1).

13. Decision 1/COP.1 (ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1). See also Fact Sheet 4.3.
Subsection 22 (6) provides that at each ordinary session, the Conference of the Parties shall elect a Bureau, whose structure and functions are defined in the rules of procedure. The composition of the Bureau should consider the need to “ensure equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected country Parties, particularly those in Africa”.

The COP elects a Bureau at the start of the first meeting of every ordinary session. This comprises a Chairman, nine Vice-Chairmen and the Chairman of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). The Chairman of the CRIC has also been a member of the Bureau since its creation (COP 5, Geneva). The regional groups propose the members to represent their region, taking into account that each geographical region must be represented by at least two members within the Bureau. The Chairman of the Bureau manages the session and exercises the powers granted to him in the COP rules of procedure. Note that the members of the Bureau exercise their mandate until their successors are elected at the next COP session.

In addition to the Parties to UNCCD, COP sessions can welcome other participants as observers. These include United Nations specialised institutions and accredited intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations (IGOs and NGOs) (UNCCD Art. 22(7)). Although observers have no voting rights, their positions frequently influence the decisions taken by the COP. Bodies or organisations seeking admittance as observers must submit an accreditation request to the secretariat, indicating that they wish to be represented at a COP session. The secretariat submits a list of bodies or organisations seeking accreditation at each session. The COP then grants the status of observer to these bodies or organisations, who can attend the current and subsequent COP sessions.

At least one third of Parties must be present for the Chairman of the Bureau to declare a session open. Nevertheless, the presence of two-thirds of Parties is required for any decision to be taken. The Chairman establishes a list of speakers for each session and the Party representatives can take the floor by showing their intention. The observers may also speak if so authorised by the Chairman. During the discussion on a question, the Party representatives can raise a point of order that requires an immediate ruling by the Chairman. The Parties must submit proposals and amendments to proposals in writing to the permanent secretariat.

In terms of voting rights, the Parties have a single vote, except for regional economic integration organisations, which have a number of votes equal to the number of their member States that are Parties to the UNCCD. Nevertheless, the regional economic integration organisations cannot exercise their voting right if one of the member States is using its own. This applies to the European Union as all the member States vote individually (see Articles 36 to 46 of the Rules of Procedure, ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1). Although the COP rules of operating procedure set out the voting procedures, note that most decisions are taken by consensus and that recourse to a vote is normally seen as a failure of negotiations.
During each session, the COP sets its budget and sets the date and duration for the next ordinary session. Each COP session regularly includes a high-level segment, which gathers Heads of State and Ministers. The final report of each COP lists speakers and summarises declarations made during this segment.

Two “open dialogue” meetings, where NGOs and the civil society can take part, are also held during each COP session. These meetings are organised by the NGOs in conjunction with the secretariat and encourage their involvement in implementing the UNCCD. They are normally chaired by the Chairman of the COP, the Chairman of the Committee of the Whole (COW) or his representative.

Parliamentarians are also invited to meet for an “Interparliamentary Round Table”, during which they discuss commitments and the implementation of the UNCCD. A “Declaration of parliamentarians” is adopted at the end of each Round Table. This is then annexed to the final COP report.

Representatives of business and industry entities are also participating in the COP, mainly during the Sustainable Land Management Business Forum. During this event, managers of companies with an interest in land management discuss with government officials and representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs) about a cooperation that would allow a better management of land. The first such Forum was held at COP 10 and has been part of the special events of the COP ever since.

Until 2001, the COP met annually. Since then, it meets every two years.

1.2.2 The Committee on Science and Technology (CST)

UNCCD Article 24 creates the Committee on Science and Technology (CST). This is a subsidiary body devoted to providing the Conference of the Parties (COP) with information and advice on technological questions on combating desertification and mitigating drought.

The CST is a multi-disciplinary body open to the participation of all Parties. It is composed of government representatives competent in the relevant fields of expertise. It meets during ordinary sessions of the COP and the CST bureau follows up the work of the committee between COP sessions.

The bureau is responsible for monitoring the work of the CST between sessions. The President of the CST office is elected by the COP, while other officers (four Vice- Presidents) are elected by the CST. The president and vice-presidents are chosen so as to ensure equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected countries, particularly those in Africa, and cannot hold office for more two consecutive terms.14

14. Articles 22 and 31 of the Rules of procedure, as amended by decision 25/COP.10 (ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1).
The COP set out the CST mandate initially during its first session in 1997. As part of its activities, the CST provides a link between the COP and the scientific community in that it seeks to encourage cooperation with the competent national, international and non-governmental agencies and bodies to take advantage of services and information they may provide. It also works with the consultative committees of other conventions and international organisations so as to coordinate their activities and avoid duplications to achieve the best possible results.

COP 9 saw a reshaping of the CST operation to bring it in line with the 10-year strategic plan and framework (Decision 16/COP.9). The main purpose of this reshaping was to organise CST sessions in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format focusing on defined themes. The competent regional and subregional scientific networks, institutions, bodies and organisations, together with the interested non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders from the civil society, are involved in the discussions at scientific conferences. The COP.9 saw a reshaping of the CST operation to bring it in line with the 10-year strategic plan and framework (Decision 16/COP.9). The main purpose of this reshaping was to organise CST sessions in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format focusing on defined themes. The competent regional and subregional scientific networks, institutions, bodies and organisations, together with the interested non-governmental organisations and other stakeholders from the civil society, are involved in the discussions at scientific conferences. The developed country Parties, international organisations and stakeholders involved are called upon to financially support future scientific conferences under the Convention. Moreover, two subsequent decisions have been adopted to continue this reshaping. The first, decision 18 COP.10, is of a more general nature and deals with the organization of the second and third scientific conferences. The second, decision 21/COP.11, contained more detailed provisions regarding the conduct of the inter-sessional CST meetings, and the organization of scientific conferences and their follow-up by the science-policy interface.

The Strategy provides for the CST to become an international knowledge hub on desertification by compiling all the scientific, technical and socio-economic information available on the causes and effects of land degradation. In addition, the CST should design guidelines for monitoring and assessing the spread of drought. It will also support the implementation of advocacy, awareness-raising and education, thereby influencing the local competent national and international mechanisms and players.

The CST was already in charge of a survey and evaluation of the existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies working on topics relevant to combating desertification, with a view to constituting a network to support the implementation of the UNCCD (UNCCD Art. 25). Following COP decisions, the (international, regional, subregional, national and non-governmental) organisations carrying out comparable work to the CST were also listed (ICCD/COP(3)/CST/5).

To create a network of expertise, the secretariat maintains a file of independent experts, taking account of the need for a multi-disciplinary approach, gender equality and a broad and equitable geographical representation. With this in mind, the COP encourages the Parties to keep their national list of experts up to date.

15. Decision 15/COP.1 (ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1).
16. See decisions 21/COP.1 (ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1) and 15/COP.2 (ICCD/COP(2)/14/Add.1).
date. This list, however, remains a concern. Its review resulted in decisions 21/COP.9 and 23/COP.10, and is again on the agenda of COP 12 (see section 3.3.5). Some efforts have been mobilized in order to make it more useful, for example by including more diverse fields of knowledge and including the humanities, as well as experts from a diversity of sectors, including NGOs. Decision 23/COP.10 also requires Parties to update their list of national experts and the secretariat to set up web devices for that purpose.

The COP can name Ad Hoc Groups to provide information and advice through the CST on particular questions on the state of knowledge in science and technology. The COP draws from the file of independent experts when constituting ad hoc groups, to name experts recommended by the CST. It also sets out the mandate and operating modalities for each ad hoc group and the duration of its functions (Art. 24, paras. 2 and 3 and Decision 17/COP.1, ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1). Ad hoc groups have been named for a variety of themes, including benchmarks and indicators, early warning systems and traditional knowledge (For more information on traditional knowledge, see Fact Sheet 4.8).

1.2.3 The Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC)

At its fifth session in 2001, the Conference of the Parties (COP) created a Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC). It is a subsidiary body of the COP, just like the CST. The committee was created following numerous debates on how best to revise the implementation of the Convention. Thus, although the COP 3 was required to review the implementation during its regular sessions, there was insufficient time for an in-depth analysis and the COP therefore created an ad hoc committee to review the implementation. This committee met during COP 4 and once during the inter-sessional period. The CRIC modalities were based on lessons drawn from the ad hoc committee.

The CRIC is made up of all the Parties to the Convention. Observers (NGOs, national and international governmental organisations, etc.) may also be authorised to attend its sessions, provided that one of the Parties present do not oppose this. The COP elects the Chairman, whereas the CRIC elects the Vice-Chairmen. They form the CRIC Bureau and are chosen to ensure equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected countries. They also cannot serve for more than two consecutive mandates. The CRIC meets every year, during and between the ordinary COP sessions.

18. Decision 1/COP5 (ICCD/COP(5)/11/Add.1).
19. Decision 1/COP5 Annex (ICCD/COP(5)/11/Add.1).
The CRIC mandate is to review the implementation of the UNCCD using experience acquired at national, subregional, regional and international levels and to facilitate the exchange of information on implementation procedures drawn up by the Parties. During meetings held at the same time as the official COP sessions, the CRIC must focus on reviewing the UNCCD operational method (reports by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism on the execution of their functions, etc.) whereas during the “inter-sessional” sessions, it focuses on the questions linked directly to the implementation of the UNCCD (listing and reviewing implementation measures and analysing their effectiveness, summarising best practices and experiences acquired, preparing recommendations, etc.). The CRIC reports its conclusions and its recommendations for the next stages in UNCCD implementation at each COP session.20

COP 9 confirmed and strengthened the CRIC mandate in accordance with The Strategy. In its final decision (ICCD/COP(9)L.22), it established the CRIC as a permanent subsidiary body of the COP.21 The CRIC mandate in the annex to the decision covers the subject, functions, composition, scope of the review process, session intervals, organisation of work, type of review and methodology and the transparency of work.22 These functions have been extended by Decision 18/COP.11 (ICCD/COP(11) Add.1), which also requests a progress report in this regard. Its main functions are henceforth as follows:

• Undertake an assessment of implementation of The Strategy (hereinafter referred to as “assessment of implementation”) through the review of information provided by Parties and other reporting entities, and of information on civil society, including the private sector;
• Undertake a performance review of the Convention’s institutions and subsidiary bodies (hereinafter referred to as “performance review”), following a results-based management approach (RBM) and on the basis of the reports on the two-year costed work programme;
• Review and compile best practices on implementation of the Convention and forward this information for consideration by the COP with a view to disseminating it;
• Assist the Conference of the Parties to assess and monitor the performance and effectiveness of the CRIC;
• Assist the COP to evaluate the implementation of The Strategy, including its mid-term evaluation by 2013;
• Give recommendations, based on its review of performance indicators, to entities of the UNCCD on priorities to be included in their programme of work and budget for the following programming biennium;

20. Id.
21. ICCD/COP(9)/L.22.
22. Decision 11/COP.9, Annex (ICCD/COP(9)/18/Add.1).
• With the secretariat, use the outcomes of intersessional deliberations of the Committee to inform the drafting of decisions and recommendations for consideration by country Parties at the COP;

• Promote the improvement of interlinkages between its Bureau and that of the regional coordination mechanisms;

• With the Bureau of the CST, with the support of the secretariat, jointly propose how scientific considerations based on the outcomes of the CST could be better integrated into the exchanges taking place during intersessional sessions of the CRIC, in order to improve the incorporation of science into policy considerations under the UNCCD.

The COP decision also states that the COP should review the CRIC mandate, operation and meeting timetable by its 14th session at the latest and modify it as necessary, mainly in terms of reviewing the need and modalities of the CRIC as a subsidiary body.

1.2.4 The secretariat

UNCCD Article 23 provides for the creation of a permanent secretariat (secretariat), which was instituted at the first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) held in Rome in 1997. Bonn in Germany was chosen as the city to house the secretariat during this session. A headquarters agreement with the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany was signed in 1998 and came into force in 1999, making Bonn the official headquarters of the secretariat. The headquarters of the secretariat has been located in the United Nations complex in Bonn since July 2006.

The secretariat represents the administrative body of the UNCCD, i.e. it assists the COP in exercising its functions. To achieve this, it organises the sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies whilst providing them with services as required. The secretariat compiles and transmits the reports that it receives, mainly the reports received in application of UNCCD Article 26 (about the reports, see fact sheet 4.2). It thus makes sure that assistance is given to affected developing country Parties that so request it, especially African countries, in compiling and communicating information required under the UNCCD.

In addition, the secretariat coordinates its activities with those of secretariats of other relevant international bodies and conventions. For instance, the secretariat set up a joint liaison group together with the secretariats of the other Rio Conventions, i.e. the Convention on Biological Diversity and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The secretariat agreed to a joint work programme on the biological diversity of dry and sub-humid lands with the latter. It has also agreed to a cooperation protocol with the Bureau of the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, and a Memorandum of Understanding with the Convention on Migratory Species.

23. Decision 5/COP.1 (ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1).
24. Decision 1/COP.3 (ICCD/COP(3)/20/Add.1).
The secretariat is authorised to enter into such administrative and contractual arrangements as may be required for the effective discharge of its functions. It is nevertheless required to account for the way in which it discharges its functions and must present reports for this purpose to the COP. UNCCD Article 23 lastly stipulates that the secretariat is required to perform such other secretariat functions as may be assigned to it by the COP; these are specified in the decisions taken during the various COP sessions.25

The COP Rules of Procedure also allocate a variety of functions to the secretariat. They state in particular that the secretariat is required to (i) arrange for interpretation at the session, (ii) collect, translate, reproduce and distribute the documents of the session, (iii) publish and distribute the official documents of the session, (iv) make, and arrange for keeping of, sound recordings of the session, (v) arrange for the custody and preservation of the documents of the session and (vi) perform all other work that the Conference of the Parties may require.26

The secretariat also deals with the accounts and financial affairs of the UNCCD, including the trusts funds used to facilitate the participation of developing countries and NGOs in the COP sessions and the funds used to finance special activities (additional funds). These funds are made up of voluntary contributions. The secretariat's activities are financed by the contributions from country Parties through the Convention budget.

In the execution of its functions, the secretariat is supported by the United Nations Conference Services Division in Geneva, which translates documents into the six official UN languages, provides interpretation and services official meetings.

The activities of the secretariat underwent a general review by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), which reported to the COP during its seventh session (Nairobi, 2005). Several shortcomings were underlined in the report, mainly the lack of proposals for a new medium-term strategic plan by the secretariat since 1999 and the overlapping of its functions with those of the Global Mechanism (MM).27 The JIU issued several recommendations that were analysed by an Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group (IIWG) duly mandated specifically for this purpose.28 Those problems have since been addressed, as indicated in the sections of this guide that pertain to the secretariat and the GM.

The Strategy sets out the guidelines for the work of the secretariat. The secretariat is called on to play a role in introducing advocacy, awareness-raising and education and in obtaining results in preparing an action framework working towards creating a favourable climate for seeking solutions to combat desertification and land

25. See for example decision 3/COP.6 that sets out the functions of the secretariat (ICCD/COP(6)/11/Add.1).
27. See the 2005 Report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) (ICCD/COP(7)/4).
28. Decision 3/COP.7 (ICCD/COP(7)/16/Add.1).
degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought. The plan and framework also stipulates that the secretariat should play a support role in achieving other operational objectives.

The secretariat’s annual workplan is displayed on the UNCCD Internet site.\textsuperscript{29} Note lastly that the secretariat is supported by a liaison office in New York and includes three regional coordination units (Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean).

\subsection*{1.2.5 The Global Mechanism (GM)}

The Global Mechanism (GM), instituted by UNCCD Article 21(4), is a subsidiary body of the COP and aims to promote actions leading to the mobilisation and channelling of financial resources to affected developing country Parties.

The GM falls under the Conference of the Parties (COP) in the same way as the Convention’s secretariat. In this respect, it is required to report on to the COP on its operation, its activities undertaken to mobilise and channel financial resources to the affected developing country Parties, the assessment of funds available to implement the UNCCD and the search of means for distributing these funds.

The GM was set up at the end of 1998, two years after the UNCCD entered into force. In September 1997, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) was chosen to house the GM during the first session of the Conference of the Parties.\textsuperscript{30} IFAD hosted the GM until 2014, at which point it moved to Bonn into the premises of the secretariat (Decision 6/COP.11). A GM liaison office, hosted by FAO, in Rome, opened on 1 April 2014.

The GM’s operating budget comes from allocations approved by the Conference of the Parties and voluntary contributions by Parties and other multilateral, non-governmental or private donors. Special allocation funds fed by contributions from bilateral and multilateral sources can also finance the GM interventions in support of UNCCD implementation.

The 10-year strategic plan and framework sets out the main tasks of the GM, namely to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms and to mobilise substantial financial resources. The GM must also facilitate access to the technology and play a role in introducing advocacy, awareness-raising and education and in preparing an action framework working towards creating a favourable climate for seeking solutions to combat desertification and land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought (operational objectives 1 and 2).

\textsuperscript{29} http://www.unccd.int/.
\textsuperscript{30} Decision 24/COP.1 (ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1).
1.2.6 Working groups and intersessional groups

The Conference of the Parties and some of its subsidiary bodies are authorised to create working groups from time to time to delegate some of their work that they cannot discharge within official sessions. The ad hoc working groups are committees of varied composition, often restricted but sometimes open to all the Parties, with a mandate that is normally given a time limit. They are most frequently asked to review a technical question in depth or conduct a policy debate outside the limits of official sessions. NGOs, international organisations and other observers are frequently unable to participate, however. Lastly, the working groups normally have no decision-making authority; they submit recommendations to the COP.

There are several ad hoc working groups under the UNCCD. For example, the Committee on Science and Technology has several times created working groups for an in-depth review of certain questions falling under its mandate during the inter-session periods, be they questions relating to traditional knowledge or early warning systems. Forerunner of the CRIC, an ad hoc working group was also created, under the auspices of the Conference of the Parties (Decisions 6/COP3 and 1/COP4), to revise the implementation of the Convention.

1.3 The Parties

The general obligations under Article 4 of the Convention emphasise the “need to coordinate efforts and develop a coherent long-term strategy at all levels”. The strategy adopted must be based on an integrated approach (Art. 4):

- that addresses the physical, biological and socio-economic aspects of desertification and drought;
- that takes into consideration the situation and particular needs of all affected developing country Parties. To create an economic environment conducive to sustainable development, they must be given particular attention in terms of international trade, marketing arrangements and debt;
- that integrates strategies for poverty eradication;
- that encourages cooperation:
  - among affected country Parties in the fields of the environment and the conservation of land and water resources;
  - that is subregional, regional and international;
  - within relevant intergovernmental organisations
- and which avoids duplications when establishing institutional mechanisms and encourages the use of existing bilateral and multilateral financial mechanisms.

The article also provides that Affected developing country Parties can request assistance for the implementation the Convention.
1.3.1 The affected country Parties

The affected countries undertake to (UNCCD Art. 5):

(a) give due priority to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought, and allocate adequate resources in accordance with their circumstances and capabilities;

(b) establish strategies and priorities, within the framework of sustainable development plans and/or policies, to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought;

(c) address the underlying causes of desertification and pay special attention to the socio-economic factors contributing to desertification processes;

(d) promote awareness and facilitate the participation of local populations, particularly women and youth, with the support of nongovernmental organizations, in efforts to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought; and

(e) provide an enabling environment by strengthening, as appropriate, relevant existing legislation and, where they do not exist, enacting new laws and establishing long-term policies and action programmes.

The affected countries discharge these obligations by preparing and implementing National Action Programmes (NAP) and subregional and regional action programmes (UNCCD Art. 9). They must also report on the implementation of the UNCCD to the COP (UNCCD Art. 26).

Lastly, The Strategy provides for affected country Parties to develop integrated investment frameworks (IIFs) for leveraging national, bilateral and multilateral resources with a view to increasing the effectiveness and impact of interventions (expected outcome 5.1). Fact sheet 4.6 provides more information on The Strategy.

1.3.2 The developed country Parties

Under Article 6 of the Convention, the developed country Parties undertake to support the efforts by the affected developing country Parties. To achieve this, they undertake to:

(a) actively support, as agreed, individually or jointly, the efforts of affected developing country Parties, particularly those in Africa, and the least developed countries, to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought;

(b) provide substantial financial resources and other forms of support to assist affected developing country Parties, particularly those in Africa, effectively to develop and implement their own long-term plans and strategies to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought;

(c) promote the mobilization of new and additional funding pursuant to article 20, paragraph 2 (b);

(d) encourage the mobilization of funding from the private sector and other non-governmental sources; and
(e) promote and facilitate access by affected country Parties, particularly affected
developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-
how.

The UNCCD also requests donor countries that already have financial aid
agreements with affected country Parties to review their public development aid
(PDA) so that special, lasting attention can be given to implementing the UNCCD
(UNCCD Art. 20).

UNCCD Article 26 and Decision 11/COP.1, especially, require developed
country Parties to report on the financial resources they have provided, or are
providing, under the Convention (see fact sheet 4.2). Thus, the developed country
Parties must report regularly on measures taken to assist in the preparation and
implementation of action programmes by developed countries affected by desert-
ification and the financial resources provided. The national reports are submitted
to the UNCCD secretariat which summarises and analyses them in a report submitted
to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
(CRIC) for review.31

31. Decision 1/COP.5 (ICCD/COP(5)/11/Add.1).
This section presents in summary form the outcome of COP, CRIC and CST sessions held to date. It also includes a summary of some other important meetings related to the UNCCD.

