



## Convention to Combat Desertification

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#### **The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy)**

#### **Independent mid-term evaluation of The Strategy**

### **Mid-term evaluation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)**

#### **Report by the Intersessional Working Group**

#### *Summary*

By decision 3/COP.8, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) adopted a 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy). By the same decision, the COP decided that an independent mid-term evaluation of The Strategy should be undertaken at the eleventh session of the COP in 2013. The COP also agreed in the decision that the evaluation would review progress made in implementing The Strategy and make appropriate recommendations on improving performance and furthering implementation.

By decision 12/COP.10, the COP adopted the terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation, and decided to establish an ad hoc Intersessional Working Group (IWG), subject to available funding, to prepare recommendations on the mid-term evaluation under the direction of the Bureau of the COP. Following the approval by the Bureau of the COP of the IWG terms of reference in late February 2012, the working group started its tasks with a view to completing its report by 30 June 2013, in accordance with decision 12/COP.10.

This document contains the report of the IWG, presenting its main findings, conclusions and recommendations. The report is submitted to Parties for consideration at COP 11.

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## I. Introduction and methodology

1. By decision 3/COP.8, the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) adopted a 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy). The vision of this Strategy is “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.”

2. The following four strategic objectives were set down in The Strategy to guide the actions of all UNCCD stakeholders and partners in the period 2008–2018:

- (a) To improve the living conditions of affected populations;
- (b) To improve the condition of affected ecosystems;
- (c) To generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD;

and

(d) To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors.

3. The Strategy also specified five operational objectives with a view to supporting the achievement of the above-mentioned vision and strategic objectives. These objectives were intended to be implemented in the short or medium-term (3–5 years). The operational objectives are as follows:

(a) To actively influence relevant international, national and local processes and actors in adequately addressing desertification/land degradation and drought-related issues;

(b) To support the creation of enabling environments for promoting solutions to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought;

(c) To become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought;

(d) To identify and address capacity-building needs to prevent and reverse desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought; and

(e) To mobilize and improve the targeting and coordination of national, bilateral and multilateral financial and technological resources in order to increase their impact and effectiveness.

4. By decision 3/COP.8, the COP decided that an independent mid-term evaluation of The Strategy should be undertaken at the eleventh session of the COP in 2013. The evaluation would review progress made in implementing The Strategy and make appropriate recommendations on improving performance and furthering implementation.

5. By decision 12/COP.10, the COP adopted the terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation. By the same decision, the COP decided to establish an ad hoc Intersessional Working Group (IWG), subject to available funding, to prepare recommendations on the mid-term evaluation under the direction of the Bureau of the COP. The Bureau of the COP was also requested to develop a terms of reference covering the roles and responsibilities of the IWG. The decision further specified that the IWG would consist of 14 members, comprising the President of the COP, the Chair of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), the Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST), two members from each of the five regional groups, and one representative for civil society organizations accredited to the COP. In order for the mid-

term evaluation to be effective and truly participatory, the terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy include a consultative process between COP 10 and COP 11, which could take advantage of the regional meetings in preparation for CRIC 11 and COP 11, and involve online consultations, among other means.

6. Following the nomination of regional representatives and the completion of the terms of reference of the IWG by the Bureau of the COP, the IWG began its work. The group met four times: 26–27 March 2012, 31 October–3 November 2012, 22–24 April 2013 and 24–25 June 2013. The first three meetings were held in Bonn, Germany, while the last meeting took place in Seoul thanks to the kind invitation of the President of COP 10. At the beginning of the first meeting, the group appointed Mr. Chenchu Norbu from Bhutan as the Chair of the IWG and Ms. Barbara De Rosa-Joynt from United States of America as the Vice-Chair. Two consultants were selected by the IWG to assist in its work.

7. The IWG followed the evaluation methodology and criteria that were detailed in its terms of reference. The consultants drafted the documentary outputs mentioned in the terms of reference utilizing data from the background documents listed in the IWG terms of reference and collecting further information through interviews, a survey of national focal points (NFPs) and exchanges with regional and interest groups. The IWG based its conclusions and recommendations on the documentation produced by the consultants.

8. In accordance with its terms of reference, the IWG, with assistance from the secretariat, made it possible for Parties and relevant stakeholders to provide feedback on its documentation. In April 2013, the regional meetings in preparation for CRIC 11 were used to inform countries on the emerging recommendations of the IWG, and a brief report was presented during the plenary session of CRIC 11. The first draft of the IWG report was made available online in May 2013 for comments by Parties and other stakeholders. The IWG completed its report in its last meeting on 25 June, and the final report is contained in the present document.

## II. Conclusions and recommendations

9. The terms of reference for the mid-term evaluation of The Strategy define six substantive elements of the evaluation, and specify the input, expected output and expected outcome under each element.<sup>1</sup> There may be some overlap in addressing themes/topics: for example, operational objectives and performance indicators are considered from different angles under substantive elements one (Evaluation of the overall framework and scope of The Strategy), two (Evaluation of progress made in implementing The Strategy), three (Evaluation of the performance and effectiveness of the CRIC) and five (Evaluation of the performance review and assessment of implementation system).

