

Decision 15/COP.1

Terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling article 24, paragraph 1, of the Convention, which provides that the Conference of the Parties shall decide, at its first session, on the terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology,

Recalling also article 22, paragraph (2) (h), of the Convention, which provides that the Conference of the Parties shall, 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,

Having reviewed the recommendations of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on the terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology,

Decides to adopt the terms of reference attached to the present decision.

Terms of reference of the Committee on Science and Technology

Introduction

1. In accordance with the provisions of the Convention, the Committee on Science and Technology (hereinafter referred to as "the Committee") is a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties. The role of the Committee is to provide the Conference of the Parties with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought to ensure that its decisions are based on the most up-to-date scientific knowledge.

Functions

2. Consistent with the provisions of the Convention, particularly its articles 16 to 18 and 24, and at the request of the Conference of the Parties, the functions of the Committee include the following.

(a) Advisory functions

- (i) Provide scientific and technological information needed to implement the Convention.
- (ii) Collect information, analyse, assess and report on the impact of developments in science and technology and give advice on the possible utilization of such developments for the implementation of the Convention.
- (iii) Advise the Conference of the Parties on the possible implications of the evolution of scientific and technological knowledge for programmes and activities under the Convention, particularly in connection with the review of implementation pursuant to paragraph 22 (2) (a) of the Convention.
- (iv) Advise on possible research priorities for particular regions and subregions, reflecting different local conditions.
- (v) Make recommendations on the establishment of ad hoc panels, including issues relating to the terms of reference, composition and modalities of work of the panels.
- (vi) Advise on the structure, membership and maintenance of the roster of independent experts bearing in mind the recognition in the Convention of local knowledge and expertise.

(b) Data and information functions

- (i) Make recommendations regarding the collection, analysis and exchange of data and information to ensure systematic observation of land degradation in affected areas and assess the processes and effects of drought and desertification.
- (ii) Make recommendations on pertinent, quantifiable and verifiable indicators which might be used in connection with action programmes.

(c) Research and review functions

- (i) Make recommendations regarding specialized research on the scientific and technological tools necessary to implement the Convention and on evaluation of the results of such research.
- (ii) Identify, as appropriate, new scientific and technological approaches with particular reference to the multidisciplinary aspects of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.
- (iii) Make recommendations for promoting cooperative and comparative research between regions with different cultural and socio-economic circumstances.
- (iv) Make recommendations for promoting participative research on relevant traditional and local technology, knowledge, know-how and practices to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought through, *inter alia*, the utilization of information and services provided by local populations and other competent bodies, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations.

(d) Functions related to technology

- (i) Make recommendations on ways and means to identify and use technology, knowledge, know-how and practices relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.
- (ii) Make recommendations on ways and means to exchange information regarding technology, knowledge, know-how and practices, including through the network referred to in paragraphs 3 and 4.

(e) Evaluation functions

- (i) Monitor the application of science and technology to research projects relating to the implementation of the Convention and report to the Conference of the Parties.

- (ii) Examine the scientific and technological relevance and feasibility of research conducted pursuant to action programmes under the Convention.

Networking of institutions, agencies and bodies

3. In accordance with article 25 of the Convention, the Committee shall, under the supervision of the Conference of the Parties, make provision for the undertaking of a survey and evaluation of the relevant existing networks, institutions, agencies and bodies willing to become units of a network to support the implementation of the Convention.

4. On the basis of the results of the survey and evaluation referred to in paragraph 3, the Committee shall make recommendations to the Conference of the Parties on ways and means to facilitate and strengthen networking of the units at the local, national and other levels, with a view to ensuring that the thematic needs set out in articles 16 to 19 of the Convention are addressed.

Composition and Bureau

5. The Committee shall be multidisciplinary and open to the participation of all Parties. It shall be composed of government representatives competent in fields of expertise relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

6. The Committee shall elect its own Vice-Chairpersons, one of which shall act as Rapporteur. Together with the Chairperson, elected by the Conference of the Parties in accordance with rule 31 of the rules of procedure, they shall constitute the Bureau. The Chairperson and the Vice-Chairpersons shall be elected with due regard to the need to ensure equitable geographical distribution and adequate representation of affected country Parties, particularly those in Africa, and shall not serve for more than two consecutive terms.

Programme of work and reports

7. The Committee shall adopt a programme of work, which should include estimates regarding its financial implications. The programme of work shall be subject to approval by the Conference of the Parties.

8. The Committee shall report regularly to the Conference of the Parties on its work, including at each of its sessions.

9. The Bureau of the Committee shall be responsible for follow-up of the work of the Committee between sessions and may benefit from the assistance of ad hoc panels established by the Conference of the Parties.

Liaison with the scientific community and cooperation
with international organizations

10. The Committee shall serve as a liaison between the Conference of the Parties and the scientific community. In carrying out its functions, it shall, in particular, 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.

11. The Committee shall keep itself informed of the activities of the scientific advisory bodies of other conventions and of relevant international organizations, and shall coordinate its activities and cooperate closely with them to avoid duplication of work and optimize results.

Transparency of work

12. The results of the work of the Committee shall be in the public domain.