Table 1. History of UNCCD sessions and meetings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>COP, Date, Location</th>
<th>CRIC, Date, Location</th>
<th>CST, Date, Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>COP 12, 12-23 October, Ankara</td>
<td>CRIC 14, 12-23 October, Ankara</td>
<td>CST 12, 12-23 October, Ankara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CRIC 13, 25-27 March, Bonn</td>
<td></td>
<td>CST S-4, 9-12 March, Cancún</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>COP 11, 16-27 September, Windhoek</td>
<td>CRIC 12, 17-27 September, Windhoek</td>
<td>CST S-3, 9-12 April, Bonn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CRIC 11, 15-19 April, Bonn</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>COP 10, 10-21 October, Changwon (Initiative de Changwon)</td>
<td>CRIC 10, 11-20 October, Changwon</td>
<td>CST S-2, 16-18 February, Bonn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CRIC 9, 21-25 February, Geneva</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>COP 9, 21 September - 2 October, Buenos Aires</td>
<td>CRIC 8, 23-30 September, Buenos Aires</td>
<td>CST 9, 22-25 September, Buenos Aires</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>CRIC 7, 3-14 November, Istanbul</td>
<td></td>
<td>CST S-1, 3-6 November, Istanbul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32. Unless stated otherwise, the sources of information contained in this part are official session documents (available at www.unccd.int) and summaries prepared by the Earth Negotiations Bulletin of the International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD).
**Table 1. History of UNCCD sessions and meetings (cont’d)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>COP ES-1</td>
<td>26 November, New York</td>
<td>COP 8, 3-14 Sept.</td>
<td>Adoption of The Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COP 8</td>
<td>3-14 September, Madrid</td>
<td>CRIC 6, 4-7 Sept.</td>
<td>(Adoption of The Strategy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CRIC 6</td>
<td>4-7 September, Madrid</td>
<td>CST 8, 4-6 Sept.</td>
<td>(Adoption of The Strategy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CRIC 5</td>
<td>12-21 March, Buenos Aires</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Adoption of The Strategy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>COP 7</td>
<td>17-28 October, Nairobi</td>
<td>CRIC 4, 18-21 Oct.</td>
<td>Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CRIC 4</td>
<td>18-21 October, Nairobi</td>
<td>CST 7, 18-20 Oct.</td>
<td>(Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CRIC 3</td>
<td>2-11 May, Bonn</td>
<td>CRIC 3, 2-11 May</td>
<td>(Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>COP 6</td>
<td>25 August to 5 Sept., Havana</td>
<td>CRIC 2, 26-29 Aug.</td>
<td>(Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CRIC 2</td>
<td>26-29 August, Havana</td>
<td>CST 6, 26-28 Aug.</td>
<td>(Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>CRIC 1</td>
<td>18-29 November, Rome</td>
<td>CRIC 1, 18-29 Nov.</td>
<td>(Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>COP 5</td>
<td>1-12 October, Geneva</td>
<td>CST 5, 2-4 Oct.</td>
<td>(Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>COP 4</td>
<td>11-22 December, Bonn</td>
<td>CST 4, 12-14 Dec.</td>
<td>(Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>COP 3</td>
<td>15-26 November, Recife</td>
<td>CST 3, 16-18 Nov.</td>
<td>(Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>COP 2</td>
<td>30 November - 11 Dec., Dakar</td>
<td>CST 2, 1-3 Dec.</td>
<td>(Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>COP 1</td>
<td>29 September - 10 Oct., Rome</td>
<td>CST 1, 29 Sept.</td>
<td>(Adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Entry into force of the UNCCD (26 December), 90 days after the 50th ratification</td>
<td>CST 1, 29 Sept. - 10 Oct., Rome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Adoption of the UNCCD (17 June)</td>
<td>CST 1, 29 Sept. - 10 Oct., Rome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Adoption of Resolution 47/188 by the UN General Assembly calling for the adoption of a convention to combat desertification (December)</td>
<td>CST 1, 29 Sept. - 10 Oct., Rome</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>Adoption by the United Nations of an action plan to fight desertification</td>
<td>CST 1, 29 Sept. - 10 Oct., Rome</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**COP 1/CST 1: September-October 1997: Rome, Italy**

The first session of the COP and the CST were held in Rome in September-October 1997, the year following the entry into force of the UNCCD.

**First session of the CST**

The agenda for CST 1 mainly included organisational items, including procedures for establishing ad hoc panels and for establishing and maintaining the list of independent experts.
First session of the COP

The first session of the COP was held in the year following the entry into force of the UNCCD. The issues mainly covered the organisation of the COP and other UNCCD institutions. The COP “rules of procedure” (Fact sheet 4.3 provides additional information on the Rules of Procedure) and its “financial management rules and those of its subsidiary bodies and the secretariat” were adopted and Bonn in Germany was named as the city to house the UNCCD’s Permanent secretariat. The delegates also chose the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) as the host organisation for the Global Mechanism and fixed its functions. The delegates also adopted the mandate and the work programme for the Committee on Science and Technology (CST).

The COP adopted procedures to organise the communication of information required under UNCCD Article 26 so that it could review the implementation of the UNCCD.

Following the recommendation by the CST, the COP established an ad hoc panel of experts to examine the benchmarks and indicators relevant to the CD and invite the Parties to the UNCCD to produce national inventories on the use of technologies, knowledge, know-how and traditional and local practices.

The COP also mandated the CST to assess the links between traditional knowledge and technologies and to submit its observations at COP 2.

Building partnerships for the UNCCD was also discussed at this session. In this context, the COP decided to include two open dialogue sessions with the NGOs in its regular session programme.

Note lastly that the COP decided to establish and maintain a roster of independent experts in the various areas of specialisation relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. The members of ad hoc panels are chosen from the experts on this roster.

See document ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1 for all decisions adopted by the COP at its first session.

COP 2/CST 2: November-December 1998:
Dakar, Senegal

Second session of the CST

The CST considered the evaluation of links between traditional knowledge and modern technologies. The discussions at CST 2 led to the creation of an ad hoc panel to continue the discussion on the links between traditional and modern knowledge.

Second session of the COP

It also examined a report about measures taken to encourage the implementation of the UNCCD in several regions. It was decided that the reports of affected African country Parties and from other regions would be reviewed during the third and fourth sessions of the COP.
Regional implementation of the UNCCD and the development of regional action programmes were discussed during this session and the COP invited the Parties to do everything necessary to implement such regional programmes. It also urged the Central and Eastern European countries to submit a regional implementation annex project to the UNCCD (Annex V).

The question of early warning systems was allocated to the CST for the 3rd session and the COP established an ad hoc panel on traditional knowledge. It asked the secretariat to conclude its work of collecting information on traditional knowledge and to present a summary to the CST 3.

In addition, the delegates criticised the failure to implement the GM and discussed the draft “Memorandum of Understanding between the COP and IFAD on the GM administrative and operational modalities”.

Furthermore, the COP analysed a report by the secretariat on the “collaboration and synergies among Rio conventions for the implementation of the Convention”.

Note, lastly, that the negotiations on resolving implementation questions (UNCCD Art. 27) and the procedures for arbitration and conciliation and the adoption of related annexes (UNCCD Art. 28) were opened during this session.

See document ICCD/COP(2)/14/Add.1 for all decisions adopted by the COP at its sixth session.

**COP 3/CST 3: November 1999: Recife, Brazil**
**Third session of the CST**

Early warning systems and traditional knowledge were the main topics of COP 3.

**Third session of the COP**

The secretariat submitted its “Medium-term strategy” at this session, which was examined by the COP. The COP also approved the amended version of the “Memorandum of Understanding between the COP and IFAD on the GM administrative and operational modalities”.

During this session, the reports submitted by the affected African country Parties, the subregional organisations, the developed country Parties, the United Nations bodies and the intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations on implementation of the UNCCD were reviewed, along with the secretariat’s compilation and summary of these reports. The COP issued recommendations for each report and encouraged the Parties to use quantifiable and verifiable benchmarks and indicators to determine progress in implementing the UNCCD.

It also formed an ad hoc working group to review and analyse reports on the national, subregional and regional action programmes (see also Fact Sheet 4.1 on NAPs) and urged the Parties and observers to present their proposals regarding a committee to evaluate national reports.
Preparation of a declaration to enhance implementation of the obligations of the UNCCD, including measures to strengthen its implementation, was initiated for consideration and adoption at the fourth session.

The COP issued recommendations on the report covering the policies, operational strategy and the GM functioning modalities and activities.

Note, lastly, that the COP adopted a decision on reinforcing the role of NGOs in implementing the UNCCD.

See document ICCD/COP(3)/20/Add.1 for all decisions adopted by the COP at its third session.

**COP 4/CST 4: December 2000: Bonn, Germany**

**Fourth session of the CST**

COP 3 had entrusted the CST with considering, at its fourth session, the application of traditional knowledge, benchmarks and indicators and early warning systems to monitoring and assessing the sustainable management of land and water in the drylands, with a view to efficient execution of national action programmes, given similar or complementary work under other conventions.

The fourth session of the CST therefore submitted proposals to the COP to improve the work of the CST (criteria and progress indicators) and to assess networks, traditional knowledge, early warning systems, the roster of experts and the future work of the CST.

**Fourth session of the COP**

COP 4 adopted Annex V of the UNCCD on the regional implementation of the Convention in Central and Eastern Europe.

It also adopted of the declaration on commitments to strengthen the execution of obligations listed in the UNCCD (Bonn Declaration).

Also of note is that the Ad Hoc Working Group for the review and analysis of national reports submitted to the third and fourth sessions started its work during this session, the aim being to draw conclusions and make recommendations for the adoption of new measures to improve the implementation of the UNCCD. The Ad Hoc Working Group presented its interim report at this session and undertook to present its full report during COP 5. The COP also requested the secretariat to compile the recommendations of Parties on creating a committee to review national reports.

In terms of the national reports, the COP requested the Parties to incorporate various elements into them, including information on the scientific and technological activities to combat desertification undertaken at all levels.

The COP also re-appointed an ad hoc panel on early warning systems.
Note, lastly, that during this session, the COP requested the Parties to submit solutions to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST.

See document ICCD/COP(4)/11/Add.1 for all decisions adopted by the COP at its fourth session.

**COP 5/CST 5: October 2001: Geneva, Switzerland**

**Fifth session of the CST**

CST 5 reviewed the issue of information communication strategies and their use with a view to creating best practices in combating desertification.

In accordance with its programme, the Committee produced recommendations on the review of available networks, the roster of experts, the scientific and technological aspects of national reports, traditional know-how, early warning systems, the Dryland Degradation Assessment and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, improvements to be made to the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, the CST work programme, the work programme of the ad hoc panel and benchmarks and indicators.

**Fifth session of the COP**

During this session, the Ad Hoc Working Group for the review of national reports submitted at the third and fourth sessions presented its overall report, which included its conclusions and recommendations on the new measures for the implementation of the UNCCD. The COP took note of these recommendations and invited the Parties to take account of them when preparing their national reports.

As a follow-up to proposals received on this topic, the COP decided to create a new subsidiary body, the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the UNCCD (CRIC), tasked especially with analysing the reports of Parties and observers and information and opinions from the CST and GM. The COP established the mandate and functions of the CRIC and also listed the thematic questions it should consider. It scheduled the first session of the CRIC, in November 2002, as “inter-sessional”, i.e. held between two ordinary COP sessions.

The COP took note of observations received from Parties and adopted various ways and means on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, including establishing a “Group of experts in the area of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought”, acting under the immediate authority of the CST.

During this session, the COP also decided to submit the summary of the high-level dialogue held on the fringes of the fifth session to the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg. The summary covered the mitigation of poverty through the rapid and effective implementation of the UNCCD.
In addition, reinforcing the financing of the UNCCD was also noted following the particular support from the Global Environment Facility (GEM), whose Council decided to consider land degradation (desertification and deforestation) as a focal area.

A certain number of questions relating to the effectiveness and mandate of the Global Mechanism were raised during the regular review of its activities. The COP therefore requested an independent assessment of the Global Mechanism for consideration at its next session.

See document ICCD/COP(5)/11/Add.1 for all decisions adopted by the COP at its fifth session.

**CRIC 1: November 2002: Rome, Italy**

**First session of the CRIC**

At its first session, the CRIC reviewed the situation in the five regions targeted by the UNCCD with respect to the seven general themes that its mandate requires it to examine, i.e.:

- The participatory processes involving civil society, non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations;
- Legislative and institutional frameworks or arrangements;
- Resource mobilisation and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusions of partnership agreements;
- Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies;
- Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought;
- Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment;
- Access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how.

The CRIC reviewed the reports from developed country Parties on measures to help to prepare and implement action programmes from all regions and it reviewed the reports from affected country Parties, United Nations bodies and other intergovernmental organisations. The CRIC also considered information on the financial mechanisms supporting the implementation of the UNCCD, the opinions received from the CST and the GM and certain reports from the secretariat.

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33. ICCD/COP(7)/3., p. 6.

Sixth session of the CST

CST 6 mainly continued the debate on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee, by discussing the framework for the two-year workplan for the Expert Panel, among other things.

Second session of the CRIC

The second session of the CRC took place at the same time as COP 6. The CRIC addressed major themes, namely the assessment of the implementation of the UNCCD and its institutional arrangements and the review of data on financing the implementation of the UNCCD by agencies and multilateral institutions.

Sixth session of the COP

During this session, the COP monitored the outcome of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) relevant to the UNCCD and underlined especially that the implementation of the UNCCD could assist in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The COP also emphasised the strengthened collaboration between the UNCCD and the GEF and named it as the new financial mechanism for the UNCCD.

In terms of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, the COP set out new guidelines for the Group of experts in the area of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought and set it a workplan for the next two years.

The COP also underlined the existence of activities to promote and strengthen the links between the different conventions and international bodies, by emphasising especially the adoption of a Memorandum of Understanding between the UNCCD and the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species and the implementation of a joint programme between the UNCCD and the Convention on Biological Diversity.

This COP session also reviewed the independent evaluation of the Global Mechanism, which had been requested at the previous session. This evaluation was the high point in a long debate on the role and effectiveness of the Global Mechanism (GM), which had experienced delays and difficulties in actually demonstrating resource mobilisation. The assessment issued recommendations on the strategic direction of GM activities and on its operational arrangements. The evaluation also raised the spiny problem of possible overlapping between the activities of the GM and of the secretariat.

A similar review of the secretariat’s activities was ordered on the same occasion from the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU). Its aim was to review the directions, means and activities of the secretariat from a strategic and operational angle, to determine means of making it more effective.
The COP adopted six decisions based on the recommendations of CRIC regarding: the further steps in the implementation of the UNCCD; the overall review of the secretariat’s activities and progress made by affected country Parties in the implementation of the UNCCD; the implementation of the Bonn Declaration on the commitments to enhance implementation of the obligations of the Convention; the review of policies, operational modalities and activities of the GM; collaboration with the Global Environment Facility; and the work program of the third CRIC session.34

See document ICCD/COP(6)/11/Add.1 for all decisions adopted by the COP at its sixth session.

**CRIC 3: May 2005: Bonn, Germany**

**Third session of the CRIC**

CRIC 3 was the stage for many exchanges of information, experiences and lessons learned between the affected countries. The CRIC focused on the review of the application of the UNCCD in Africa and globally and on preparing conclusions and recommendations on these topics. It also reviewed the reports of developed country Parties on measures to help prepare and apply action programmes of African country Parties and the information communicated by the United Nations bodies, funds and programmes and other intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations.

Two global interactive dialogues were also organised under this third session to enrich the Committee’s discussions. One focused on the integration of national action programmes and their contribution to eradicating poverty in general and the other on land degradation, desertification and their impacts on migrations and conflicts.35

**COP 7/CST 7/CRIC 4: October 2005: Nairobi, Kenya**

**Seventh session of the CST**

COP 6 had entrusted the CST for its seventh session with a further review of the integrated approach to land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation.

**Fourth session of the CRIC**

The fourth session of the CRC took place at the same time as COP 7. The CRIC dwelt on the evaluation of the implementation of the UNCCD, the GM and on the review of data on the financing of the UNCCD.

34. ICCD/COP(6)/11, par. 46.
35. ICCD/CRIC(3)/9.
Seventh session of the COP

This session featured many controversial, often inconclusive negotiations and many delegates were dissatisfied at its end, for a variety of reasons. The COP adopted several decisions, including: to encourage the implementation of the UNCCD in Africa, that called for strengthening capacities of African countries, building partnerships and mainstreaming, mobilising and channelling resources for the implementation of national action programmes (NAP – see sheet I about NAPs) in Africa; the review of measures taken by the Parties for enhanced implementation of the obligations under the UNCCD; resource mobilization for the implementation of the UNCCD; cooperation with the GEF; and improving procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the COP.36

The COP also carried the CRIC mandate forward to the end of COP8. This extension to its mandate gave CRIC a chance to complete the analysis of national reports of affected country Parties of regions other than Africa during its fifth session in March 2007, before the detailed evaluation of its mandate and its operations planned for COP 8.

The COP established an ad hoc working group to improve the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to it so as to advise it on adopting procedures for establishing simplified and consistent reports and format methods (standardised) (AHWGR).

Following the general review of the activities of the secretariat by the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), requested by COP 6, COP 7 created an Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group (IIWG), with the mandate to review the JIU recommendations and prepare a draft 10-year strategic plan and framework for the Convention for consideration at its eight session.

Regarding the improvement in the functioning of the CST, the COP decided to renew the mandate of the Expert Panel until COP 8 and requested that it continue with its priority activities.

The central budget was once again one of the tricky questions during the 7th session. The budget was reformed considerably and saw a considerable decrease for the 2006-2007 financial year. This budgetary downturn was moreover highly criticised by several delegates.

However, progress was definitely made during this session with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the UNCCD secretariat and the GEF on strengthening collaboration (ICCD/COP(7)/16/Add.1). The COP also welcomed under this same decision the Country Pilot Partnerships of the GEF, the TerrAfrica initiative, a multi-institutional alliance launched by the World Bank, and the “Least-Developed Countries – Small Island Developing States Targeted Umbrella Project for Capacity Development and Mainstreaming of Sustainable Land Management” implemented by the UNDP.

36. ICCD/COP(7)/16, par. 44.
Regarding the monitoring of the World Summit for Sustainable Development (WSSD), the COP recalled that the implementation of the UNCCD is a means of achieving the Millennium Development Goals and urged the Parties to meet their commitments in this respect. The COP also reviewed the preparations for the International year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD).

Lastly, note the adoption of the Nairobi Declaration on the implementation of the UNCCD, in which Party representatives mainly state their intention to combat poverty and their desire to support North-South cooperation and for the intersession process that aims to prepare a consistent strategy and long-term framework to strengthening UNCCD implementation.

See document ICCD/COP(7)/16/Add.1 for all decisions adopted by the COP at its seventh session.

CRIC 5: March 2007: Buenos Aires, Argentina

Fifth session of the CRIC

The fifth session of the CRIC took place in March 2007 in Argentina. The central focus of this session was the review of the implementation of the UNCCD in the affected countries other than in African region. It also took stock of 2006 – the International year of Deserts and Desertification.

It also reviewed the draft of The Strategy developed by the IIWG. The IIWG, consisting of three delegates from each of five regions, as well as representatives of the secretariat and the GM, was supported by a team of consultants coordinated by UNISFÉRA.

An intersessional group met at the same time as this CRIC session: the Ad hoc Working Group to improve the procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports on the implementation of the Convention.

COP 8/CST 8/CRIC 6: September 2007: Madrid, Spain

Eighth session of the CST

The COP had requested the CST to consider the issue of the effects of climatic variations and human activities on land degradation (assessment, field experience gained and integration of mitigation and adaptation practices for livelihood improvement).

The eighth session of the CST focused on the studies submitted by the Expert Panel, covering, among other things, the methods for assessing land degradation and its links with poverty and land rehabilitation projects in some countries.
**Sixth session of the CRIC**

There were many items on the CRIC 6 agenda, including the review of the CRIC 5 report, the review of policies, operating modalities, activities and execution of the function of the Global Mechanism (GM), reports available on the financing of the implementation of the Convention by multilateral organisations and institutions and lastly the establishment of the CRIC 7 work programme.

The function of the GM, the body responsible for increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of existing financial mechanisms, was discussed at length. Many Parties called on the GM and the secretariat to prepare a joint work programme and on general harmonisation of the UNCCD institutions.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was at the heart of discussions on financing provided by the institutions. The States stressed their wish for a better financing balance of the GEF between the Rio Conventions, more assistance in obtaining co-financing and in mobilising private sector resources and improved GEF communication with the national focal points.

**Eighth session of the COP**

Overall, the COP had a mixed record. The delegates failed to reach consensus on the two-year budget 2008-2009. The main point of contention was the core budget percentage increase. The Parties did nevertheless agree on changing from the US dollar to the Euro as the UNCCD official currency. The failure of the budget discussions triggered the first extraordinary session of the Conference of the Parties.

The participants adopted the 10-year strategy plan and framework 2008-2018 put together by the Intergovernmental Intersessional Working Group (IIWG) established at COP 7. Designed to act as a framework for the execution of the UNCCD and to strengthen its implementation in the period 2008-2018, The Strategy is the most significant effort towards reform of the Convention since it was established. It recommends a results-based approach, targets greater clarity in the mandates and activities of the Convention bodies and more rigorous allocation of roles and responsibilities (for more information, see Fact Sheet 4.6).

Following the recommendation of the CRIC, the Conference of the Parties requested the United Nations Joint Inspection Unit to assess the Global Mechanism and report on this to its ninth session.

The COP also urged the Parties to prepare measures encouraging the implementation of the UNCCD in all regions, mainly by (i) standardising reporting, (ii) ensuring that all stakeholders in affected countries participate in implementing the Convention, (iii) mobilising financial resources from all sources and, lastly, (iv) encouraging capacity building in a sustainable manner in all areas governed by the national action plans (NAP). The COP also decided to continue to support the existing regional coordination units.37

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37. Decision 1/COP.8 (ICC/COP(8)/16/Add.1).
The COP stressed the need to mobilise resources for the implementation of the UNCCD: the COP invited the industrialised countries to increase their voluntary contributions to the execution of NAPs and encouraged the Parties to make sustainable land management a priority in Africa and to support scientific research programmes in developing countries.\(^{38}\)

The COP especially requested the GEF to increase its budget allocated to combating land degradation, to implement a strategy on land degradation, to facilitate access by affected countries, particularly those in Africa, to financing for projects to combat desertification and to indicate to the developing countries, in conjunction with the Global Mechanism, the possibilities of co-financing.\(^{39}\)

The COP lastly decided to renew the mandate of the CRIC as a subsidiary body of the COP and agreed that it would continue to function under its present terms of reference, that could, nevertheless, be revised as necessary.\(^{40}\)

The Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD to attend the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to take part in discussions on desertification, land degradation and drought on the agenda for its sixteenth and seventeenth sessions.

Delegates discussed the need to develop synergies between the UNCCD, the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) together with the possible rapprochements between the UNCCD and Ramsar, the World Heritage Committee, UN-Water and the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF). The COP also called on the Parties to encourage the synergies of action plans and programmes carried out under the auspices of the UNFCCC and the CBD and the National Action Plans (NAP).

The Parties agreed that the next sessions of the CRIC and CST would be held simultaneously to improve coordination. The Parties were also asked to harmonise their action programmes with the operational objectives of the Plan and submit their reports on the implementation of the Plan to COP 9.

The CSOs suggested strengthening the participation of young people and including representatives of the civil society in national delegations. The session also featured discussions on participant, equality between men and women and climate change. The conclusions of NGO representatives are included in the declaration of non-governmental organisations.

See document ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1 for all decisions adopted by the COP at its eighth session.

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\(^{38}\) Decision 5/COP.8 (ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1).

\(^{39}\) Decision 6/COP.8 (ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1).

\(^{40}\) Decision 7/COP.8 (ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1).
COP-ES 1: November 2007: New York, United States of America

First extraordinary session of the COP

Given the failure of the budget discussions during COP 8, the Parties met in a First extraordinary session of the Conference of the Parties to conclude the negotiations on this question. After intense deliberations, they granted themselves a core Convention budget for the 2008-2009 biennium with an allocation of 14,896,000 euros, representing a 4% increase over the 2006-2007 budget. They also agreed that the budget for the next biennium would be negotiated on the basis of this amount. The Parties allocated 10,375,000 of this amount to the secretariat and 3,456,000 euros to the Global Mechanism.

The COP also requested the Executive Secretary to introduce results-based management and to realign, as needed, the current programmes, the staffing structure and terms of reference for the miscellaneous posts of the secretariat, to facilitate the implementation of The Strategy, working within the allocated budget and guided by the following principles:

(a) Optimisation of expenditures and improvements in efficiency, as appropriate;
(b) The reallocation of resources to strengthen key capacities;
(c) The need for transparency and clarity in accounting;
(d) Increased support to the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

CST S-1 and CRIC 7: 5-14 November 2008: Istanbul, Turkey

First special session of the CST

This special session of the CST focused mainly on the review of two-year programmes and four-year workplans prepared by the Convention bodies as well as on the indicators and guidelines for preparing national reports.

Seventh session of the CST

The delegates met to discuss progress in implementing the 10-year strategic plan and framework to strengthen the implementation of the Convention (The Strategy). This had been adopted during COP 8 in Madrid, Spain in September 2007. At the same time, the CRIC reviewed the four-year workplans and the two-year work programmes that the UNCCD bodies should develop. The CRIC also focused on preparing indicators and guidelines for reporting, to set up a framework for assessing the implementation of The Strategy.41

41. This summary is based on document ICCD/CRIC(7)/5 and the summary of CRIC 7 in the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, Vol. 4, No. 218, 17 November 2008.
The implementation of The Strategy relies both on achieving its strategic objectives and its monitoring through suitable indicators. During this session, Parties sought both clarification of strategic objectives and on strengthening the consensus around indicators used (for example, measuring the involvement of the private sector or members of the civil society). Many Parties underlined the need for support and improvement of National Action Plans (NAP). The need to align the national, regional and subregional plans to The Strategy was also brought up again.

The Parties recognised that the mandate of the CRIC itself should be reviewed so that the COP 9 could make the necessary modifications, taking account of The Strategy and the role of the Committee as defined in the relevant decisions of COP-8 and the outcome of CRIC 7 and CRIC 8. Having said that, the main functions of the CRIC have already been stated as follows in The Strategy:

(a) determining and disseminating best practices on implementation of the Convention;

(b) reviewing implementation of The Strategy;

(c) reviewing Parties’ contributions to the implementation of the Convention;

(d) assessing and monitoring of its own performance and effectiveness.

The Parties noted that The Strategy fixed a crucial milestone in the review system, by deciding that the simplified and effective new reporting process should be based on information that is comparable across regions and over time. They recommended that the current alternation in reporting be ended and that all regions report to the COP at the same time from the next reporting cycle in 2010.

Parties generally welcomed the option by which the review of the implementation of The Strategy through performance indicators would be carried out every two years and the review of the implementation of the Convention through desertification, land degradation and drought profiles (DLDD) and impact indicators would be carried out every four years.

At the request of the Parties, a round table was organised under the global interactive dialogue on the strategic orientations of the Convention, held during CRIC 7. The interactive dialogue focused on the means of enhancing investment in land management, shared responsibilities and partnership building in the context of The Strategy. Through the interactive dialogue, the Parties provided information on the way forward, the preferred options and the priority areas for the implementation of The Strategy, including mainstreaming the national action plans (NAP) and their contribution to overall poverty eradication.
conference-style format, in conjunction with the lead institution or consortium with the qualifications and expertise required in the thematic topic chosen by the COP.

The priority theme addressed by the Scientific Conference was: “Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water management”. The Conference was a forum for addresses and main presentations of results and the recommendations of three white papers prepared by the working groups of the Dryland Science for Development Consortium (DS) for the Conference, followed by general discussions, on the following items:

- integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation processes and drivers;
- monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management;
- monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation: knowledge management and economic and social drivers.42

CST 9 was responsible for recommending to the COP concrete measures for improving the effectiveness of the organisation of the Scientific Conference, including its timetable, and a specific theme for the 2nd Scientific Conference (see COP 9 below).

**Eighth session of the CRIC**

CRIC 8 dealt with several questions in order to make recommendations to the COP: a) workplans of the Convention's institutions and subsidiary bodies; b) collaboration between the UNCCD bodies and the GEF; c) CRIC mandate; d) performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS); e) reporting guidelines and indicators.

**Ninth session of the COP**

Many Parties viewed the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties as key in strengthening the implementation of the Convention in the field, mainly thanks to the implementation of The Strategy.

Decision 3/COP.9 reflected the consensus reached between the Parties and called upon the Executive Secretary and Managing Director of the GM to strengthen the effectiveness and efficiency of regional coordination mechanisms to facilitate the implementation of the Convention. With this in mind, they should support the RCMs and provide one post per region requiring it within available resources. The Decision also stated that:

42. A summary of the recommendations/key messages are available in the following document “Report of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference: Note by the secretariat” (ICCD/COP(9)/CST/INF.2).
• staff provided by the GM within available resources should be co-located with posts deployed from the secretariat in the same host institution or host country;
• that the RCMs would use, as appropriate, locations and components of existing RCU;
• the Executive Secretary would review the current hosting arrangements of the existing regional coordination units and conclude, where appropriate, new memorandums of understanding with the host institutions and host countries;
• one post of the secretariat should also be provided for the Central and Eastern European countries.

As for the budget, the countries agreed on an increase of 4.29% in their annual contribution to the main budget, with a total budget of €16,364,800 for the biennium 2010-2011.

The report by the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/2009/4) on the GM was presented by the JIU representative. As the GM performance was considered good overall, the inspectors concentrated on the relationship between the GM and the secretariat. The JIU underlined the weakness of the joint work programme, poor coordination, insufficiently clear mandates and a lack of synergies between the two institutions. Decision 6/COP.9 invited:
• The GM and the Convention secretariat to collaborate to produce a joint work programme accompanied by cost estimate for the biennium;
• The Managing Director of the GM to submit a report to each COP for review by the Parties;
• The GM and the Convention Secretariat to collaborate in producing detailed regional work programmes for the allocation of financial resources, submitted to CRIC sessions for review;
• The COP-9 Bureau, in conjunction with the Managing Director of the GM and the Executive Secretary of the Convention, to undertake and supervise an assessment of existing and potential reports, the responsibility and institutional arrangements for the GM and their legal and financial implications, including the possibility of identifying a new institution/organisation to house the GM. It requested the Bureau to submit a report on this assessment to COP 10 for decision.

The COP adopted Decision 8/COP.9 encouraging more cooperation with the relevant international bodies on matters pertaining to desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) with respect to the implementation of The Strategy. The Decision urged further coordination with the secretariats of the UNFCCC and Convention on Biological Diversity through the Joint Liaison Group to harmonise and facilitate the reporting requirements of Parties and requested the secretariat to elaborate policy promotion frameworks that foster advocating issues such as synergy with climate change adaptation and mitigation and biological diversity of global ecosystems given their link to DLDD.
Having considered the document on “Follow-up to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and outcome of CDD 16 and 17” (ICCD/COP(9)/11), the Conference of the Parties encouraged the Parties to develop national, regional and sub-regional research centres and networks for the exchange of research, information, traditional and cultural knowledge, and technology concerning arid, sub-humid lands.

Decision 21/COP.9 requested the Parties to propose, within six months after the conclusion of the COP session, new candidates in order to achieve a better gender balance and representation of all relevant disciplines, and of all individuals with expertise in the field of desertification, land degradation and drought. The Decision also called on the secretariat to propose a revision of its current procedures, to update the software required to maintain rosters and to submit a feasibility study to COP 10 on a web-based search tool for use in consulting the rosters of experts of the three Rio Conventions.

By decision 11/COP.9, the CRIC was established as a permanent subsidiary body of the COP. This decision further provides that the COP should, at its 14th session at the latest, revise the mandate of the CRIC, its operations and its schedule of meetings and the need for and modalities of the CRIC as a subsidiary body.

By its decision 12/COP.9, the COP adopted a performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) to support the CRIC and the COP in their review of the implementation of The Strategy and of the Convention, based on a new methodological approach and results and impact indicators. The system also allows the review of best practices and financial flows associated with DLDD.

Guidelines for reporting and indicators were prepared by the secretariat (ICCD/CRIC(8)/5 and Add.1 to Add.3). By Decision 13/COP.9, the COP adopted provisionally, indicators, methodologies and procedures.

In its decision 19/COP.9, the COP took note of cross-fertilization opportunities between the CST and the LADA program (LAnd Degradation Assessment in drylands), led by FAO.43 In addition, the COP invited the CST, with the support of the secretariat, to consult with the LADA program and to reinforce, in accordance with decision 17/COP.9, the impact indicators related to land degradation and related methods. The COP also encouraged the CST to develop collaborative regional training activities on land degradation in order to improve capacities for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of The Strategy.

For all decisions adopted by COP 9, see the documents ICCD/COP(9)/18/Add.1 and ICCD/COP(9)/18/Add.1/Corr.1.

43. The LADA project led by the FAO was completed in 2010: <http://www.fao.org/nr/lada/index.php?lang=fr>.
CST S-2/CRIC 9: February 2011: Bonn, Germany
Second special session of the CST

The Committee examined report ICCD/CST(S-2)/2 accompanied by recommendations from the independent evaluators on the organisation of the UNCCD First Scientific Conference, which covered the following issues: monitoring and evaluation; the articulation of public decisions from different geographical levels; sustainable land management; coordination of information with the various multilateral environmental agreements; supporting public decisions on the themes of the Convention with economic models; synergy and pooling of different sources of fundamental and methodological expertise; the establishment of an independent scientific advisory mechanism; accessibility of required data; and networking of scientific information.

The Committee submitted the following recommendations:

• The putting in place of a conference steering committee to coordinate the organisation, composed of members of the Bureau of the Committee, the UNCCD secretariat and the selected lead institution or consortium.
• Financial assistance by the lead institution or consortium to the secretariat.
• The establishment of an independent scientific committee representing the different regions by the lead institution or consortium.
• Holding the CST every two years during an intersessional period of the CRIC to ensure the participation of scientists and encourage that of policymakers.
• Earlier preparation of working groups to optimise their work time.
• The CST organised as a plenary session followed by breakout groups (working groups) based on the themes of the Conference.
• The invitation to the scientific community from the Committee to consider potential themes for future UNCCD scientific conferences, in preparation for the tenth session of the CST.

Progress made in the methodologies and baselines for the effective use of the subset of impact indicators was reviewed firstly based on documents ICCD/CST(S-2)/7 and ICCD/CST(S-2)/INF.1. Progress made on the refinement of the set of impact indicators for strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 was reviewed by the Committee for a second time based on documents ICCD/CST(S-2)/8 and ICCD/CST(S-2)/INF.1.

Ninth session of the CRIC

The ninth session of the CRIC focused on the implementation of the Convention, assessing it in relation to the operational objectives of the strategic plan and framework, the specific UNCCD financial flows and best observed practices. The Parties secondly reviewed the procedures likely to improve the communication of information and the procedures for reviewing the implementation of The Strategy.\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{44} For a detailed report of that session see document ICCD/CRIC(9)/16.
Note that the review of the implementation of operational objective 1 (advocacy, awareness raising and education) has shown that a major effort still has to be made by all country Parties.

The implementation of operational objective 2 (policy framework) has emerged as principally needing to be improved in the country Parties by aligning their national, subregional and regional programmes with The Strategy (see sheet I about NAPs).

Important linkages between the NAPs and the integrated investment frameworks (IIF) were highlighted as was the need to consider these two processes together during the alignment processes. The affected country Parties were called on to increase their efforts to establish IIFs with the aim of at least ten affected country Parties establishing an IIF every year until 2014.

The secretariat was called on to prepare a global framework by revising presentation templates for best practices relating to SLM technologies.

A report noted that certain Parties underlined that the reports as generated from the PRAIS portal did not represent a good tool for awareness raising at national level. It was felt that the iterative process required a more realistic timetable for future reporting. Refining the iterative process relating to the assessment of the implementation (PRAIS), mainly the performance indicators, methods and reporting procedures, was requested to make it easier to access. The Parties requested the secretariat to establish, for COP 10, reporting templates and guidelines for the communication of information to subregional and regional organisations called on to report on the implementation of SRAP and RAP. At the same time, the Parties were urged to broaden their coordination with the subregional organisations involved through regional coordination mechanisms.

The Parties reviewed progress in implementing Decision 6/COP.9 regarding the JIU’s report about the GM. The Parties called on the Global Mechanism to provide additional details on the financial resources allocated to each country and on their use to COP 10. Clarifications on the notion of “financing for DLDD and UNCCD implementation” were sought to improve the presentation and analysis of financial data.

**COP 10/CRIC 10/CST 10: October 2011: Changwon, Republic of Korea**

**Tenth session of the CST**

The work of the CST covered the reshaping of the operation of the Committee for Science and Technology in accordance with The Strategy, how best to measure progress, measures enabling the UNCCD to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought, knowledge management, the fellowship programme, the roster of independent experts, the role and responsibilities of science and technology
correspondents and the work programmes for CST Ex 3 and CST 11. This work gave rise to several decisions, including two on the establishment of ad hoc working groups: one to continue the participatory iterative process on the refinement of impact indicators and the monitoring and evaluation of impacts and the second to continue the discussions on the options in the field of scientific advice provided to the UNCCD.

Discussions took place on the results of the first Scientific Conference, on the planning of the second Conference, and on the theme of the third Conference.

**Tenth session of the CRIC**

The work of the CRIC mainly cover the review of the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy, mainly the multi-year workplans of Convention bodies, the collaboration with the Global Environment Facility, the modalities, criteria and mandate proposed for the mid-term assessment of the 10-year strategic plan and framework, the assessment of the implementation of the Convention through performance indicators, the iterative process on the assessment of the implementation, the best practices and the work programme for CRIC 11. The recommendations of the CRIC led to the adoption of decisions on these items by the COP.

**Tenth session of the COP**

The main issues of COP 10 concerned the strengthening of the scientific base of the Convention (mainly through on-going reforms of the CST) and its institutional framework (with special attention paid to the changing role of the Global Mechanism (GM)). The implementation of The Strategy and the realignment of structures and activities of the Parties to comply with it were reviewed. More especially, the COP considered the work of CRIC 9 and the implementation of the PRAIS system, together with most recent progress in developing indicators and national reporting communicatin and analysis methods.

Apart from a general revision of the implementation, the COP set out provisions to complete the institutional reforms commenced when adopting The Strategy, including the continuation of the assessment and reform of the GM, the review of mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination, the application of new procedures governing the participation of civil society organisations in meetings and other processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and the continuation of the reforms of the CST.

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45. This summary is based on the report of the COP 10/CRIC 10/CST 10 in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, Vol. 4, No. 241, 24 October 2011 and the report of the Conference of the Parties on its tenth session held in Changwon on 10-21 October (ICCD/COP(10)/31).
The Government of the Republic of Korea presented the “Changwon Initiative” that identified the intended measures of the Republic of Korea to implement the decisions of COP 10.

Under Decision 2/COP.10, the COP recognised the need to accelerate the alignment of national, subregional and regional action programmes with The Strategy (see Fact Sheet 4.1 on NAPs). The COP also, among other things, invited the Convention institutions to continue providing affected country Parties with the support they require to build institutional and technical capacity for the effective alignment and implementation of the action programmes within available resources, including the relevant technical assistance for the preparation, revision and alignment of subregional and regional action programmes.

Document ICCD/COP(1)/21 noted genuine progress in regional coordination, especially the cooperation between the GM and the secretariat through the Regional Coordination Units (RCU). However, shortfalls were noted in the implementation and adoption of regional and subregional action programmes, which seemingly were still not effective practical frameworks.

In its Decision 5/COP.9 regarding the revised procedures for the accreditation of civil society organisations and representatives from the private sector, the COP had laid the bases for revised procedures to be introduced for the participation of civil society organisations (CSO) in the meetings and processes of the Convention. The also stipulates, among other things, that the CSOs should submit a report on their activities and their contributions to the implementation of the Convention to the secretariat every five years, and that the selection panel for the participation of CSO and the private sector in the UNCCD meetings included CSO representatives from each of the annexes of the Convention.

In its Decision 6/COP.10 regarding the governance and institutional arrangements of the Global Mechanism, the COP decided, among other things, that: the accountability and legal representation of the GM should be transferred from IFAD to the secretariat; the Executive Secretary should assume overall management responsibility, including coordinating reporting on accounting, performance and activities of the GM, to the COP; the Executive Secretary must delegate operational authority to the Managing Director of the GM to manage the programme and budget of the GM and enter into agreement with lending institutions; and the Memorandum of Understanding with IFAD has to be revised in order to limit IFAD’s competence to logistical and administrative support, and privileges and immunities granted to GM staff through the Government of Italy.

The COP also made requests regarding the GM transfer, including the preparation of rules of procedure to govern the relationship between the secretariat and the GM, the development and implementation of a joint corporate identity, the rationalization of the financial and administrative management and the coordination of the reporting to the CRIC and the COP. The COP also requests that all staff and accounts of the GM fall under a single administrative regime administered by the UN in Geneva, and a new housing arrangement for the GM.
With regard to fund-raising, in its Decision 7/COP.10, the COP took note of the draft common fund-raising strategy (2012-2015). The COP also requested the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to continue coordinating their fund-raising efforts, ensuring alignment and integration with wider strategies to address strategic objective 4 of The Strategy and to include reporting on their fundraising efforts in the overall report on the performance of the Convention’s institutions and subsidiary bodies.

Decision 25/COP.10 replaced paragraph 1 of rule 22 with an alternative text stating that the President of the CST would be elected at the last meeting of the COP and would take up his post immediately. It also stipulated replacing rule 31 with a text stating that the Vice-Presidents of the CST would be elected at the same time as the President.

Decision 12/COP.10 concerns the proposed arrangements, criteria and mandates for the mid-term review of The Strategy. It created a special Intersessional Working Group (ISWG) whose mandate was to develop recommendations to the COP Bureau.

Many decisions of the COP pertained to issues relating to science, and, by extension, to the CST. First, by Decision 18/COP.10, the COP postponed the 2nd Scientific Conference, scheduled for 2012, to March 2013 at the latest. It also decided to hold the 3rd Scientific Conference in 2014, at the time of the special session of the CST. In addition, the COP requested the secretariat to organize a thorough evaluation of the 2nd Scientific Conference, and invited the CST Bureau to assess the appropriateness of holding scientific conferences during CST intersessional meetings.

By Decision 20/COP.10, the COP requested the CST to provide for measures in the short and long terms to fulfil operational objective 3 of The Strategy, that is to say, to make the UNCCD an international authority on scientific issues related to desertification. By this decision a special working group was set up to consider options regarding scientific advice on DLDD issues.46

Furthermore, Decision 21/COP.10 requested the secretariat to continue to improve knowledge management, which meant: to develop a knowledge platform related to DLDD; to carry out taxonomy work for internal content categorization related to the UNCCD; to determine criteria and priorities pertaining to knowledge management under the Convention, taking into account the results of the needs assessment; and encourage inter-relations with regional knowledge management systems through available networks.

In addition, decision 23/COP.10 invited Parties to revise and update the information included in the national experts registry and propose new candidates

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46. The science-policy interface (SPI) was created in Decision 23 / COP.11 as a result of this work.
and requested the CST to review and update the list of disciplines. It also requested the secretariat to implement Web-devices to facilitate the updating of the list.

For all decisions adopted by COP 10, see the documents ICCD/COP(10)/31/Add.1.

CST S-3/CRIC 11: April 2013: Bonn, Germany

Third special session of the CST

The third special session of the CST focused on reshaping the operation of the Committee on Science and Technology in line with The Strategy, progress made in refining the impact indicators relating to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy and the review and assessment of scientific information from Parties and other reporting entities, in particular on impact indicators relating to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy.47

The theme chosen by COP 9 for the 2nd Scientific Conference, which was incorporated into the CST meeting, was “Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas” In accordance with the provisions of Decision 16/COP.9, the Davos Global Risk Forum was selected as lead institution under the guidance of the CST Bureau.

It will be recalled that Decision 17/COP.9 established an iterative process to develop proposals to refine the set of impact indicators and associate methodologies to measure progress on strategic objectives 1, 2, and 3 of The Strategy. An Ad Hoc Advisory Group of Technical Experts (AGTE) was established for this purpose by Decision 19/COP.10. The AGTE representatives described the principal conclusions of their work and presented a summary of their preliminary recommendations. These recommendations included, in particular:

• using the term “progress” indicator rather than “impact” indicator;
• pursuing harmonisation rather than standardisation;
• the delineation of affected areas under a three-layered approach as a precondition to tracking progress in implementing the Convention;
• continuing to refine the set of provisional indicators proposed initially in Decision 17/COP.19 and improved in Decision 19/COP.10, to produce a minimum set mentioned in their report; and
• complementing these indicators by relevant regional, national and/or local information and by indicators designated by the Group as “narrative indicators”).

In its Decision 12/COP.9, the Conference of the Parties requested the Committee to contribute to the work of the CRIC in reviewing and assessing scientific infor-

47. This summary is based on the ‘Report of the Committee on Science and Technology on its third special session, held in Bonn on 9-12 April 2013’ (ICCD/CST(S-3)/7) and the report on CST-11 contained in the Earth Negotiations Bulletin, Vol. 4, No. 242, 15 April 2013.
information from Parties and other reporting entities, in particular on impact indicators relating to strategic objectives 1, 2 and 3 of The Strategy. Document ICCD/CRIC(11)/8-ICCD/CST(S-3)/6 and Rev.1 provided a summary and preliminary analysis of the information provided on this subject and the Committee duly took note. The Committee also noted the conclusions of the open-ended contact group presented in document ICCD/CST(S-3)/L.3.

**Eleventh session of the CRIC**

CRIC 11 focused on the implementation using provisionally-adopted impact indicators and results, financial flows, issues regarding the alignment of national action programmes (NAP – see Fact Sheet 5.1 on NAPs), communication strategies, best practices, exchanges with the other relevant conventions and with the competent international conventions and organisations, institutions and agencies and the governance of the GM.  

The Parties analysed the information provided by the affected country Parties and the developed country Parties, the subregional and regional entities, the United Nations bodies, the intergovernmental organisations and the GEF and the information from the secretariat and the GM on strategic objectives 1 to 4 of The Strategy.

The main points raised by the parties in relation to the operational objectives of The Strategy are as follows. As for objective 1, Parties expressed concerns with regard to the reliability and representativeness of information on the total percentage of populations informed. Regarding operational objectives 2 and 4 of The Strategy and assessment of the alignment of action programmes and their implementation in accordance with The Strategy, Parties noted that preliminary analyses and priorities coherent with national development policies should be set before the alignment process started. The financing of the alignment process was also discussed. Concerning operational objective 3, several points were raised, especially regarding the harmonisation of lending institutions interventions, the coordination and communication between the national correspondents of the Rio Conventions and ecosystem-based monitoring.

The review of information on financial flows intended for implementation of the Convention included information submitted by the different entities on strategic objective 4, operational objective 5 and the financial flow. The increase of financial contribution of developed country Parties, the GEF and the GM, as well as the rapid disbursement of funds of the GEF, the exploration of new financial mechanisms to enable countries to meet their reporting requirements, and private financing, were discussed.

The Parties examined document ICCD/CRIC(11)/15 featuring a first analysis of data relating to the refined set of performance and impact indicators and asso-

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48. This summary is based on the ‘Report of the Committee on Science and Technology on its third special session, held in Bonn on 9-12 April 2013’ (ICCD/CST(S-3)/7) and the report on CST 11 contained in the *Earth Negotiations Bulletin*, Vol. 4, No. 243, 22 April 2013.
associated methods. The discussions essentially gave rise to requests intended for the CST and the CRIC: review and refinement of the indicators, a longer reporting period and an amended reporting frequency, special sections within the PRAIS portal to report on supplementary indicators and/or specific actions taken by countries to combat DLDD.

**COP 11/CRIC 12/CST 11: September 2013: Windhoek, Namibia**

**Eleventh session of the CST**

The discussions of the eleventh session of the CST focused on impact indicators for the operational objectives of The Strategy, on progress made in the organisation of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice, on knowledge management, and on reshaping the operation of the Committee on Science and Technology.49

The CST considered the review of impact indicators to be linked to The Strategy’s operational objectives. This implied a monitoring and evaluation approach including indicators, a conceptual framework and indicators selection mechanisms at national level.

In terms of organization and provision of interdisciplinary scientific advice at international level, the CST approved the establishment of a Science-Policy Interface with a mandate to collect and make available the recommendations of relevant conferences and scientific networks, and to report to COP 13.

Discussions were also held on improving knowledge management, including of traditional knowledge, best practices and success stories. Furthermore, with regard to the roster of independent experts, the CST has addressed the selection of new candidates, the confirmation of current experts, and the use of the Web.

The redesign of the CST was also the subject of discussions in relation to the scientific conferences and the CRIC.

**Twelfth session of the CRIC**

The meeting of the CRIC focused on the monitoring of The Strategy, reporting to the UNCCD, links with other international conventions or institutions, the amendment of the Memorandum of Understanding with the GEF, and institutional solutions that would improve the implementation of the UNCCD.50

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On the review of the ten-year Strategy (based on the report of the CRIC 11), the CRIC noted the need to align the action plans on The Strategy, and their integration into national development plans. It also discussed the simplification of access to funding, the inclusion of the private sector and grassroots organizations in the alignment process, support, and the alignment and implementation of action programs. The CRIC also considered the implementation of the operational objectives and indicators. On financial flows to implement the Convention, the CRIC highlighted the need to involve private parties, to improve the relevance, timeliness and predictability of resources provided to affected country Parties and relevant subregional organizations, and requested the GM to continue to assist the development of integrated investment frameworks and to identify innovative financing, and aim at the objective that 50% of the affected country Parties establish these frameworks by 2014.

With respect to the communication of information and the quality of the presentation of the reports submitted to the COP, the CRIC has made some requests, especially regarding the e-SMART criterion and the operation of the PRAIS database. The CRIC has made some recommendations on cooperation, coordination and access to data, including those on best practices.

The need for the promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant international conventions and international organizations, institutions and agencies was highlighted.

The CRIC also focused on cooperation with the GEF, requesting an amendment to the existing memorandum of understanding and harmonization of disbursement of funding for enabling activities. It also requested Parties to align their use of GEF resources at national level, and use GEF resources taking into account the outcomes of Rio + 20 relating to DLDD.

Finally, discussions focused on additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention.

**Eleventh session of the COP**

The Conference of Parties was held in Windhoek from 16 to 27 September 2013. During its meetings, the COP adopted a resolution and 40 decisions. The latters were adopted upon the recommendation of six entities: the President of the COP, the Bureau, the Committee of the Whole, the CRIC, the CST, and the Special Panel of Experts.51

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The work of the COP and its Committee of the Whole primarily focused on: the evaluation of the Ten-Year Strategy, monitoring of Rio+20, GM governance and institutional arrangements, CSOs accreditation procedures, the United Nations Decade for deserts and the fight against desertification (UNDDD) (2010-2020), and the program and budget.

Sitting as Committee of the Whole (COW), the COP has considered the mid-term review of The Strategy, on the basis of the report ICCD/COP(11)/21 produced by the Intersessional Working Group (IWG). In Decision 12/COP.11, the COP requested the Executive Secretary and the Bureau of the COP to design a processes and terms of reference for the development of a new strategy and plans to step up the implementation of the UNCCD. The results will be submitted to COP 12 (about The Strategy, see Fact Sheet 4.6).

Regarding the Global Mechanism (GM), the secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP (11)/3 on options for new accommodation arrangements. By decision 6/COP.11, the COP decided to move the headquarters of the GM from Rome to Bonn in order to place it alongside the secretariat and maintain a liaison office in Rome with appropriate staff.

Discussions were also held regarding the program and budget for the 2014-2015 biennium, on the basis of documents presented by the secretariat (ICCD/COP (11)/6 and Corr.1, ICCD/COP (11)/7 and Corr.1, ICCD/CRIC(12)/2 and ICCD/COP(11)/CST/9). Decision 10/COP.11 includes the approval of the program and budget for the biennium 2014-2015 in the amount of € 16,122,431.

On the monitoring of outcomes of Rio+20, the secretariat introduced document ICCD/COP(11)/5 and Corr.1, detailing its contribution to the work of the United Nations Task Force supporting the co-chairs of the General Assembly’s Working Group on sustainable development goals (SDGs). The concept of neutrality with regard to land degradation, which is likely to be integrated in the SDGs, has been extensively discussed. Given the uncertainties regarding the concept on the one hand, and certainty as to its imminent use by the international community for the management of soils, on the other hand, the COP, by decision 8/COP.11, has set up an Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG), composed of representatives from each region and funded by voluntary contributions, to: “establish a science based definition of land degradation neutrality in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas; develop options relating to arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas that Parties might consider should they strive to achieve land degradation neutrality; and advise the Convention on the implications for its current and future strategy, programmes and the resource requirements”. The report on the work of the IWG will be sent to the secretariat for consideration at COP 12.

Accreditation of civil society organizations (CSO) was also discussed because “since COP 10, only annex region CSOs and private sector representatives have been allowed to register”. The decision on this issue (5/COP.11) strengthens the

coordination of the CSO selection panel. The COP also requested the secretariat and the GM to work towards a strategy for engaging businesses, which will be studied by the ad interim Bureau of Conference and by COP 12. More generally, the COP invited Parties to promote the active participation of CSOs, including indigenous and local communities and young people, and decided that the CSO selection committee should include a CSO representative from countries belonging to each of the five UN regional groups.

Progress in the implementation of The Strategy was also discussed. Discussions focused on two components: the overall communication strategy and regional coordination. As for communication, the results were considered positive.

By decision 3/COP.11, the COP made a number of suggestions concerning regional coordination, focusing on the necessity to build capacity and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of regional coordination mechanisms (RCM) and regional coordination units (RCU).

In decision 7/COP.11, the COP stressed the importance of the Decade for Deserts and the Fight Against Desertification to raise awareness of the value of deserts and affirmed the need to maintain multi-stakeholder partnerships and cooperation with other United Nations entities to increase activities related to the Decade.

**CST S-4: March 2015: Cancun, Mexico**

**Fourth special session of the CST**

The meeting of CST S-4 was held in Cancun from March 9 to 12, 2015. In accordance with decision 21/COP.11, the CST Bureau considered the results of the Third Scientific Conference. At its twelfth session, the Committee will receive a report on the organization and results of the Third Scientific Conference, accompanied by practical recommendations for consideration and decisions as necessary by the Conference of Parties, in accordance with of the Convention.

**Combating desertification/land degradation and drought for poverty reduction and sustainable development: the contribution of science, technology, traditional knowledge and practices**

**Main scientific conclusions**

The CST noted that the effects of land degradation and climate change on the ability of ecosystems to produce food and energy is well documented, but that knowledge on the interactions between these two processes remains incomplete. Moreover, although it is easier today to assess the value of services provided by

53. This summary is based on document ICCD/CST(S-4)/3 (<http://www.unccd.int/en/about-the-convention/official-documents/Pages/SymbolDetail.aspx?k=ICCD/CST(S-4)/3&ctx=CST(S-4)>).
ecosystems, there is a need to develop further guidance on how to take into account services that have no monetary value. Similarly, the importance of local and traditional knowledge is more widely recognized in the development of sustainable practices, but there are still improvements to be made in integrating it with scientific knowledge with a view to identifying more precisely adaptation capabilities. There is also a need to improve the compatibility of existing diagnostic methods in order to improve knowledge sharing and improve climate change scenarios.

The CST found that communities can count on many types of technological solutions, but felt that stakeholders must be involved in the identification of problems and solutions in order to facilitate their adoption at the required scale. Scientists and policy makers need to be aware of the cultural and socio-economic factors that influence adaptation choices.

As for monitoring and evaluation measures, they must pursue clear objectives, be relevant to all stakeholders, including farmers, and not just some interest groups. It is important to take advantage of hybrid knowledge, based on modern science and traditional or local knowledge. Research should continue to move towards a more coherent integrated framework based on indicators that characterize a situation of vulnerability. Research should strive to consolidate innovations such as high-resolution satellite imagery, low cost sensors mounted on drones, or crowd-sourcing that builds on the use of smartphones.

The CST has highlighted that human activities are considered as one of the main factors of land degradation and desertification, and as a contributing factor to climate change. Scientific advances and the most advanced technologies can certainly play a palliative role, but ultimately, behavioural change is required.

**Implications for policy action**

Coping with existing problems requires solutions on several fronts. Future modes of governance, locally and internationally, must take into account all sources of land degradation and desertification, that is to say not only overexploitation, but also climate change.

Appropriate governance for sustainable land management at different scales, can further stimulate public-private tools such as product certification and other market-based incentives. These tools can then reach their goal by lowering transaction costs and stimulating behavioural change in favour of sustainable land management.

The CST highlighted that the lack of resources remains a major obstacle to sustainable land management. Adaptation is in this respect one of the means to mobilize increased financial support. There is still a need to determine how to channel funds to this type of activity, what resources would be available, at what scale and for what stakeholders. The coordination of initiatives of various stakeholders in the field also requires effective governance and institutions, to ensure the welfare of stakeholders and a climate of justice.
Besides the fact that they have to be taken urgently, the required measures must be guided by sound economic assessments taking into account (1) the economics of land degradation and climate change, (2) the respective costs of action and inaction, and (3) non-monetary considerations. Furthermore, the rapporteurs note intensifying land speculation and extensive land acquisition operations, which will have important social consequences both at the local and international levels, since they impact access to natural resources, their use, and the land’s capacity to provide benefits upon which humanity depends for its welfare. Incentives and disincentives have an important role to play in this regard.

Finally, the CST addressed issues that will be thoroughly discussed at the COP 12. First, land degradation neutrality (LDN): LDN targets and sustainable land management monitoring indicators can be particularly effective for assessing adaptation options. Second, with regard to relations between the Rio Conventions, the CST considers that a common assessment framework would allow a more balanced monitoring of the multiple ecosystem services and throw some useful light on the many benefits of sustainable land management.

Provision of scientific advice on the topic: “Explore the options to achieve land degradation neutrality in the context of sustainable development”

Based on a note by the secretariat contained in document ICCD/CST(S-4)/2 and Corr.1, the Committee took note of the progress of work on the issue of possible solutions to achieve land degradation neutrality (LDN) in the context of sustainable development, and held a preliminary exchange of views on this issue. It will be further discussed at the twelfth session of the Committee with a view to make recommendations, where appropriate, to the Conference of Parties.

CRIC 13: March 2015: Bonn, Germany
Thirteenth session of the CRIC

CRIC 13 met in Bonn from 25 to 27 March 2015. Its agenda contained three main items: the evaluation of the implementation of the Convention, the review of financial support for the implementation of the Convention, and the development, revision and implementation of action programs in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.54

The conclusions and recommendations contained in the report of the session are based on the recommendations contained in documents ICCD/CRIC(13)/2 and Corr.1, ICCD/CRIC(13)/3, ICCD/CRIC(13)/4, ICCD/CRIC(13)/5, ICCD/CRIC(13)/6/Rev.1, ICCD/CRIC(13)/7/Rev.1 and ICCD/CRIC(13)/8.

Assessment of implementation of the Convention

Delegates to the CRIC 13 first evaluated the implementation of the UNCCD vis-à-vis the five operational objectives of The Strategy (see Fact Sheet 4.6 for more information on The Strategy): advocacy, awareness-raising and education; policy framework; science, technology and knowledge; capacity-building; and financing and technology transfer. The discussions were based on a preliminary analysis of the information contained in the reports from 159 (or 94%) affected country Parties and developed country Parties and the reports from other reporting entities, on the operational objectives of The Strategy.

Advocacy, awareness and education

In its report, the CRIC considered that all the parties should improve their means of communication. They were invited to consider the opportunities offered by the Internet and participatory methods to change behaviour, mentalities and attitudes. They were also asked to review their national action programs, which can be improved in this respect, inter alia by reporting on positive examples of success rather than data that may be unreliable. Finally, all parties were encouraged to use the concept of land degradation neutrality (LDN), which today takes a leading role in the fight against desertification. The definition of LDN and its indicators and targets will be discussed at COP 12.

Affected country Parties were encouraged to participate in South-South and triangular cooperation to strengthen these activities and to include DLDD issues in their primary and secondary education programs.

The institutions of the Convention were asked to include in their respective 2016-2017 work programs measures to help affected country Parties to increase awareness of DLDD processes. It was suggested to focus on national characteristics to allow affected country Parties to seek assistance from competent institutions. This approach should be voluntary.

Policy framework

Participants identified several important points concerning NAPs. First, it was suggested to the affected country Parties that have not yet completed the alignment of their NAPs to consider the future strategic direction of the Convention to be decided by the Conference of the Parties at its twelfth session to guide them in this process. Some Parties recommended that The Strategy be revised and extended to cover the period 2016-2030, so as to be consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN. The alignment process should continue in accordance with The Strategy and be completed in 2018. It should also include sub-regional and regional strategies. Finally, the Parties instructed the secretariat: a) to invite affected country Parties that have not aligned their NAPs in accordance with The Strategy to identify the main reasons that prevented them from doing so; and b) to prepare a report which identifies the main problems and presents solutions in this regard.
Furthermore, the Parties have considered that the LDN definition should apply to all territories, not only to arid land.

In addition, all Parties, other governments and financial institutions were invited to: “(a) ensure the timeliness of financial and technical support; and (b) identify incentives/ways forward for the implementation of action programmes and give priority to activities included in aligned NAPs in their allocation and/or disbursement of resources”.

Finally, requests were made to the Global Mechanism (GM) with regard to reporting and the identification of new funding opportunities.

**Science, technology and knowledge**

The CRIC took note that there are monitoring problems regarding land degradation. In this regard, regional coordination mechanisms were asked to conduct, with the help of the secretariat, a thorough analysis of national, regional and global monitoring systems. Countries should establish a national monitoring system in order to be able to provide information to the global monitoring system. Moreover, the secretariat was asked to support the creation of favourable conditions to allow affected country Parties to partner with global satellite monitoring networks.

Affected country Parties were invited to provide, with the assistance of the secretariat, national information and technical advice on the process of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD) in order to communicate this information to development partners. With regard to decision 22/COP.11, on how best to measure progress in achieving the strategic objectives, they were invited to establish baselines and concrete objectives as part of their NAPs.

As for the scientific contributions and their communication, the secretariat was requested to take further measures to operationalize the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal. Some Parties reported that the scientific contribution to the implementation of the Convention should consist primarily of providing scientific solutions already implemented, traditional knowledge and methods. Some Parties also emphasized the need to strengthen the roles of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Science-Policy Interface and cooperation between scientists and policymakers.

The Parties also recommended that the LDN project be expanded and that the Sustainable Development Goals be taken into account in the process of NAP alignment.

**Capacity building**

According to the CRIC, developed country Parties and international organizations, including the UN and GEF, should consider reviewing their capacity building plans, to avoid duplication and to use resources more effectively, particularly in view of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Affected country Parties were encouraged to engage in South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation to address problems related to the lack of required capacities to implement the Convention.
The secretariat and the GM were asked to continue to provide support to developing country Parties in the fulfilment of their obligations. The institutions of the Convention were also asked to include in their respective work programs for 2016-2017 concrete measures for capacity building for DLDD.

**Financing and technology transfer**

The CRIC also focused on the Integrated Investment Frameworks (IIFs). Affected country Parties were invited to put IIFs in place, monitor and improve them, to achieve the target of 50% of countries with an IIF set for 2014 by The Strategy. Developed country Parties, the GEF and other multilateral financial institutions were invited to further support the implementation of IIFs in all regions, especially those where it is planned to set up such frameworks in the coming biennium.

The Parties also recognized that: a) the adoption of IFFs has increased; b) a new appeal should be made to seek assistance, both technical and financial; and c) all countries that have not yet established their IFF should start doing so soon. The GM was requested to find innovative sources of financing. The task being too large for the GM by itself, it was recommended that other organizations, such as UNEP and UNDP, support the establishment of IFFs.

The GEF was invited: to review the criteria used to allocate resources under the System for Transparent Allocation of Resources (STAR), so that resources are more equitably distributed; to establish a multi-year funding program to allocate the necessary resources to put an end to the inaction on land degradation, which costs $66 billion a year; and to increase resources for South-South cooperation.

The Parties requested that access to diversified funding sources (including the Green Climate Fund, the Adaptation Fund, etc.) be expanded, and that Parties benefit from capacity building in order to access funding from these new sources. The Parties have insisted that mitigation and adaptation measures based on soil management be specially mentioned in the 2015 negotiations of the Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, so that Parties can access funding from the Green Climate Fund. They also expressed hope that the GM put more emphasis on field projects.

Developed country Parties, other governments and multilateral organizations, particularly the GEF, were invited to continue to work to ensure that resources allocated to affected country Parties and subregions are adequate, timely and predictable. In this regard, adequate support should be given to sub-regional organizations to assist their member states in building their capacity and to focus and facilitate discussions at the subregional level. Parties requested the GEF to provide greater financial support, more predictable resources and new funding opportunities, with particular reference to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Affected country Parties were invited to make additional efforts to submit project proposals to financial institutions, mechanisms and multilateral funds and to take advantage of the support provided for this purpose. Developed country
Parties were invited to intensify their efforts to fund projects and activities through internal and external resources.

On access to technology, the Parties emphasized the importance of defining the concept of DLDD technology transfer, and some parties requested to specify the criteria for identifying technologies related to DLDD processes. Technology transfer is not limited to monitoring and reporting systems but should also include the technical innovations applied on the ground.

Affected country Parties were invited to continue their efforts to facilitate access to technology transfer. Some Parties urgently requested developed country Parties to take measures to facilitate and finance the transfer of technology for the benefit of affected country Parties.

The institutions of the Convention were asked to include in their respective work programs for 2016-2017 special measures in accordance with decisions of the Conference of the Parties on priority issues identified during the 2014 reporting, such as NAP alignment and IIF, surveillance systems specifically addressing DLDD, partnership agreements and synergies between plans, programs and initiatives of the three Rio Conventions at all levels.

**Review of financial support for the implementation of the Convention**

The Parties expressed the wish that the international efforts in the implementation of the Rio conventions and their funding recognize the importance of the fight against land degradation. In this respect, they particularly requested the secretariat: to intensify its efforts to promote the objective of the Convention and to enhance the value it provides regarding the Sustainable Development Goals in order to generate greater global commitment; and to conduct a study of the long-term global impact of inaction on land degradation, particularly with regard to the action plans to determine which aspects it will focus in the future.

In the same vein, the Parties requested that the GEF Assembly endeavours, including through regional meetings, to address the issue of unequal distribution of resources among conventions. It should also address the issue of resources for projects related to land degradation under the focal areas related to the other conventions. Parties indicated that efforts must be done at all levels to identify and better capitalize on synergies between the Rio conventions, in particular with regard to budgeting and project implementation.

With respect to financial flows for the implementation of the Convention, the Parties requested better access to data, which requires several actions, from the simplification of communications and increased notifications from developed countries, to increasing synergies and improving the online reporting platform (PRAIS). The GM has been invited to consider possible options to provide countries with existing data on financial flows they would then validate.
Some Parties, referring to Article 6 of the Convention, noted that the obligations of developed country Parties of assisting developing country affected Parties were not honoured.

Parties also stressed that in developing countries, the private sector is not able to play a constructive role. Efforts should be made to involve the private sector more extensively in the fight against desertification.

The secretariat was requested to undertake a study of the financial resources needed by the country Parties in Africa and other developing country Parties to implement the proposed strategies. The Group of African States felt that a new strategy up to 2030 is necessary and preferably developed before the end of 2016. The developed country Parties were invited to provide support for the conduction of this study.

**Formulation, revision and implementation of action programmes in view of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

Some parties expressed concerns over the concept of Land Degradation Neutrality. Some were concerned that the Convention was prejudging the results of on-going consultations and international negotiations in terms of LDN and funding opportunities. Affected country Parties were invited to continue consultations at a global scale on the alignment of NAPs with LDN, with a view to further discussions to be held on the matter and possible adoption by the COP. Parties suggested that LDN targets be included in the NAPs or other relevant programs. Finally, Parties were invited to undertake consultations on the outcome of discussions of the Intergovernmental Working Group on LDN with a view to examine this matter further at the twelfth session of the Conference of Parties.

Furthermore, the Parties requested the secretariats of the Convention and the GEF to continue consultations on the objectives and options for enabling activities in the context of the sixth replenishment of the GEF Trust Fund, with a view to including technical support and financing for the 2016 round of reporting, including on relevant targets that could emerge from the Sustainable Development Goals process.

The secretariat was further requested to continue to facilitate the implementation of pilot projects to assist countries that wish to adopt an LDN approach in the development, alignment and implementation of their NAPs.

Affected country Parties were invited to continue consultations on the alignment of the NAPs with the relevant goals that may result from the Sustainable Development Goals process. The secretariat and the GM were asked to facilitate these consultations, including by organizing special meetings in the margins of the twelfth session of the Conference of Parties.

Some Parties requested that the GM continues to provide multi-faceted support to affected country Parties in the implementation of the Convention.
The developed country Parties and the Convention institutions were invited to consider new and additional funds for affected country Parties. The mechanisms and funding sources for the future work of the Convention should be implemented at national level, relying on voluntary targets and not be linked only to the concept of LDN. In addition, some Parties expressed concern about the financing of capacity building activities under the GEF and noted with concern that part of the required resources did not reach the country level.
3.1 Twelfth session of the CST

3.1.1 Report of the CST S-4 and outcomes of the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference

The CST will consider the reports of the CST S-4 (ICCD/CST(S-4)/3) and of the 3rd scientific Conference (ICCD/COP(12)/CST/2). The latter report contains a number of proposals for further CST and SPI work. It also contains the result of research by the ISP on emerging issues of policies related to desertification and land. To improve the impact of scientific activities already undertaken by the UNCCD, the SPI has identified new research approaches. The CST will be invited to make recommendations accordingly to the COP.

3.1.2 Work programme of the Committee on Science and Technology for the next biennium

Decision 3/COP.8 provides that subsidiary institutions and bodies of the UNCCD must develop multi-year workplans in line with The Strategy. The Executive Secretary also has to prepare results-based budget and work programmes for the biennium 2016–2017. The secretariat has prepared documents ICCD/COP(12)/6-ICCD/CRIC (14)/2 and ICCD/COP (12)/5 in accordance with these instructions. These documents are discussed in the section of this guide devoted to COP 12.

One of the main topics to be addressed by the CST concerns the post-2015 sustainable development agenda. It comprises two aspects: monitoring of the progress towards the adoption of a Sustainable Development Objective (SDG) and of a target related the fight against land degradation, and the monitoring of the impacts of sustainable land management on climate change and biodiversity.

Regarding the monitoring of SDG 15 and of its target related to LDN, the secretariat tested the monitoring method as determined in Decision 22/COP.11 for reporting to the UNCCD. These tests were carried out as part of LDN initiatives. They thus serve the dual purpose of determining whether the method allows to improve UNCCD reporting and to establish whether to adopt one or more LDN
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targets. The report of the secretariat (ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7) will be submitted to the CST and CRIC. The report indicates that the test results have not yet been fully compiled; Parties may need more time and resources to do this. Nevertheless, the establishment of a LDN target could be done in 2016. The COP will be asked to make a decision based on the recommendations of the CST.

The second aspect of monitoring pertains to the impact of SLM on climate change adaptation and mitigation, as well as on the support of biodiversity and ecosystem services. Pursuant to Decision 23/COP.11, the SPI submitted proposals to the CST to serve as the basis of recommendations to the COP. The documents dealing with this issue are contained in the reports ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7), which contains the findings of the SPI, and ICCD/COP 12)/CST/INF.1.

Concerning the work of the UNCCD, the SPI established indicators for determining the integrated potential of the three Rio conventions. A framework, called Resilience, Adaptation and Transformation Pathways Assessment – RAPTA, was developed by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). It consists of a multi-stakeholder approach whose indicators allow for needs identification with respect to resilience and adaptation. The SPI also submits proposals for monitoring the work. Document ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF.1 prepared by the secretariat complements the previous report. It contains the findings of the SPI, relating the different existing scientific data on the interactions of three phenomena that the Rio conventions are trying to curb. The findings of the SPI pertain to the required improved monitoring of the contributions of sustainable land management to the other two Rio conventions.

The CST will look into options to improve its inputs to decision making, in particular through synergies with other relevant scientific conferences. This discussion follows decision 21/COP.11. It will focus on the notes presented by the secretariat, including the SPI report prepared for this purpose. ICCD/COP (12)/CST/4 concludes that the scientific conferences have had a direct effect on UNCCD policies, but that this beneficial effect can be further improved. It therefore suggests a number of options to improve this influence. ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF.2, which specifically covers the first and second conferences, also found this positive impact. It also stressed that the ultimate indicator of the usefulness of scientific information is its implementation on the ground and monitoring its effects.

In order to better link scientific knowledge with decision-making, the CST will be called upon to analyse the work of the SPI, established by Decision 23/COP.11. Its analysis will be based on several documents prepared by the secretariat. ICCD/COP(12)/CST/6 contains the report of the work done by the SPI and its proposals to the CST. Document ICCD/COP (12)/CST/INF.4 focuses on the fourth objective of the SPI work program, focusing on its cooperation with the (Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soil (ITPS)). A joint meeting held on April 19, 2015 identified subjects for possible cooperation.
Moreover, the CST will be making other recommendation to link scientific knowledge to decision-making. It will address the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal, established by Decision 24/COP.11, as well as the issue of dissemination of knowledge on best practices, as per decision 17/COP.11. The discussions will be guided by documents prepared by the secretariat. See the section on CRIC 14 for a summary of report ICCD/COP(12)/CST/7-ICCD/CRIC (14)/6 and of document ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF:5 which addresses more specifically the Portal. The document indicates what might be the next steps in the development of this Portal: greater number of partners and their automated access to the databases, quality improvement through research partnerships, improved interface, and increased access to other sources of knowledge.

3.2 Fourteenth session of the CRIC

3.2.1 Effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional levels

The first part of the session of the CRIC will be devoted to reviewing the report of CRIC 13, to draw conclusions and make recommendations. In this regard, the reader may refer to the section of this guide devoted to CRIC 13.

Subsequently, in accordance with decision 11/COP.9, the CRIC will review the multi-year work plans, and submit recommendations to the COP. The multi-year workplan is contained in document ICCD/COP(12)/6-ICCD/CRIC(14)/2, and is summarized in the COP 12 section of this guide.

The results of the institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention must be reviewed by the CRIC in accordance with decisions 11/COP9 and 1/COP.10. The document prepared by the secretariat in this regard (ICCD/CRIC(14)/3), contains a report of the achievements pursuant to each of operational objectives. For the period 2014-2015, the document highlights that awareness of the international community to the need to establish land restoration targets, and to the fact that they are linked to other environmental and social issues, including climate change, has increased. The document report on new opportunities for funding, and indicates that reporting by the Parties has improved. It also reports that scientific collaboration has increased and that the UNCCD enjoys more support from CSOs.

Document ICCD/CRIC(14)/3 produced by the secretariat has already been the subject of official remarks from certain countries and will be the subject of discussions within regional groups. The most salient points relate to the periodicity of meetings of the CRIC and their possible replacement by regional meetings, which will eventually lead to discussions on the mandate of the CRIC.

As regards national action programs, decision 2/COP.11 requested Parties to develop and/or align them with The Strategy. It also requested CRIC 13 to design a plan for the NAP alignment process with the general objectives of SLM, which was done. The plan proposes that Parties take into account the SDGs for the post-2015
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period. The plan proposed by CRIC 13 was updated by the secretariat in document ICCD/CRIC(14)/4, which also takes into account the report of the IWG. Based on a review of statistics, the document concludes that alignment is progressing more slowly than expected, but that it should be completed by the end of 2016.

In its note, the secretariat advocates the adoption of a global target and of national targets, listing the benefits they can bring to the achievement of the objectives of the UNCCD. A target should consider available data on the trends and causes of desertification, actions undertaken, projections, synergistic impacts of desertification and climate change, as well as the necessary resources. These elements are usually already contained in the NAP. Nationally developed targets will depend on circumstances, but must follow the agreed indicators and methodology. Options for determining this target were tested in 14 countries, as reported in the appendix of the document.

As for financing, the GEF is already involved in relation to desertification. In addition, the Green Climate Fund has funds for adaptation to climate change, which can be used for land management. Finally, the GM is working to create a LDN Fund. Full details on these issues are contained in the above-mentioned document prepared by the secretariat. CRIC 14 will be invited to consider this document and to prepare a draft decision to the COP.

With regard to relationships with financial mechanisms to further investment to support UNCCD’s implementation, which is a standing item on the agenda of the COP since decision 9/COP.1, CRIC 14 will focus on the GEF, which produced a report, in accordance with the memorandum of understanding adopted by decision 6/COP.7, on its funding strategies, programs and projects related to desertification (ICCD / CRIC (14) / 5). It is on the basis of this report that the CRIC will be asked to draft a proposal for consideration by the COP.

3.2.2 Best practices

In accordance with decision 17/COP.11, the secretariat submits simultaneously to the CRIC and CST a report on best practices related to the implementation of the Convention (ICCD/COP(12)/CST/7-ICCD CRIC(14)/6). Both committees are invited to consider this report and make recommendations to the COP. The report contains much information that is only briefly summarized here. Regarding technologies for sustainable land management, including adaptation, the UNCCD, following a selection process, has concluded an agreement with the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT). WOCAT, along with the University of Bern, is now in charge of maintaining the database on best practices. The transfer of data from the PRAIS to the WOCAT secretariat took place on July 4, 2014. The agreement also established a steering committee to monitor the project, whose first meeting (November 28, 2014) is reported in the secretariat document.

With regard to financing and resource mobilization, several discussions have taken place since the last meeting of the CRIC, when the GM reported that it had not received any proposal for a database on best practices in financing. The GM
finally developed, with funding from the Government of Norway and the EU, a “Finance Info Kit” in the form of a directory listing the different funding sources.\textsuperscript{55} This kit has been cited by the UN Joint Inspection Unit as a model for the management of best practice among information systems on financing for climate change.\textsuperscript{56}

Moreover, decision 13/COP.9 requested that best practices be grouped according to seven themes, five of which not having yet been developed, despite two subsequent decisions on this issue: 15/COP.10 and 17/COP.11. For now, only the information on best practices in sustainable land management technologies, including adaptation, which has been compiled. The secretariat suggests that the COP agree that the UNCCD only refer to the other topics\textsuperscript{57} by linking to the websites of institutions that already deal with these topics, and have compiled relevant information.

In terms of knowledge management, the information submitted to the CRIC pertains to the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal. Decision 3/COP.8 requested the CST, with other relevant institutions, to create and pilot this Portal. This mandate is detailed in decision 21/COP.10 and 24/COP.11 and in ICCD COP(11)/CST/6. A pilot test of the Portal was conducted in 2014, which was improved in 2015.

\subsection*{3.2.3 The UNCCD reporting and review process in view of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development}

COP 12 will be asked to consider a number of recommendations pertaining to the revision of the processes of communication and review of reports on the implementation of the Convention, in view of the data contained in these reports.

Pursuant to decisions 14/COP.11, 16/COP.11 and 22/COP.11, the secretariat and the GM produced three documents presenting simplified and improved frameworks for the preparation of the reports to be provided by the Parties. The first pertains to strategic objectives 1, 2, and 3 (ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7), the second strategic objective 4 (ICCD/CRIC(14)/8), and the third describes the iterative process for assessing implementation (ICCD/CRIC(14)/9). This third document stresses that despite a decrease in requests for assistance from Parties to the UNCCD in terms of reporting, challenges remain, with regard to Party capacity and available information. In the absence of a comprehensive

\textsuperscript{55} Available at: \url{http://globalmechanism.org/our-services/finance-info-kit}.

\textsuperscript{56} Promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices and the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal, ICCD/COP(12)/CST/7-ICCD/CRIC(14)/6 (\url{http://www.unccd.int/Lists/OfficialDocuments/cop12/cst7eng.pdf}).

\textsuperscript{57} Capacity building and awareness raising; Monitoring, evaluation and research in the fields of desertification, land degradation, drought and sustainable land management; Knowledge management and decision making support; Policy, legislative and institutional framework; Participation, cooperation and networking. See decision 13/COP9, ICCD/COP(9)/18/Add.1 (\url{http://www.unccd.int/Lists/OfficialDocuments/cop9/18add1fre.pdf}).
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Database of financial information on domestic and private flows, it is not possible to generate comprehensive statistics. Nevertheless, it should be noted that a global support programme funded by GEF and UNEP has enabled the development of capacity for reporting. In its conclusions, the secretariat document offers recommendations in light of the many persistent limitations to data gathering.

Recommendations from the secretariat (ICCD/CRIC(14)/10) include: request Parties to focus performance reporting on key performance indicators; encourage Parties to incorporate LDN targets in their reports (ICCD/COP (12)/4 and ICCD/CRIC(14)/4); decide that the reports on financial flows should comply with the procedures defined in ICCD/CRIC(14)/8 and use, to the extent possible, the default data to be validated by the Parties; and reiterate that the progress reports should comply with decision 22 COP.11 and focus on a set of core indicators of progress to be validated, as presented in ICCD/COP(12), CST 3-ICCD/CRIC (14)/7 and ICCD/CRIC(14)/8.

Regarding the frequency of reporting and review mode, it is suggested that reports on the performance, progress and financial flows be prepared every four years starting during the biennium 2016-2017, and that they be considered every four years by the CRIC during its intersessional meeting, starting during the 2018-2019 biennium. Intersessional meetings of the CST would be held immediately before those of CRIC, and the total duration of these two meetings would be five working days. In addition, regional meetings of the Annexes would be held immediately prior to the intersessional meetings of the CST and CRIC. Each recommendation includes requests to the secretariat and/or the GM for the implementation of the necessary tools. Parties may also consider the recommendations contained in documents ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7, ICCD/CRIC(14)/8 and ICCD/CRIC(13)/9.

3.3 Twelfth session of the COP

Three issues will be central to all discussions at COP 12. The first is that of land degradation neutrality (LDN). COP 11 raised several questions with regard to this concept. To the extent that LDN is integrated in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which have been adopted by the UN General Assembly in September, it will be essential for COP 12 to address various aspects of this issue.

Integration of the SDGs into the implementation of the UNCCD is the second substantive issue that will be addressed by COP 12. The SDGs will replace the Millennium Development Goals, and will likely be more inter-related that their predecessors. They participate to a general movement towards a more integrated implementation of the various international conventions pertaining to sustainable development (SD). The third crosscutting issue addressed at COP 12 will be the synergy of environmental conventions and international initiatives on SD. These three topics are given special attention in the following pages, the structure of which reflects the provisional agenda of COP 12.
3.3.1 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Implications for the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

The post-2015 period was discussed at COP 11. The discussion focused on the issue of LDN, and on the integration of the SDGs in the implementation of the UNCCD.

Land degradation neutrality

Resolution 66/288 of the General Assembly of the United Nations, adopted in the context of Rio+20, called its Member States to strive to achieve a land-degradation-neutral world. This approach should be deliberated within the UNCCD, following the debates that took place at COP 11. The latter nevertheless adopted decision 8/COP.11, establishing an Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) to address the issues of LDN. COP 12 will be asked to address this issue again taking into consideration recent developments, including the work of the General Assembly in September 2015 on the post-2015 period.

Report of the Intergovernmental Working Group

As noted above, the last COP adopted decision 8/COP.11, creating an IWG to study the LDN. Its task was divided into three areas: definition of LDN; options for achieving the LDN and; implications on current and future strategies, as well as programmes and resources. The IWG was to take into account the development of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), relevant economic studies produced by the science-policy interface (SPI), and synergies to be established with relevant conventions.

IWG members were not unanimous as to the scope of the definition to be adopted for LDN. The proposed definition is the following (the brackets indicate unresolved options):

“Land degradation neutrality [in affected areas] [in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas] is a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.”

At the national level, management options have two components: prevention and rehabilitation. Prevention can be done by taking into account resilience in land use planning, and through sustainable resource management. Rehabilitation can be achieved by reducing the causes of desertification and through rehabilitation projects. In terms of national policies, the IWG concludes that the national action programs should integrate LDN.

The operationalization of LDN is based on various aspects that can be summarized as: measurement of degradation, identification of its causes, development of sustainable landscape management, integration of LDN into the different national strategies to ensure multi-sectoral coordination, taking into account local, traditional and scientific knowledge, and the development of communication strategies.

The IWG does not see the need to amend the current UNCCD Strategy, given that it will end in two years. LDN should be integrated into strategies and work plans decided at each COP. According to the IWG, the integration of LDN into the NAPs is the ideal approach, but if a specific plan exists for LDN, or if it is integrated into a sustainable development plan, the Convention should be open to receive separate reports on LDN.

With regard to the resources needed for the implementation of LDN, the IWG emphasizes the need to better use and realign existing resources, secure new resources and conduct awareness raising campaigns.

**Integration of Sustainable Development Goals and targets and implementation of the UNCCD**

The integration of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) to the implementation of the UNCCD will be an important issue at COP 12. The SDG were developed in the context of the post-2015 development agenda. The SDGs respond to the need identified at the Rio+20 summit to agree on universal goals that balance the three dimensions of sustainable development. The SDGs will replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Rather than renew the MDGs, the United Nations decided to develop new goals that would address the criticisms voiced against the MDGs. These criticisms related in particular to the fact that the MDGs did not take sufficient account of the environment, nor of the interconnections between the three dimensions of SD. Conversely, the agreed SDGs show a lot of interconnections.

As per decision 12/COP.11, the secretariat prepared a note (ICCD/COP(12)/4), based on the report of the IWG-LDN and CRIC 13, on the integration of the sustainable development goals in the implementation of the UNCCD.

The secretariat notes that the General Assembly is considering the adoption of a sustainable development goal related to the fight against desertification, as well as a target related to LDN. The secretariat also indicates that it is working with the GM on the creation of a fund dedicated to LDN, in the form of a public-private investment platform.

According to the secretariat, setting a target related to LDN would be the most effective way to support the implementation of the current strategy of the UNCCD. The secretariat lists a number of recommendations to be considered by Parties at COP. The secretariat suggests that Parties recognize that achieving an

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LDN target is conducive to the fulfilment of the three dimensions of sustainable development, and that LDN can serve as a basis for the development of programmes to implement the Convention. Affected country Parties are invited in particular to establish LDN targets and to integrate it into their national programmes. Developed country Parties, other governments, the private sector, civil society and technical and financial institutions are invited to provide technical, scientific and financial assistance, and establish equitable partnerships.

The secretariat has developed basic common indicators for monitoring the implementation of SDG 15, including its target 15.3, and that after having presented them to the UNFCCC and CBD, it has submitted them to the United Nations Statistical Commission (ICCD/COP(12)/17 and ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7). The adoption of indicators for SDG monitoring should conclude in March 2016, according to the information contained in ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7.

**Land Degradation Neutrality: Front and Center in the Development and Climate Agendas**

On 25-27 September 2015, the UN General Assembly ratified *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, including 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets. “Halting and reversing land degradation” headlines SDG 15 and “achieving a land degradation neutral world by 2030” is the feature of target 15.3. In December 2015, the world will welcome a new climate agreement that includes commitments to reduce emissions and slow global warming. Once again, the land-use sector will feature prominently to keep us on track to meet the 2°C target. As delegates to UNCCD COP12, you are gathering in Ankara at a critical juncture between the launch of these two historic agendas that will set the future course of civilization. The health and productivity of the ground that you stand on will determine the success or failure of the human endeavor.

The objective of Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) is to maintain and increase the amount of healthy and productive land resources over time and in line with national development priorities. Achieving LDN will have immediate and cumulatively significant benefits for both climate change mitigation and adaptation. It will also be a critical pathway of action to meet the food, water and energy needs of the close to 10 billion people by the year 2050. Agriculture, forestry and other land uses represent approximately 25% of anthropogenic GHG emissions: half of which come from agricultural production and half from land use change (e.g. forest clearing, wetland drainage). While the mitigation potential of the land use sector is still not fully recognized in the climate negotiations, LDN activities as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will contribute significantly to both reduced emissions and increased rates of sequestration.

**UNCCD’s Commitment to Sustainable Development**

The LDN target presents new opportunities for countries to benefit from increased awareness and investments in sustainable land management and restoration from both private and public sources. In this regard, the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) on the follow up to Rio+20 (ICCD/COP(12)/4)
and Parties at CRIC 13 (ICC/CRIC(140/4)) present various options for implementing the LDN target and creating incentives and mobilizing resources in the context of the Convention. The UNCCD secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) are currently in the process of developing the LDN fund, a public-private investment platform to help ensure adequate, predictable and timely financial resources for large-scale rehabilitation activities.

Deliberations at UNCCD COP12 will include the possible adoption of voluntary LDN targets as the primary vehicle for driving implementation of the Convention and achieving its priority objectives as currently formulated in The Strategy. In addition, the Parties may wish to consider endorsing the definition of LDN as proposed by the IWG with the aim of furthering the UNCCD’s custodianship of the LDN target and increasing synergies with the 2030 Agenda and the other Rio conventions. The terms of reference for developing plans to enhance the implementation of the UNCCD’s existing strategy would include prioritizing assistance to countries in setting national LDN targets within the context of sustainable development and creating the enabling environment for their implementation and monitoring. In this regard, it may be prudent to consider a 2016–2030 time horizon in order to align with the financing and monitoring instruments of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

**Climate Action through Sustainable Land Management**

Striving to achieve the LDN target translates into meaningful climate action by: 1) protecting our natural carbon sinks like forests, grasslands and wetlands, 2) scaling up sustainable land management practices that reduce emissions, increase productivity and prevent further land use change, and 3) restoring degraded ecosystems for improved resilience and long term carbon storage.

Due to current trends in land degradation, our communities and ecosystems are failing to cope with the impacts of climate change, especially the challenges of growing water scarcity and prolonged drought. Many livelihoods in the developing world are closely linked to the health and productivity of the land. The LDN target will promote investments in local communities, empower them to recover the lost productive potential of their land and better absorb the shocks and stressors associated with climate change.

LDN activities need not be expensive or complex. For example, it can take as little as USD 20 to rehabilitate one hectare of farmland in Africa using traditional agro-forestry, water conservation and livestock management practices. These low-cost practices along with large-scale rehabilitation projects, such as those expected to be funded by the proposed UNCCD’s new LDN Fund, could help recover the productivity of 12 million hectares per year. Under this scenario, by the year 2030, the combined restoration of approximately 150 million hectares of degraded lands could provide US$30–40 billion/year in extra smallholder income, additional food for close to 200 million more people, more resilient landscapes, and an additional 2 GtCO2e/yr sequestered.

LDN activities almost always come with adaptation benefits creating a pathway to enhanced resilience for land-dependent communities. With healthy and productive land, these communities will be able to respond to and minimize climate impacts while improving their livelihood strategies. There is still time to strengthen the commitments in the land-use sector in the climate negotiations and the UNCCD COP12 decisions could send a strong signal that LDN is an important link between the development and climate agendas.

Source: UNCCD secretariat

The UNCCD communication strategy was developed pursuant to decision 3/COP.8. This communication strategy was given a new impetus after Rio+20, when the General Assembly called for a land degradation neutral world. The secretariat submitted a report on the progress of the implementation of the communication strategy in accordance with Decision (4/COP.11). The secretariat also reports on the implementation of decision 7/COP.11 on the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification. Both reports can be found in document ICCD/COP(12)/2.

The secretariat also indicates that it has changed the storyline it uses when referring to desertification. Rather than focusing on the land itself, the focus is placed on the impact desertification has on people and the help they need. The secretariat mentions having received excellent cooperation from the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) in this regard.

Implications of the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals for the delivery of science and policy efforts of the UNCCD

In accordance with the provisions of Decision 29/COP.11, CST 12 will address the implications of the post-2015 development agenda and sustainable development goals for the delivery of science and policy efforts of the UNCCD, and the COP will be invited to take note of the CST report and its recommendations.

3.3.2 Effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional levels

Trends in the implementation of the UNCCD

By decision 3/COP.11, the COP requested stakeholders to take a number of actions. The secretariat prepared a report on the progress of the implementation of that decision (ICCD/COP(12)/12).

The first focus of the report is on the strengthening of the institutional framework. Regional coordination mechanisms, which include the Regional Coordination Units (RCUs), have been put in place pursuant to decision 3/COP.9. The secretariat and the GM are supporting the RCUs. The role of RCUs is important: they support regional groups and regional committees, conduct outreach, monitor the performance of regional and subregional processes, provide training and technical support for the preparation of reports and alignment of the action programs, support the preparation of CRIC 13 and COP 12, and provide information, including feedback regarding national targets for the implementation of the UNCCD. Considering
the limited means of RCUs, which usually have only one employee, their task is difficult. RCUs only exist for three regions: Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Central and Eastern Europe. The other regions are not considering establishing RCUs at this time.

The second focus of the report is on the promotion of regional cooperation. The secretariat lists the initiatives that have been reported by each region, including those involving civil society which, according to the secretariat, has been particularly active in this regard during the last biennium. Furthermore, preparatory meetings were held in each region immediately before the CRIC 13, and, at the time of writing, two other meetings were scheduled to take place, one in Africa and one for the Northern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern Europe countries.

The third focus of the report concerns the facilitation of the implementation at regional level. First, decision 3/COP.11 asked each region to ensure that their own priorities were adequately reflected in the action programs. The alignment process of subregional action programs has been completed in three regions in Africa, and is in the process of being completed in the southern region of the continent. In Asia, some work has been done, and the programme of central Asian countries will be implemented with funding from the FAO, the governments as well as the government of Turkey, and other institutions. In Latin America and the Caribbean, no program has been implemented, except that of Trinidad and Tobago. This program, however, is threatened by lack of funds in 2016. In Central and Eastern Europe, the process is well supported. Six regional projects and eight global projects related to land degradation have been set up with funding from the GEF.

Finally, the secretariat highlights several new cooperative initiatives. The GM is engaged in many of them: the International Land Coalition, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration, the FAO Forest and Landscape Restoration Mechanism, the Forest Ecosystem Restoration Initiative, the Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative and the International Year of Soils. These initiatives favour cooperation on sustainable land management, and support advocacy for more funding for sustainable land management. The secretariat and the GM also fostered North-South and South-South partnerships through projects such as Changwon Initiative and the Kubuqi International Forum on Deserts. The secretariat, with the assistance of relevant RCUs, developed a research project on the economics of land degradation in Central Asia, which is supported by several partners.

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60. Effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional levels, ICCD/COP(12)/12, p. 7 (<http://www.unccd.int/Lists/OfficialDocuments/cop12/12eng.pdf>).
Leveraging of synergies among the Rio conventions, including land-based adaptation to climate change

By decision 9/COP.11 the COP requested an analysis of existing synergies between the UNCCD and other conventions, organizations, institutions and relevant international agencies.

In document ICCD/COP(12)/17, the secretariat highlights the work of the UNCCD and its bodies on synergies among the Rio conventions.

The UNCCD cooperates with the other Rio conventions. As recognized by the UN General Assembly on the occasion of Rio+20, desertification has a direct impact on the subject matter of all the Rio conventions, which means that cooperation is required. In September 2014, the Joint Liaison Group of the Rio conventions agreed on the need to focus on issues of common interest, while respecting the obligations comprised in each of the conventions.

With the support of France, the secretariat has started work on the development of common indicators for monitoring the implementation of SDG 15 and target of 15.3. The approach advocated by the secretariat was presented to the UNFCCC Adaptation Committee and at COP 12 of the CBD. In March 2015, the secretariat submitted three proposed indicators to the United Nations Statistical Commission61: trends in land cover, trends in land productivity or functioning of the land, and trends in carbon stocks above and below ground. These have been tested on a voluntary basis since May 2014 as part of an LDN project in 16 affected countries belonging to five regions. The GEF and the secretariat have also started to develop joint indicators the Rio Conventions and the GEF could use. Several other entities have expressed interest in working on common indicators. The CBD initiated a framework study on an integrated information system and indicators for the three Rio Conventions, and several entities, including the UNCCD, participate in discussions surrounding this study.

The UNCCD has relationships with a number of organizations, including the FAO, a key partner in soil management (Of note, the GM’s Rome liaison office is located in FAO’s offices). The report of the secretariat lists a number of areas in which the UNCCD is collaborating with FAO: the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, the Global Soil Partnership, the Advisory Steering Committee of the FAO Forests and Landscapes Restoration Mechanism, and the Mountain Partnership. The UNCCD and FAO also cooperated in the context of the World Day against Desertification. Finally, they regularly cooperate on the following issues: liaison (to further strengthen the engagement of Rome-based agencies and institutions in UNCCD implementation); land (to promote sustainable investments and management

61. The development of the SDG indicator framework will follow a multistage process culminating in March 2016 with the final recommendations of the UNSC, according to document ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7.
Deciphering the main topics on the agenda of the sessions

in land-based systems addressing DLDD); security (to assess interlinkages between DLDD, food insecurity and forced migration as drivers for global insecurity); resilience (to improve people’s livelihoods and resilience to food and water insecurity, drought and climate change). Also, meetings were held between the science-policy interface (SPI) and the Technical Intergovernmental Panel of the Global Soil Partnership, in order to avoid duplication of efforts and to identify means of cooperation.

The secretariat is working with the Technical Cooperation Department of the International Atomic Energy Agency to develop isotopes that can provide information on soils. And, cooperation with several entities has helped develop a training program on national policies on drought management.

In November 2014, the UNCCD secretariat issued a joint statement with the Ramsar Convention on wetlands calling for a more resilient future. In June 2015, the secretariat worked with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) on a collaborative framework. The IUCN houses the secretariat of the Global Partnership for Forest and Landscape Restoration, of which the UNCCD is a member. The UNCCD can use this partnership to promote the Bonn Challenge, an international commitment to restore 150 million hectares of deforested lands by 2020. As a member of the Collaborative Partnership on Mediterranean Forests, the UNCCD was able to raise the awareness of other members on the value of reforestation in the fight against land degradation. On the linkages between migrations and desertification, the UNCCD has begun working in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration. This partnership has already borne some fruit in West Africa. As founding members of the TerrAfrica partnership, the secretariat and the GM have supported the implementation of its 2014-2015 work plan. The GM has contributed to the Council of the International Land Coalition, offered support to the Congo Basin Forest Partnership, and worked with the Landscapes for People, Food and Nature Initiative. Pursuant to Decision 23/COP.11, the science-policy interface worked with the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, to which it provided relevant information.

In conclusion, the secretariat suggests that the Parties consider endorsing the proposed indicators, in order to create a common reporting system to the three Rio conventions. This system would also be consistent with progress indicators adopted by decision 22/COP.11 and with the proposal by the secretariat for a global indicator on trends in land degradation based on the three indicators of progress of the Convention, to monitor the LDN target in the context of sustainable development goals.62

The document prepared by the secretariat should be read in conjunction with several other documents prepared for the CST 12 (ICCD/COP(12)/CST/6, ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF.3 and ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF.4), and this section of the guide should be read in conjunction with the section on the CST 12.

ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF.3 states that the institutions of the UNCCD should continue to work in synergy with the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). It also suggests that synergies be addressed in reports pertaining to land degradation and restoration.

The Rio Conventions Pavilion will hold workshops on synergies at CoP12.63

**Securing of additional investments in the UNCCD**

Decision 11/COP.11 tasked the secretariat, in cooperation with the GM, to prepare a draft amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding between the UNCCD and the Global Environment Facility (GEF). The proposed amendments are described on page 3 of document ICCD/COP(12)/18.

**Global Mechanism**

Decision 14/COP.11 asked the GM to assist affected country Parties in assessing their financial needs, and to explore innovative ways of mobilizing financial flows for the implementation of the Convention. It also asked the GM to submit a proposal on this matter at COP 12. Furthermore, decision 1/COP.11 asked the GM to increase its support to capacity building to enable affected countries to better identify and seize funding opportunities. At COP 12, the GM will hold a meeting to report on the implementation of these decisions. The relevant documents to be consulted in relation to these issues are the multi-year workplan (ICCD/COP(12)/6), and documents related to the financial statements of the trust funds of the Convention (ICCD/COP(12)/7 and ICCD/COP(12)/INF.5).

**Global environment facility**

The relationships between the UNCCD and the GEF date back to the first COP. In Decision 11/COP.11, the COP requested the Executive Secretary, in cooperation with the Administrator of the GEF, to propose amendments to the memorandum of understanding between the UNCCD and the GEF. The draft memorandum is contained in document ICCD/COP(12)/18. The report from the GEF on its funding of projects related to the Convention is contained in ICCD/CRIC(14)/5 (since Decision 11/COP.9, CRIC assists the COP in reviewing its partnership with the GEF).

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3.3.3 **Special segment: Boosting stakeholder engagement in the implementation of the UNCCD**

By Decision 39/COP.11, the COP determined that there would be at COP 12 interactive dialogues with various stakeholders: ministers, civil society organizations, businesses, the scientific community and parliamentarians. The dialogues will take the following form:

(a) Parallel ministerial/high-level round tables:
   (i) Round table 1: From global to local: translating land degradation neutrality into action;
   (ii) Round table 2: Drought adaptation: mainstreaming drought management policy in national agendas and mitigating the effects of drought;
   (iii) Round table 3: Land-based adaptation to climate change: resilience through sustainable land management;

(b) Land rights (a dialogue with civil society);

(c) Framing of legislation to protect and rehabilitate land (a dialogue with parliamentarians);

(d) Incentives for investment in sustainable land management (a dialogue with the private sector).

Document ICCD/COP(12)/INF.2 prepared by the secretariat provides background information for delegates.

3.3.4 **Multi-year workplan, two-year costed work programme, and programme and budget**

This section is a summary of the information contained in the documents prepared by the secretariat and the GM with regard to the multi-year workplan for the Convention, the two-year costed work programme of its bodies (ICCD/COP(12)/6) and the 2016-2017 budget as such (ICCD/COP(12)/5). It should be read in conjunction with documents ICCD/COP(12)/7 and ICCD/CRIC(14)/3, on the performance of the UNCCD during the last biannual exercise. In order to avoid repetition, this section only provides an outline of the issues and no figures are provided.

It should be noted that the presentation of the programme and the budget was simplified at COP 12 as compared to previous years.

Decision 3/COP.8 on The Strategy of the UNCCD, requested the secretariat, the GM, the CST and the CRIC to develop multi-year work plans and two-year costed work programmes.

**Multi-year work plan and two-year costed work programme**

The 2016-2019 multi-year workplan is based on the four strategic objectives of the Convention: improving the living conditions of affected populations, improving the condition of affected ecosystems, generating global benefits through effective
implementation of the UNCCD, and mobilizing resources to support the implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors. The table it contains shows the expected results, indicators, and the 2016-2017 production schedule.

The 2016-2017 two-year costed work programme is much more detailed than the multi-year plan and focuses on the resources the secretariat and the GM require. In terms of human resources, the secretariat and GM mention that they have commitments associated with 45 posts.

Regarding the resources required by the secretariat, they are divided into five categories: Executive Direction and Management; External Relations, Policy and Advocacy; Knowledge Management, Science and Technology; Facilitation and Monitoring of Implementation; and Administrative Services.

The executive direction and management division coordinates the activities of the secretariat and of the other bodies of the UNCCD, including the New York Liaison Office, which ensures the representation of the UNCCD to the United Nations and interest groups. The secretariat proposes to increase from D-1 to D-2 the level of the post of Deputy Executive Secretary.

For the next two years, the task of the external relations, policies and promotion division will be to translate the implications of the Sustainable Development Goals, the post-2015 agenda and the climate commitments into possible actions for the UNCCD and its Parties. The division will also advocate that desertification and drought are factors of insecurity, and that SLM has a stabilizing effect. Its proposed budget comprises communications and support for participation of civil society.

The knowledge management, science and technology component aims during 2016-2017 to improve scientific understanding and cooperation on land degradation neutrality, to support affected country Parties, and to facilitate access to scientific knowledge and best practices.

The facilitation and monitoring of the implementation component supports the activities of the CRIC. The objectives for the next biennium are to support affected country Parties with the establishment of land degradation neutrality targets, NAP alignment and with capacity development and technical support. It also intends to develop the reporting, review and assessment procedures.

Finally, the administrative component provides management and support to the secretariat and the GM. It will continue to implement the Umoja system, an administrative reform conducted within the United Nations, and the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).

The resources needed to GM are also divided into subcategories, which are dependent on the changing context of international funding. Recent studies have yielded some suggestions for changes to the GM approach. Three main themes have been identified for future action:

- Land degradation neutrality action: country support for LDN targets baselines and practices;
• Lands, economy and the private sector: viable investment opportunities and sustainable land-use business models;

• Lands, resilience and security: landscape restoration, drought and disasters risk reduction, human mobility and conflict prevention, and liaison with Rome.

The secretariat’s conclusions and recommendations are to consider the submitted multi-year work plan and two-year costed work programme, and to review them in light of the tasks the COP mandated the secretariat, GM, CST and CRIC to perform.

Programme and budget

The core budget and indicative scale of contributions are determined by the COP. The scale for the period 2016-2017 was developed in accordance with decision 67/238 of the U.N. General Assembly.

Five funds contribute to the activities of the Convention:

(a) The Trust Fund for the Core Budget of the UNCCD;

(b) Trust Fund for Participation of Representatives of Eligible Parties in the Sessions of the UNCCD Conference;

(c) Trust Fund for Voluntary Financing of Activities under the UNCCD;

(d) Trust Fund for Voluntary Financing of Activities under the GM;

(e) Trust Fund for Convention Events Organized by the UNCCD secretariat (the Bonn Fund).

The secretariat also prepared contingency budgets. A budget for conference follow-up (COP, CST and CRIC), in the event that the General Assembly change its practice, which was until now to include this budget in the regular budget of the United Nations and the COPs. Contingency budgets are also provided in the event that COP 13, the S-5 CST and CRIC 15 are held in Bonn.

The secretariat and the GM are requested to regularly assess their operations to meet requirements of the United Nations or donors. A UNCCD Evaluation Office was established in 2014 to meet these demands. The Evaluation Office has one professional staff financed through the programme support costs. An allocation from the core budget is proposed for the recruitment of independent evaluators and the publication of evaluation results. Project-level monitoring and assessment costs are in turn included in the overall costs of each project.

Convention Trust funds

This sub-section is based on document ICCD/COP(12)/7, which, pursuant to decision 10/COP.11, reports on the status of the Convention trust funds, including its revenues and expenses.
With regard to the Trust Fund for the Core Budget of the UNCCD, the secretariat had received 63% of expected contributions by May 31, 2015. Moreover, at the same date, expenditures had reached only 56.6% of the budget, due to special circumstances. The disbursements from the Trust Fund for Participation of Representatives of Eligible Parties in the UNCCD in the Sessions were also lower than its revenues.

The Trust Funds for Voluntary Financing of Activities under the UNCCD received only 53% of expected funds, despite the fact that decision 10/COP.11 underlined the need for extra budgetary funding for additional activities of the secretariat and the GM. However, these figures show a marked increase over the same period in 2012-2013.

With respect to the Bonn Fund, which relies solely on funding from the government of Germany, half of the planned funding for 2014-2015 had been received by May 31, 2015, and expenses were below revenues.

Finally, the secretariat reported on the Special Account for Programme Support Costs, which was established in accordance with a practice of the United Nations, and which consists of 13% of the revenues of all funds.

Document ICCD/CRIC(14)/3, containing the report on the implementation of the four-year workplan and two-year costed work programme for 2014-2015 of the secretariat, the CRIC, the CST and the GM, should be considered when reading the document ICCD/COP(12)/7.

The Parties will also be asked to review the documents relating to the audited financial statements of the Convention trust funds for the biennia 2012-2013 and 2014-2015 (up to December 31, 2014) (ICCD/COP(12)/9 and ICCD/COP(12)/8), and the status of contributions to the funds of the Convention for the biennium 2014-2015 (ICCD/COP(12)/11). Similarly, the audited financial statements of the GM (up to September 27, 2013) are submitted to the COP in document ICCD/COP(12)/10.

3.3.5 Procedural matters

Procedural issues reported in this section are subject to the attention of COP 12, in particular rule 47 of the rules of procedure dealing with the voting majority required for the adoption of decisions by the Conference. This outstanding item has been an item on the agenda of the COP since its second session.

Maintenance of the roster of experts

To ensure a better representation of experts from various disciplines, the COP, by its decision 26/COP.11, requested that the list of international experts be updated. Paragraph 3 of that decision lists the areas and topics of relevance to the UNCCD. The secretariat, in document ICCD/COP(12)/13, reports on the activities undertaken to comply with the decision.
The secretariat proceeded to remove from the list the experts who had not been validated by the relevant national focal points by March 31, 2014. The secretariat makes the following observations: the list was reduced by 34% compared to that of June 1st, 2013; appointments were proposed by 81 Parties (70% of Parties), and the men now represent 84% of the experts on the list, and women 16% (an increase compared to 2013). Because it lacks the necessary technology, the secretariat was not in a position to implement a web-based system as required by the same COP decision. Albeit it has not yet reached its full potential, the list is an important tool to allow individual participation of experts in activities related to the fight against desertification.

Accreditation of civil society organizations and representatives from the private sector to the Conference of the Parties and their participation in meetings and processes of the UNCCD

Decision 5/COP.11 modified the selection process of civil society organizations. It also requested the secretariat and the GM to develop a strategy for involving businesses. The Parties will be called to consider the revised procedures contained in ICCD/COP(12)/3.

Rule 47 of the rules of procedure

Document ICCD/COP(12)/14 summarizes the issue concerning rule 47 of the rules of procedure dealing with the voting majority required for the adoption of decisions by the Conference. This outstanding item has been an item on the agenda of the COP since its second session. Decision 30/COP.11 called for the matter to be decided at COP 12. The proposals submitted by five parties are available on the UNCCD website: <www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/COP/COP12/Submissions.pdf>.

According to the secretariat, three options can be considered at COP 12. First, the COP can refer the matter to a future COP. Second, the COP could decide that when there is no consensus, a simple or qualified majority vote will be required. Third, it could decide to specify in Article 47 which decisions must be taken by consensus and which decisions must be taken by a majority vote.

Procedures and institutional mechanisms for the resolution of questions on implementation

Decision 31/COP.11 extended the mandate of the ad hoc group of experts (AHGE) to make recommendations on procedures and institutional mechanisms for the resolution of questions on implementation. The secretariat’s note (ICCD/COP(12)/14) builds upon and updates document ICCD/COP(11)/17. Among the Parties, only Kenya and Senegal have submitted their views on the issue. International institutions and organizations have also submitted comments.
At the last meeting of the AHGE it was agreed that any resolution process regarding implementation issues should be facilitative and non-confrontational, and support the implementation of the Parties obligations. The annex to document ICCD/COP(9)/13 is submitted as a potential starting point for the drafting of such rules.

**Annexes containing arbitration and conciliation procedures**

By Decision 32/COP.11, the COP requested the AHGE to make recommendations concerning the annexes on arbitration and conciliation procedures. In ICCD/COP(12)/14, the secretariat reported that only Kenya and Senegal had submitted proposals. Furthermore the secretariat considered the optional rules of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) Optional Rules for Arbitration of Disputes Relating to the Environment and/or Natural Resources, as well as the rules of the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

The secretariat concludes that the information contained in ICCD/COP(4)/8 remains relevant, and that the tools presented in ICCD/COP(7)/9 can be a useful starting point if the Parties decide to adopt annexes.

**Request submitted by Annex V country Parties regarding the mandate and scope of the Convention**

Armenia, representing Annex V countries (Central and Eastern Europe), asked the secretariat to request the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations (OLA) to provide an interpretation UNCCD’s mandate and scope. The request was also sent directly to the OLA, who replied that it can not accede to such a request unless it emanates from a formal decision by the relevant entity of the UNCCD. Following meetings in September 2014 and June 2015, the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties decided to include this item for discussion at COP 12. Document ICCD/COP(12)/16 was prepared by the secretariat for the purpose of this discussion.

The issue arises from the fact that UNCCD documents sometimes use more than one formulation when referring to five expressions. The aim of the request is that the vocabulary be systematized. The contentious expressions and the decisions in which they are used can be found in the annex to the document prepared by the secretariat.
4.1 Action programmes

The national action programme for the fight against desertification (and its sub-regional (SRAP) and Regional (RAP) counterparts) is the main tool for implementation of the UNCCD at national level. Each affected country Party is required to develop a national action program (NAP) based on reliable scientific data on the extent and trends of the phenomenon, and ensure the active and sustained participation of the different stakeholders, especially local populations.

Pursuant to Article 10 of the Convention (Article 11 for SRAPs and RAPs), the NAPs should “identify the factors contributing to desertification and practical measures necessary to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought” (art. 10 para. 1 UNCCD). These programs must specify the roles for key actors (such as the State, local communities and land users), the resources that are necessary for its implementation and those that are actually available (art. 10 para. 2 UNCCD). The NAPs define long-term strategies that should be integrated into national sustainable development policies. They must also be able to adapt to the changing circumstances and to different local socio-economic, biological and geo-physical conditions. The NAPs should promote a participatory approach and pay particular attention to the implementation of prevention measures as well as capacity building and the strengthening of institutional cooperation and coordination frameworks.

NAPs also serve to promote new livelihoods to generate incomes in the affected areas as well as sustainable natural resource management. For this purpose, the NAPs may provide for concrete measures such as: the creation of early warning systems; strengthening of drought preparedness and management; the implementation of networked food security systems, related for example to food storage and marketing; the promotion of environmentally sustainable agricultural practices and the introduction of sustainable irrigation programs; etc. (art. 10 par. 3 and 4).

The Annexes of the UNCCD for the implementation of the Convention at the regional level provide details on regional and subregional socio-economic, geographical and climatic factors to be taken into account in the preparation of NAPs (art. 15 UNCCD).
Affected Country Parties also have to report to the Conference of Parties (COP) on the content and implementation of their NAPs. To this end, guidelines are provided to guide them in the preparation of their national reports. The NAPs that are submitted to the secretariat can be accessed through the UNCCD website. Developed countries shall support the development and implementation of these action plans (art. 6 and 9 para. 2).

The value of NAPs was initially considered to be at two levels. First, the NAPs were to give affected country Parties a participatory planning tool for the implementation of the UNCCD. Second, the NAP would serve as a tool for the coordination and mobilization of funding from international agencies and donor countries. Unfortunately, experience has shown that if NAPs may have constituted important strategic planning tools at national level, they did not contribute to the mobilization of funds as they generated only limited interest on the part of investors, who blamed the NAPs’ lack of strategic and long term vision and the absence of mechanisms to learn from past experiences and to go beyond the results achieved by other types of projects already benefiting from the investors’ financial support.

The Strategy adopted by the Parties at COP 8 sought to remedy this situation (decision 3/COP.8), inviting affected country Parties to “align their action programmes and other relevant implementation activities relating to the Convention with The Strategy by, inter alia, addressing the outcomes under the five operational objectives.”

Guidelines for NAP alignment were presented at COP 9 (ICCD/COP(9)/2/Add.1). Decision 2/COP.9 took note of these guidelines and encouraged affected countries and other stakeholders to use them to align their programs with the five operational objectives of the strategy. The same decision requests the secretariat to facilitate the provision of technical assistance and invites the GM to work closely with the secretariat to mobilize resources for the implementation of aligned action programs. In addition, decision 13/COP.9, which sets the CONS-O-5 target for the implementation of this initiative, provides that by 2014, at least 80% of affected country Parties and subregional or regional entities will have aligned their NAPs / SRAPs / RAPs on The Strategy.

In decision 2/COP.11, the COP reiterates the importance of conducting NAP alignments, invites the Parties to follow the guidelines and makes several recommendations pertaining to the alignment process, particularly in terms of participation of all stakeholders and the necessity to ensure consistency with other sectoral policies and development plans. The COP also invites Parties to develop

64. See, for example: ICCD/CRIC(5)/INF.3.
subnational plans as necessary. The COP also made various recommendations to the secretariat, the CRIC and the GM with regard to the facilitation of the implementation of its decision, and the related financing.68

In May 2011, the GEF informed the Parties that it would provide financing (GEF-5) to support national activities related to: (a) the development of National Action Programmes to combat desertification and their alignment with The Strategy; and (b) the preparation of the national reports to be submitted to the UNCCD for the 2012-2013 and 2014-201569 evaluation cycles.

GEF-6, which coincides with the last four years of The Strategy, also allocates funds for the implementation of the UNCCD, but does not set a specific funding target for the development of NAPs.70

### 4.2 National reports on implementation

UNCCD Article 26 provides that the Parties must report to the Conference of the Parties (COP) on their measures taken to implement the UNCCD. The affected developing country Parties must communicate the information on any strategies and action programmes prepared and their application. They must address the progress made and challenges encountered. The national reports are submitted to the UNCCD secretariat which summarises and analyses them in a report submitted to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) for review.71

The affected developing country Parties can request technical and financial support from the COP in preparing their reports and in determining the needs linked to their action programmes.72 A manual is also at the disposal of Parties to assist them in preparing their reports.73 The manual and the national reports are accessible via the PRAIS Internet site: http://www.unccd-prais.com/.

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71. Decision 1/COP.5 (ICCD/COP(5)/11/Add.1).
73. The document in question is ICCD/CRIC(5)/INF.3.
For the first report establishment cycle, COP 3 created an ad hoc working group for an assessment and in-depth analysis of action programme reports. The group was entrusted with the individual review of first reports presented during COP 3 (1999) and COP 4 (2000). The ad hoc group submitted its overall report together with its conclusions and recommendations in 2001, to the COP 5. During this same session, the COP decided to entrust the review of reports on implementation to the newly-created CRIC.

The third reporting cycle started during the third session of CRIC with the reports submitted by affected African countries in 2004. At its fourth session, held during the COP 7, the CRIC suggested several decisions to the COP that were adopted. The COP established, among other things, an ad hoc Working Group to improve the procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports on implementation (AHWGR). A report on the conclusions and recommendations of this ad hoc working group was submitted to COP 8. The secretariat continued this work by submitting documents on the proposed directives and performance indicators to COP 9 (ICCD/CRIC (8)/5 et Add.1 to Add.3).

At COP 9, the Parties agreed on a new Performance Review and Assessment of Implementation System (PRAIS). CRIC would thus be able to review the implementation of the Strategy and the Convention efficiently, based on a new methodological approach and results and impact indicators together with information on best practices and financial flows (Decision 11/COP.9., 12/COP.9 and 13/COP.9).

During the fifth reporting cycle (2013-2014), the GM, with financial support from the GEF and UNEP, acted as an executing agency for the implementation of a project to support Parties with the development of their report. The “Global Support Program” (GSP) provided reporting tools to countries Parties and other entities, as well as a manual and training on the revised guidelines and simplified templates available on the PRAIS portal. The GSP also provided online assistance to focal points and their assistants throughout the reporting cycle.

This project strengthens the financial support provided by the GEF through UNEP in the context of the financing of enabling activities. The number and quality of submitted reports were substantially improved compared to the previous cycle, although gaps remain in terms of availability of the necessary data to populate the indicators.

CRIC 14 will focus on recommendations for further improving the reporting and assessment processes. For more on this issue, see section 3.2.3 of this guide.

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74. Decision 6/COP.3 (ICCD/COP(3)/20/Add.1).
75. Decision 1/COP.4 (ICCD/COP(4)/11/Add.1).
76. Decision 8/COP.7 (ICCD/COP(7)/16/Add.1).
4.3 Rules of procedure

At its first session, the COP, by decision 1/COP.1, adopted its rules of procedures in compliance with article 22, paragraph 3 of the UNCCD (ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1), except for section 2 of article 22, and articles 31 and 47. While paragraph 2 of article 22 and article 31 were adopted at COP 2, article 47, which relates to the voting procedure on substantive issues, is still outstanding. This issue is on the COP 12 agenda, and the secretariat will report on the status of similar provisions in the rules of procedure of other multilateral environmental agreements (Decision 27/COP.9, ICCD/COP(9)/18/Add.1, and Decision 30/COP.11, ICCD/COP(11)/23/Add.1). In its decision taken at COP 11, the COP indicates it is still considering draft decision 21/COP.2 (ICCD/COP (2)/14/Add.1).

The rules of procedure include the place and frequency of COPs, opening to observers and their status, publication modalities for official documents, rules about the budget, representation of Party States (credentials), constitution and operation of the Bureau and subsidiary bodies, the quorum, voting procedures, conduct of debates, etc.

Delegates to the COP should also be very familiar with the rules of procedure to ensure control of the technical aspects of negotiations.

It is important to understand that, under multilateral environmental agreements, decisions are normally reached unanimously or by consensus. Unanimity means that all delegations approve the proposed text. Consensus means that no delegation objects sufficiently to block the decision. Exceptionally, the President may request a vote.

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4.4 Working groups

The plenary meeting of the Conference of the Parties is the body that makes the final decisions during negotiating sessions. However, negotiating with nearly two hundred country Parties can sometimes prove taxing and even impossible. Working groups are therefore often established to continue the work on tricky questions in a more restricted context, whilst the COP continues to work on other issues.

Most of the texts prepared by working groups are adopted by the COP without modification. A presence in these groups is therefore important if the issue being discussed is crucial for your delegation, as it will not be addressed further in a plenary session.

As interpretation is not always provided in the rooms where restricted group meetings are held, it is useful to send members of the delegation sufficiently comfortable with English or to reach an understanding with another delegation to put forward a specific viewpoint.

There are several types of group:
- Committee of the Whole (COW): as its name suggests, this has almost the same powers and functions as the COP plenary. It acts in a way like a mirror committee, created to allow greater flexibility in the discussions. Made up of the same participants as the Conference of the Parties, it takes on the oper-
ational issues on the agenda and transmits its recommendations to the COP, whereas the Conference of the Parties takes charge of policy issues (elections, votes and official decision making).

- **Working groups:** these can be established by the Chairman of the COP or by the Chairman of its subsidiary bodies (CRIC, CST) to focus on one or more agenda items requiring special attention. They normally have a chairman and co-chairman representing different regions (for example, one from the North and one from the South). These groups are open to participation by all interested Parties (open ended).

- **Contact groups:** these groups are established when discussions on a specific controversial topic risk slowing down the progress of the COP. They are open most of the time, but in practice it is mainly the Parties involved in the conflict who take part. Their aim is to find a solution to the problem dividing the Parties.

- **Informal groups:** when the contact groups have not managed to resolve the differences, the Chairman can decide to create an informal group. The Parties can thus meet in private. Informal groups are not open to observers.

- **Informal-informal groups (or non-groups):** informal-informal group meetings take place in private, without note taking (no report). Conflicting Parties are able to discuss issues more freely and an attempt can be made to overcome deadlocks in the negotiations.

- **Friends of the Chair:** the Chairman can create such a group in very sensitive negotiations, comprising a small number of key delegates who represent the regional groups, to explore the paths to consensus between the different positions expressed. The Chairman normally chooses the Parties most involved in the discussions to represent the others within the Friends of the Chair. Non-governmental actors may be invited to take part on occasion.

- **Drafting groups:** these groups are established to prepare texts for subsequent submission to the COP for adoption. Special drafting groups made up of legal experts are sometimes set up (Legal Drafting Groups (LDG)).

### 4.5 Ratification status of the UNCCD

With the exception of Canada, all member States of the United Nations and also the Cook Islands and Niue (non UN members) are Parties to the Convention.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ratification status of the UNCCD (as of May 18th 2014)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Mexico</td>
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<td>2. Cape Verde</td>
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<td>4. Egypt</td>
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<td>5. Senegal</td>
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<td>6. Ecuador</td>
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| 8. Finland       | 20/09/95 | 74. Cameroon  | 29/05/97 | 139. Japan      | 11/09/98 |
| 9. Togo          | 04/10/95 | 75. Austria*  | 02/06/97 | 140. Tuvalu*    | 14/09/98 |
| 10. Tunisia       | 11/10/95 | 76. Iceland*  | 03/06/97 | 141. Nauru*     | 22/09/98 |
| 11. Guinea-Bissau | 27/10/95 | 77. Antigua and Barbuda | 06/06/97 | 142. Tonga*     | 25/09/98 |
| 12. Mali         | 31/10/95 | 78. Syrian Arab Republic | 10/06/97 | 143. United Arab Emirates* | 21/10/98 |
| 13. Uzbekistan   | 31/10/95 | 79. Djibouti  | 12/06/97 | 144. Rwanda      | 22/10/98 |
| 15. Peru         | 09/11/95 | 81. Tanzania  | /06/97   | 146. Uruguay*    | 17/02/99 |
| 16. Sudan        | 24/11/95 | 82. Guinea    | 23/06/97 | 147. Monaco*     | 05/03/99 |
| 17. Canada¹      | 01/12/95 | 83. Italy     | 23/06/97 | 148. Rep. of Moldova* | 10/03/99 |
| 18. Sweden       | 12/12/95 | 84. Kenya     | 24/06/97 | 149. Qatar*      | 15/03/99 |
| . Denmark        | 22/12/95 | 85. Brazil    | 25/06/97 | 150. Solomon Islands* | 16/04/99 |
| 27. Israel       | 26/03/96 | 93. Guyana    | 26/06/97 | 158. Vanuatu     | 10/08/99 |
| 28. Portugal     | 01/04/96 | 94. Seychelles| 26/06/97 | 159. Republic of Korea | 17/08/99 |
| 29. Panama       | 04/04/96 | 95. El Salvador* | 27/06/97 | 160. Liechtenstein* | 29/12/99 |
| 30. Lebanon      | 16/05/96 | 96. Ethiopia  | 27/06/97 | 161. Czech Republic | 25/01/00 |
| 31. Algeria       | 22/05/96 | 97. Kuwait    | 27/06/97 | 162. Philippines  | 10/02/00 |
| 32. Gambia       | 11/06/96 | 98. Angola    | 30/06/97 | 163. Cyprus*     | 29/03/00 |
| 33. Malawi       | 13/06/96 | 99. Belgium*  | 30/06/97 | 164. Albania*    | 27/04/00 |
| 34. Germany      | 10/07/96 | 100. St. Kitts and Nevis* | 30/06/97 | 165. Australia  | 15/05/00 |
| 35. Libya        | 22/07/96 | 101. Armenia  | 02/07/97 | 166. Suriname*   | 01/06/00 |
| 36. Oman*        | 23/07/96 | 102. Saint Lucia | 02/07/97 | 167. Trinidad and Tobago* | 08/06/00 |
| 37. Bolivia       | 01/08/96 | 103. Nigeria  | 08/07/97 | 168. New Zealand* | 07/09/00 |
| 38. Mauritania   | 07/08/96 | 104. Kazakhstan | 09/07/97 | 169. Croatia*    | 06/10/00 |
## Ratification status of the UNCCD (as of May 18th 2014)


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* Accession

4.6 The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018)

The ten-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008-2018) (The “Strategy”) was first submitted as a draft at CRIC 5, then formally submitted and adopted at COP 8. Its development stems from the need to give new impetus to the implementation of the Convention at international, regional and national levels, and to reform the institutions and governance of the Convention in order to raise its political profile. Designed as the spearhead of the renewal of the international commitment to the fight against desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD), The Strategy represented the most important effort to strengthen the UNCCD since its inception.

Noting a number of challenges that arose in the context of the implementation of the Convention, The Strategy aims to ensure a common and consistent vision for the Convention: to forge a global partnership to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and to mitigate the effects of drought in affected areas in order to support poverty reduction and environmental sustainability. It advocates a results-based approach for the future conduct of the work of the Convention and intends to make the UNCCD the pivot for synergistic initiatives on issues of sustainable land management, climate change, biodiversity and the fight against poverty.

To achieve this goal, The Strategy enunciates strategic objectives to guide the action of the institutions of the UNCCD and of its Parties and operational objectives defining the action plan for the decade. It also proposes reforms to the institutions of the Convention.

The Strategy includes four strategic objectives, which are part of a long-term vision. The Strategy also specifies what the “expected impacts” are, that is to say the long-term effects expected from the strategic objectives. These objectives are as follows: 1. To improve the living conditions of affected populations; 2. To improve the condition of affected ecosystems; 3. To generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD; and 4. To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors.

The Strategy also includes “operational objectives” which are intended to guide the short and medium term actions contributing to the achievement of strategic objectives. The five operational objectives are: 1. Advocacy, awareness raising and education; 2. Policy framework; 3. Science, technology and knowledge; 4. Capacity-

77. As adopted at the eighth Conference of the Parties, Decision 3/COP.8, ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1, page 8 onwards.
78. In the context of The Strategy, « long-term » means a period of 10 years or more.
79. ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1 p. 17.
80. In the context of The Strategy, « short and medium term » means a period of 3 to 5 years.
building; and 5. Financing and technology transfer. The strategy also specifies the “outcomes”, that is to say the short and medium term effects that are expected to result from the operational objectives.81

To achieve these objectives, The Strategy sets out the role of the UNCCD institutions and their operating procedures. The Strategy calls for a results-based management approach in connection with the implementation of The Strategy.

4.7 The UNCCD participatory approach

The UNCCD place given to the civil society makes it stand out from other multilateral environmental agreements.82 The UNCCD does not simply plan to raise awareness of members of the civil society, but requires their full participation. The UNCCD text provides expressly for the participation of local communities, affected populations, especially women, farmers and NGOs in the various approaches surrounding the implementation of the Convention. In addition to conferring to the participation of these players the status of underlying principle that should guide the Parties towards achieving the Convention objectives (UNCCD Art. 3 (a)(c)), the UNCCD reiterates several times the importance of this participation in both the designing, updating and implementing action programmes.

The UNCCD recognises the central role normally played by women in the affected regions in managing natural resources by paying them special attention (UNCCD Arts. 5 (d), 10 (f) and 19 para. 1 (a)).

The UNCCD has an innovative bottom-up approach. The involvement of populations and local communities is generally recognised to make it easier to assess areas targeted by the Convention, where the ecosystems are particularly vulnerable and the features vary depending on the local environment. The experience of populations in affected regions facing the challenges of desertification and drought and their adaptation strategies would also encourage formulating solutions in line with the particular environmental and socio-economic conditions of communities. Their participation necessitates, however, introducing adequate cooperation mechanisms, creating a favourable environment for local actions and reproducing activities with conclusive effects.

The UNCCD participatory vision thus places the civil society at the centre of the search for solutions and their implementation. The action programmes must also state the role reserved for each player involved and provide for the effective participation of CSOs, local populations and resource users. The viewpoints of various players must also henceforth be considered when preparing national reports.83

81. ICCD/COP(8)/16/Add.1, p. 19.
82. For more detail on this subject, see note 3, chapter 7, p. 89 onwards. See also: “Civil society: Stewards of the land” at: <http://www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/Publications/CSO%20ENG%203_7_14%20small.pdf>.
83. ICCD/CRIC(3)/INF.3. para. 25.
The CSOs are especially encouraged to help in preparing, implementing and monitoring action programmes. During CRIC9, the Parties called on the CSOs to make a wider contribution to the reporting and review processes, in coordination with the national focal points (NFP) and the institutional focal points of subregional and regional organisations.

The CSOs are, indeed, key UNCCD partners and their involvement goes back to the negotiations that surrounded the development of the Convention. The UNCCD therefore provides that “any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, which is qualified in matters covered by the Convention, and which has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented at a session of the Conference of the Parties as an observer, may be so admitted unless at least one third of the Parties present object.” (UNCCD Art. 22, para. 7). Decision 5/COP.10 provides for an accreditation mechanism for CSOs and representatives from the private sector to the COP; the secretariat maintains a database of accredited CSOs. Moreover, the accredited CSOs have to submit a report on their activities and their contributions to implementation of the Convention to the secretariat every five years.

Once accredited to the COP, the CSOs can request support to participate as an observer at the COP, CRIC and CST meetings.

More than two hundred and thirty CSO have been accredited as observers so far. The CSOs have developed interesting proficiency in their respective areas of expertise and their contribution is a key component in UNCCD implementation.

The accreditation of the CSOs is on the agenda of COP 12. Decision 5/COP.11 expresses the concerns of the COP with respect to the low participation of civil society at COP 11. In accordance with a request to that effect contained in that decision, the secretariat has prepared a revised accreditation procedure (ICCD/COP (12)/3).

4.8 Traditional knowledge

As a corollary to its participatory approach, the UNCCD supports protecting, integrating and promoting local and traditional knowledge and practices. The UNCCD thus recognises traditional knowledge as an integral part of techniques and technologies best place to encourage sustainable management of drylands. The Parties also favour technical and scientific cooperation and information sharing to understand better the desertification processes and to develop and apply effective solutions. The UNCCD therefore encourages both the development and capacity building in research and development of technologies and their integration with traditional knowledge (UNCCD Arts. 16, 17 and 18).

84. For more detail, see note 3, chapter 7.
Under the terms of the UNCCD, the Parties undertake expressly to protect, enhance and use traditional knowledge and, to achieve this, to list and broadcast it, to help to adapt it for widespread use and encourage, where necessary, its integration with modern technologies. They also undertake to protect it and make sure that local populations benefit directly on an equitable basis from any commercial utilisation of their knowledge (UNCCD Art. 18, para. 2).

Managing traditional knowledge has been at the heart of the work of the UNCCD since its inception. From its first session, the Conference of the Parties (COP) recognised the importance of this question and gave the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) the mandate to examine this priority question at the next session.\(^{87}\) At its next session in 1998, the COP established an ad hoc panel on traditional knowledge.\(^{88}\) The most significant and most widely-applied traditional knowledge at subregional, regional and national level was summarised\(^{89}\) and allowed the group of ten experts to carry out its mandate to list the successes and issue conclusions on: (1) the threats and constraints weighing on traditional knowledge and practices, (2) the strategies to integrate traditional and modern knowledge and (3) the mechanisms for promoting and exchanging successful approaches.\(^{90}\)

In addition, the Panel generated a common understanding of the term “traditional knowledge” in its report to COP 3. The Panel concluded that: “traditional knowledge consists of practical (instrumental) and normative (enabling) knowledge about the ecological, socio-economic and cultural environment. Traditional knowledge is people-centred (generated and transmitted by people as knowledgeable, competent and entitled actors), systemic (inter-sectoral and holistic), experimental (empirical and practical), transmitted from one generation to the next and culturally valorised. This type of knowledge promotes diversity; it valorises and reproduces the local (internal) resources”.

During COP 3 in 1999, a second ad hoc panel on traditional knowledge was set up to develop further appropriate criteria in line with future work on benchmarks and indicators, to be used by national focal points so as to: (a) Measure the reciprocity between traditional and modern knowledge and/or promote it; (b) Assess how networks and mechanisms created by the secretariat (regional networks, regional coordinating bodies, national focal points) are incorporating traditional and local knowledge in their work programmes; (c) Assess the socio-economic and ecological benefits of traditional knowledge in the light of environmental changes.\(^{91}\)

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87. Decisions 16/COP.1 and 20/COP.1 (ICCD/COP(1)/11/Add.1).
88. Decision 14/COP.2 (ICCD/COP(2)/14/Add.1).
89. ICCD/COP(3)/CST/2.
90. ICCD/COP(3)/CST/3.
91. Decision 12/COP.3 (ICCD/COP(3)/20/Add.1).
In its report, the Panel established criteria to measure and promote the reciprocity between traditional knowledge and modern knowledge, criteria to assess how networks and mechanisms created by the secretariat (regional networks, regional coordinating bodies, national focal points) were incorporating traditional knowledge and local knowledge in their work programmes and, lastly, criteria to assess the socio-economic and ecological benefits of traditional knowledge in the light of environmental changes. The Panel also recommended creating a network of experts, institutions, organisations and bodies having experience in the field of traditional knowledge.

At the same period, the Italian authorities were busy setting up an international research centre on traditional knowledge in conjunction with the UNCCD secretariat and UNESCO. The COP 6 invited the Italian authorities to continue the work undertaken in collaboration with the other interested institutions and to present a proposal for the realisation of a pilot project of a network of institutions, bodies and experts on traditional knowledge. The COP also requested the Parties and the Global Mechanism to explore partnership options to establish such a network.

The Italian authorities proposed creating an international knowledge network under national or even subregional action programmes in the form of a network of thematic programmes. Although the COP took no decision on the actual establishment of such a network, the Parties were invited to give their opinion on how traditional knowledge could help to achieve the Convention objectives. At the same time, the group of Parties from the Latin American and Caribbean region submitted a proposed network of thematic programmes focusing on best practices and traditional knowledge and suggested that it be extended to other regions.

IPOGEA kept working on the implementation of several aspects of the proposed network with the help of different institutions, including UNESCO. At COP 7, IPOGEA presented the SITTI pilot project, which the COP took into account in its decision 16/COP.7. SITTI, an “Iconographic System of Traditional and Innovative Techniques” was launched, together with the Traditional Knowledge World Bank (TKWB), an archival and data bank.

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92. ICCD/COP(4)/CST/2.
94. Decisions 12/COP.4, (ICCD/COP(4)/11/Add.1) and 12/COP.5, (ICCD/COP(5)/11/Add.1).
95. ICCD/COP(6)/CST/4.
96. ICCD/COP(7)/CST/5 and ICCD/COP(7)/CST/5Add.1.
97. ICCD/COP(7)/16/Add.1 : [http://www.unccd.int/Lists/OfficialDocuments/cop7/16add1eng.pdf].
98. Available at the following address: [http://www.ipogea.org/site2/index.php/en/sitti].
Despite these developments, the delegates did not reach agreement at COP 7 in 2005, despite the proposal to call for the preparation of inventories of traditional knowledge.\(^{100}\) Lastly, the COP simply encourages the development of initiatives on traditional knowledge and invites the Parties to protect, promote and use traditional knowledge, involving local communities and experts and to foster the integration of traditional and modern knowledge in combating desertification.\(^{101}\)

The adoption of the 10-year Strategy and its objective 3, to boost knowledge and scientific and technological expertise,\(^ {102}\) led to the decision by COP 8 to reshape the functioning of the CST (Decision 13/COP.8). A subsequent decision (Decision 26/COP.9) called for CST S-2 to address the implementation of the knowledge management system, including traditional knowledge as outlined in Article 16(g) of the Convention text, best practices and success stories in combating desertification, land degradation and drought. The CST S-2 concluded that the management of knowledge among the bodies of the Convention should be improved, and that it was necessary to continue the development of a comprehensive knowledge management system, taking into account existing systems at all levels, and leveraging knowledge available within the United Nations and scientific institutions.\(^ {103}\)

COP 11 took several decisions to promote research and development of traditional knowledge. Decision 23/COP.11, pertaining to measures to enable the UNCCD to become a scientific authority on desertification, invites Parties to take advantage of traditional knowledge. Decision 24/COP.11 also aims to promote knowledge management, including traditional knowledge. Moreover, in Decision 26/COP.11, which pertains to the roster of independent experts, the COP stresses the need to have experts in all fields, including that of traditional knowledge. Decision 29/COP.11 provides that management of traditional knowledge be addressed at CST 12.\(^ {104}\)

The contribution of traditional knowledge to the fight against desertification was one of the themes of the third scientific conference, held simultaneously with CST S-4.\(^ {105}\) The summary report of the conference stresses that it is increasingly widely recognized that traditional knowledge is necessary for the development of

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101. Decision 16/COP.7 (ICCD/COP(7)/16/Add.1).
102. The implementation of the Strategy continues towards this objective, as evidenced by Decision 1/COP.11, which adopts the multi-year workplan of the institutions and subsidiary bodies of the Convention ICCD/COP(11)/23/Add.1, online: <http://www.unccd.int/Lists/OfficialDocuments/cop11/23add1fre.pdf>.
sustainable land management technologies to address vulnerability. The conference also proposed that the science-policy interface be responsible for analysing traditional methods in drylands and to assess their potential use for adaptation to climate change.

The CST S-4 also addressed traditional knowledge, noting that its usefulness was increasingly widely recognized, and that the lack of traditional knowledge was problematic in the search for sustainable solutions to desertification. Indicators used for monitoring the situation and future modes of governance should therefore take into account traditional knowledge.

Optional guidelines for conducting studies on the cultural, environmental and social impacts of development projects on sacred sites and on lands and waters traditionally occupied or used by indigenous and local communities have in the meantime been adopted by the COP to the CBD. The guidelines are also relevant to the UNCCD, as they help in the preparation of action plans to protect traditional knowledge.

4.9 Preparing for the negotiations

The negotiator’s days are long, full and riddled with the unexpected during meetings of multilateral bodies. Experienced negotiators learn over time how best to equip themselves for changing circumstances; on the other hand, for many, this is their baptism of fire. The aim of this section is to guide the first-timers so that they feel more confident and thus achieve the best possible outcome.

Getting ready to get the most out of their participation in the negotiations involves:

- a good understanding of the issues at the meeting he is about to attend;
- in-depth understanding of the interests of his country and knowledge of its detailed position;
- knowledge of other country positions; to achieve this, consult other delegations, Internet sites and coalition documents, if appropriate;
- knowledge of proposals previously adopted or rejected by the intergovernmental body;
- having consulted and read the documents published by the Convention secretariat before the meeting;
- keeping a trace of previous positions and referring to them when developing new positions;

106. Document ICCD/COP(12)/CST/2.
108. ICCD/COP(7)/5.
making sure you have a clear and precise mandate before leaving the capital;
preparing an ideal position and a minimum position for each of the issues under negotiation; the zone of possible agreement is alignment between the minimum positions of groups;
knowing what you are prepared to abandon and establishing links between these points and gains that could be achieved through discussions with other Parties;
preparing your intentions in advance, if appropriate.

Preparing a briefing book is a way of making sure that all points have been covered. The book includes a file for each negotiating issue including all the relevant information – the delegation’s ideal and minimum positions, its previous positions, the previous positions of other countries or groups of countries, the relevant official documents and any other source of useful information.

It is also important to try to avoid a “hollow” negotiating mandate, i.e. a mandate without substance which encourages vague and general declarations and which restricts the possibility of developing regional positions and building coalitions. This means favouring precise, constructive interventions leading to realistic proposals rather than ideological-type pronouncements which impede the formation of common-interest coalitions.

4.10 A day in the life of a delegate

If you are a member of a large delegation, your day will probably start with a meeting of your delegation, before the opening of the plenary session or the start of the work of the working groups. Regional group meetings under the UNCCD are held in the morning, in addition to the G77/China meetings. Attending these meetings gives you the chance to obtain information on the state of negotiations and, if appropriate, to coordinate positions. As many discussions take place outside the formal negotiating framework, it is often useful to attend the meetings of your delegation or your negotiating group to update yourself and make sure that you will be able to follow the discussions of the day that is just starting. The meetings are also a chance for you to coordinate with your colleagues and split the many forums and events between you (plenary, working groups and sub-groups, informal groups, side events, protocol events and miscellaneous meetings).

Isolation is one problem that threatens the representative of a small national delegation, as is frequently the case for developing countries. An isolated delegate will be less effective and will lose interest in the negotiations. The best solution to avoid this problem is to follow your regional group or join forces with a coalition.

To avoid being isolated and feel confused because of the magnitude and complexity of negotiations, the delegate will make sure s/he identifies the sub-group to which his country belongs and to befriend other delegations that share his country’s viewpoint or are likely to do so. Free time, during breaks and after negotiating sessions, is ideal for addressing members of other delegations and discussing
the concerns of your country. A significant proportion of discussions in fact takes place “in the corridors”; it is therefore important and useful to be active both inside the negotiating room and out.

Official sessions normally take place before lunch (10 a.m. to 1 p.m.) and in the afternoon (3 pm. to 6 p.m.). Negotiations frequently continue into the evening and even the night. Simultaneous interpretation is halted at the end of official sessions (sometimes later) in most negotiating rooms. This can prove a hindrance to the continuation of negotiations, as several delegations are unable to follow the discussions that are normally held in English. The negotiator must be prepared to be highly flexible, for formal and informal negotiating sessions can take place at any time, even over the weekend. The negotiator’s day can also include lengthy waits, when the President and his bureau are working on a summary text, for example. Make sure you check regularly for the session resumption time and when and where the text will be made available. Such information is available from the monitoring screens set up in the conference venue.

Side events are organised during the morning, the lunch break, and at 6 p.m. These events are a valuable source of information in addition to providing an informal venue for building or enhancing your network of contacts. The same is true of receptions and other organised social activities (often by the host country or by delegations) in the context of negotiations or on the side.

A few essential rules for the negotiator

1. Support the process and participate constructively even in difficult situations. Unwarranted obstructionism can undermine the whole system.

2. Look for the win-win situations and look for opportunities to support countries with different interests where possible. Their support may be needed in the future.

3. Treat other participants courteously and honestly. Good relationships and trust are invaluable assets, particularly when thinking about the long term. Humour and diplomacy can be very persuasive.

4. Focus on substantive objectives and be flexible on wording when your instructions allow. Focus on the interests of your country and other countries, rather than positions, to make progress.

5. Nevertheless, listen to the speakers very carefully and also pay scrupulous attention to what is not said. Be aware of the hierarchy of terms used. For example, “must” and “decide” carry more weight than “should”, “can”, “recommend” or “invite”, among others.

6. In a session, when concerned and in doubt, request square brackets around the text in question and allow discussion to move on.

7. A workshop or informal group may help to resolve an impasse. More information and deeper understanding of the issues are sometimes the only way to move forward.

8. Prepare carefully for interventions, with a clear focus on objectives. Prioritise interests and focus the number and length of interventions accordingly. Brevity and restraint are appreciated and are often very effective in winning support from others.
Information sources for the delegates

A certain number of resources cannot be ignored. The secretariat publishes an official journal of the session. This describes the day’s working sessions along with side events and other scheduled activities. It is also a good idea to consult the Earth Negotiations Bulletin that reports on the previous day’s negotiations. This Bulletin is also a useful tool in widening the history of a question in the negotiations, as meeting summaries are published when each one closes.

The official documents relating to the negotiation, including the agenda, must always be to hand. These documents are usually available on the Convention secretariat’s website and from the documentation centre that is normally located permanently at the negotiation venue. Preparatory official documents should be available in all the United Nations official languages. However, this is not always possible, but most documents are least available in French.

It is also essential to pick up the working documents (conference room papers (CRP)) - see the document listing under point 5 below). These are documents produced during the negotiations and distributed to the documentation centre as the negotiations advance. They are usually in English only. The various versions of the President’s texts are essential, if appropriate, as our the final versions of decisions and the report that will be adopted during the closing plenary session. These documents are normally translated into all the United Nations official languages.

Some delegations have a guide, or briefing book, that sets out the issues and details their negotiating positions.

Look out for side events. These activities are organised by Parties, research centres or universities, non-governmental organisations, international organisations or players in the private sector, who use them to present research findings, positions or claims, good practices to be shared, etc. They take place during negotiating sessions, most often, but not exclusively, during the morning, the lunch break and after 6 p.m. They can be held in rooms in the main building where the negotiating sessions are held, or in nearby hotels or other premises. Permanent information fairs are organised in some forums for the entire negotiation session. Interested organisations can set up an information kiosk here and distribute documentation to the visitors. Information about side events can normally be found in the official journal produced every day by the secretariat.

1. Catalysts of agenda inclusion

- Human-generated pollution
- Scientific evidence
- Exploitation of resources
- Economic considerations

Decision of an intergovernmental body or initiative of a State or NGO

2. Defining the issue

Turning point 1:
Agreement on the need for an agreement

Discussions within the UN or meetings of experts

3. Presentation of initial positions

Turning point 2:
Agreement to start negotiations

Deadlock

Turning point 3:
Agreement to start drafting a text

Meeting of special negotiating groups

4. Drafting the preliminary versions of the Agreement

Turning point 4:
Agreement on the overall framework or the agreement formula

Creation of a working group tasked with drafting a text

Initiative of one or more States

Text from the Secretariat of a UN body or the Chairman of negotiations

Concurrent versions are presented

Drafting starts

Drafting on an ad hoc basis

5. Final negotiations

Turning point 5:
Closing negotiations

Agreement on an Agreement formula

Pressure due to time constraints/participation of dignitaries

Overall agreement on a version of text

Attention to the peripheral details

Attention to the whole Agreement

Final compromises or vote

Carrying forward of issues tricky to resolve

Interim mechanisms

No action undertaken before the entry into force

6. Ratification and implementation

At COP12, the secretariats of the Rio Conventions and the Global Environment Facility will convene the Rio Conventions Pavilion (RCP) with other partners, hosted by the Government of Turkey. RCP is a collaborative, coordinated platform to promote and strengthen synergies among the Rio Conventions at the implementation level, and to profile activities that link biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, sustainable land management and efforts to combat desertification, and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Lastly, do not hesitate to consult the members of other delegations and the members of non-governmental organisations attending the meeting. They could provide additional information, clarify certain issues that can seem rather obscure, update progress in discussions in a working group or provide information on the time and place of a meeting or the distribution of a working document.

### 4.12 Navigating UN documents

The table below gives the nomenclature of official documents prepared for UNCCD sessions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nomenclature</th>
<th>Type of document</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ICCD/COP(x)/doc</td>
<td>Official COP documents</td>
<td>Preparatory documents which will be discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCD/CRIC(x)/doc</td>
<td>CRIC documents</td>
<td>Preparatory documents which will be discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCD/COP(x)/CST/doc</td>
<td>CST documents</td>
<td>Preparatory documents which will be discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICCD/COP(x)/AHWG/doc</td>
<td>Documents of the ad hoc working group on 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.</td>
<td>Miscellaneous documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/Add.doc</td>
<td>Additional documents</td>
<td>Additional sections of one document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/INF.doc</td>
<td>Information documents</td>
<td>General information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.doc</td>
<td>Limited documents</td>
<td>Normally, draft decisions before their official adoption by the COP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corr.doc</td>
<td>Corrigendum</td>
<td>Corrections to be made to a document (whose identifier precedes the suffix)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misc.doc</td>
<td>Miscellaneous documents</td>
<td>Points of view of Parties and observers, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rev.doc</td>
<td>Revision</td>
<td>Revised version of a document</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRP.doc</td>
<td>Conference Room Papers</td>
<td>Documents circulated during the meeting; they can often be negotiating texts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(x = \) number of the meeting (for example, COP(7))
\(doc = \) sequential number of the document (for example, ICCD/COP(7)/4).
**Bibliography / References**


PAQUIN, Marc and Wafa ESSHALI. « La gestion durable des terres : clé de voûte du développement durable » (titre de travail), dans *Liaison Énergie-Francophonie* (to be published).


Websites

Global Mechanism : <http://global-mechanism.org/>
PRAIS : <http://www.unccd-prais.com/>
Rio Conventions Pavilion : <http://www.riopavilion.org/>
UNISFÉRA International Centre

The UNISFÉRA International Centre is a non-profit organisation dedicated to the advancement of sustainable development. By combining its expertise in policy analysis and formulation with its consulting experience, UNISFÉRA is a powerful vector for knowledge-based solutions.

UNISFÉRA’s main areas of expertise comprise sustainable development policy, law and management, climate change and adaptation, sustainable land management, desertification, trade and environment and water policy.

The UNISFÉRA team and research associates include lawyers, economists, scientists and engineers along with experts in management, communications, public policy and international relations. They have a wealth of experience from working frequently with the private sector and governmental and inter-governmental organisations, including OIF-IFDD, the World Bank, UNDE, UNEP, OECD, CLD and CIDA, among others.

UNISFÉRA also offers the non-profit service Planetair that aims to help individuals, businesses and institutions to reduce their climate footprint. Created in 2005, Planetair develops and finances GHG emission carbon offset portfolios, thereby setting up an economic mechanism to achieve environmental and social objectives. It also certifies activities, events and organisations as carbon neutral.

Founded in 2002, UNISFÉRA is based in Montreal, Canada.

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The *Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable* (IFDD - Institute of the Francophonie for Sustainable Development) is a subsidiary body of the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF - International Organization of the Francophonie) headquartered in Quebec City, Canada.

Originally named *Institut de l'Énergie des Pays ayant en commun l'usage du Français* (IEPF - Energy Institute of Countries with French as a common language), the IFDD was founded in 1988 following the 11th Summit of the Francophonie held in Quebec City in 1987. It was created following the global energy crises from a desire of Heads of State and Government for cooperative action to develop the energy sector in member countries. In 1996, the Institute took the resolutions of the Rio Earth Summit 1992 as the major guide for its action and became the *Institut de l'énergie et de l'environnement de la Francophonie* (Energy and Environment Institute of the French-speaking World). And in 2013, following the Rio+20 Conference, it was renamed *Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable*.

Its mission is to contribute to:

- Training and capacity-building in sustainable development of various categories of development players in French-speaking countries in the energy and environment sectors;
- Support for development players in initiatives to prepare and implement sustainable development programmes;
- The promotion of the sustainable development approach in French-speaking countries;
- The development of partnerships in the various economic and social development sectors, mainly environment and energy, for sustainable development.

The action of the IFDD falls within mission D “Sustainable development, economy and solidarity” and Strategic Objective 7 “Contributing to the development and implementation of the post-2015 development agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals”, of the Francophonie’s strategic framework.

In particular, the Institute is assuming, in partnership with other units of the OIF, the leadership of the implementation of the following two initiatives contained in the OIF’s 2015-2018 programme:

- To increase the capacity of targeted countries to develop and implement regional, national and local sustainable development strategies that are inclusive, participatory and results-oriented;
- Strengthen the capacity of Francophone players to actively participate in international negotiations and decisions on the economy, the environment and sustainable development, as well as in their implementation.
The Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF - International Organization of the Francophonie) is an institution founded on sharing a language - French - and common values. It has to date fifty-seven member States and governments and twenty-three observers. With members spread across all five continents, it accounts for more than a third of the member States of the United Nations.

The OIF supports its member States in preparing or consolidating their policies and carries out multilateral cooperation actions under four-year programmes, in accordance with the major missions set out by the Summit of the Francophonie: promoting the French language and cultural and linguistic diversity; promoting peace, democracy and human rights; supporting education, training, higher education and research; developing cooperation to ensure sustainable development and solidarity.

57 member States and governments:
Albania • Principality of Andorra • Armenia • Kingdom of Belgium • Benin • Bulgaria • Burkina Faso • Burundi • Cambodia • Cameroon • Canada • Canada-New Brunswick • Canada-Quebec • Cape Verde • Central African Republic • Chad • Comoros • Congo • Côte d’Ivoire • Cyprus • Democratic Republic of Congo • Djibouti • Dominica • Egypt • Equatorial Guinea • France • Gabon • Ghana • Greece • Guinea • Guinea-Bissau • Haiti • Laos • Lebanon • Luxembourg • Macedonia (FYR) • Madagascar • Mali • Mauritania • Mauritius • Moldavia • Principality of Monaco • Morocco • Niger • Qatar • Romania • Rwanda • Saint Lucia • São Tomé and Príncipe • Senegal • Seychelles • Switzerland • Togo • Tunisia • Vanuatu • Vietnam • Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

23 observers:
Austria • Bosnia Herzegovina • Costa Rica • Croatia • Czech Republic • Dominican Republic • Estonia • Georgia • Hungary • Kosovo • Latvia • Lithuania • Mexico • Montenegro • Mozambique • Poland • Serbia • Slovakia • Slovenia • Thailand • Ukraine • United Arab Emirates • Uruguay
The publication of this *Guide to the negotiations* of the 12th session of the Conference of Parties (COP 12) to the *United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification* (UNCCD) is part of the support the Institut de la Francophonie pour le développement durable (IFDD) provides to francophone negotiators, and more generally to francophone countries, with regard to sustainable land and forests management, and desertification.

The *Guide to UNCCD negotiations* provides information on the content of the Convention, including its institutions, mechanisms and history as well as on the issues under consideration. It is addressed first and foremost to the delegates of the various countries participating in international meetings on desertification. It will also be useful to the public and representatives of non-governmental and international organizations interested in international developments in the field of desertification, land degradation and drought.

The first part of the *Guide* synthesizes information about the general context of the UNCCD since the Rio Summit in 1992. It presents the Convention: its genesis, institutions, main provisions, implementation strategy and stakeholders.

The second part presents the past meetings of the various institutions of the UNCCD. This part opens with a timeline of the various sessions, followed by highlights of each of them. This section puts into perspective the issues that will be discussed at the 12th session of the Conference of the Parties.

The third part of the *Guide* covers the issues to be addressed at COP 12, at the fourteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 14) and at the twelfth session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST 12).

Finally, the fourth part of the document contains fact sheets to serve as reference for the readers. These fact sheets cover topics that relate to the UNCCD and to practical issues that may sometimes be of interest to negotiators.