10. To ensure consistent and coherent reporting, the general findings and conclusions deriving from these findings are presented in chapter II.A below, structured around the strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy. The conclusions leading to the recommendations of the IWG are then divided into four areas. The first area focuses on planning/monitoring and the improved implementation of The Strategy, including the consideration of the objectives and the related monitoring of progress, as well as the policy and programmatic aspects of implementation. The second area focuses on the CST and the third on the CRIC. The fourth area concerns the Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCMs). Information on the operational objectives of The Strategy is contained in the annex to this document.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note: the input is not defined for the fourth element.

## **A. Overview of findings and conclusions**

11. The overall finding is that there has been some progress towards achieving the objectives contained in The Strategy, but less than what was hoped. Many improvements are needed if The Strategy is to be implemented successfully. The overall findings related to the general criteria for the mid-term evaluation focusing on the relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability are summarized in paragraphs 12 to 16 below.

12. With regard to relevance, the objectives of The Strategy remain relevant and continue to be consistent with Parties' needs, priorities and policies, although the operational objectives need to be updated to reflect recent developments and address problems observed in the evaluation.

13. In terms of effectiveness, progress is being made towards achieving several of the objectives of The Strategy. For some of the objectives, there is not sufficient evidence to show the extent of progress made. The increasing global attention to the importance of addressing DLDD issues indicates that the prospects for accelerating the achievement of the objectives are improving.

14. With regard to impact, which is defined as the extent to which there has been progress towards achieving the overall objectives of the Convention that can be attributed to the implementation of The Strategy, progress or lack thereof has yet to be determined. The connection between the operational and strategic objectives needs to be more carefully defined for the remaining years of the implementation of The Strategy, in order to enable Parties to better assess the impact of the implementation of The Strategy.

15. In terms of efficiency, there is considerable evidence that the funds, expertise and time that have been invested in implementing The Strategy have led to some progress. Whether the availability of financial and other resources has been commensurate to progress made towards the objectives of The Strategy, particularly at national and regional level, needs to be further considered in a final review of the Strategy.

16. On sustainability, the adoption of The Strategy has contributed to a more focused, targeted and intense UNCCD process, and it has also led to efforts in the systematic monitoring and assessing of progress made. While numerous problems and challenges remain to be addressed, many of which have been identified in this evaluation, evidence to date suggests that there is a high likelihood of continued long-term benefits from implementing the Convention by way of The Strategy.

## **B. Findings and conclusions by objectives**

### **1. Strategic objectives**

17. The four strategic objectives spell out the core aims of The Strategy that are to be achieved by 2018. Much of the work during the first five years of the implementation of The Strategy involved establishing ways of measuring progress towards achieving the strategic objectives, including indicator-based reviews. Reporting can produce important evidence and information for building political commitment and developing targeted policy action and cooperation for addressing DLDD at all levels.

18. The broad framework for monitoring progress is set in The Strategy, but its practical application – including agreement on definitions of what should be measured in the seven indicators that The Strategy defines under objectives 1–3 and the two indicators that it

defines under objective 4 – has yet to be completed, and relatively few countries<sup>2</sup> have reported at national level on progress made.

19. Some progress towards achieving the strategic objectives can be observed, despite on-going measurement challenges experienced by Parties. Significant steps towards achieving the third strategic objective were taken when UNCCD-related concerns were incorporated in *The Future We Want*,<sup>3</sup> the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) which, in its paragraph 206, calls for measures “to achieve a land-degradation neutral world in the context of sustainable development”. There is also evidence from a number of countries that suggests progress.

20. For strategic objectives 1–3, two impact indicators (‘Proportion of the population in affected areas living above the poverty line’ and ‘Land cover status’) were identified at COP 9 as the minimum requirement for reporting by affected countries, beginning in 2012. The former involves determining changes in population income in affected areas, which is challenging since data on poverty are not usually collected in such a way that information specific to affected areas could be extracted. Furthermore, different interpretations of what ‘affected areas’ means make it difficult to define these areas. Fifty-seven countries reported on this indicator.

21. For the indicator mentioned in paragraph 19 above, 49 affected country Parties, or about 69 per cent of reporting countries, provided data on land cover, while many countries had difficulties measuring land productivity. Due to the wide variety of land cover types reported and the different land cover classification systems used, data could not be easily compared. It was thus not possible to draw conclusions on the land cover status.

22. Another challenge in monitoring progress towards achieving the strategic objectives is establishing a connection between the indicators and the activities connected with the Convention that would illustrate the effect of the activity on the outcome of the objective. The ad hoc Advisory Group of Technical Experts (AGTE) that was established by the COP at its tenth session has been working on impact indicator refinement. One of its aims has been to develop indicators to establish clearer connections. The initial findings of AGTE, which were presented at CST S-3 and CRIC 11, included indicators that could be causally linked to the UNCCD and described using cost-effective methods (including qualitative ‘storylines’). The IWG highlights the importance of the work of the AGTE. The recommendations of AGTE will be considered at CST 11, which may result in advice for the COP at its eleventh session, with the aim of enabling Parties to report more effectively on progress made toward strategic objectives 1–3.

23. Further work is also needed in order to use the two indicators for strategic objective 4 in reporting. Both indicators have a close relationship with the operational objectives and underpin their success. However, a detailed analysis of strategic objective 4 was hampered by the lack of reporting, particularly from developed countries.

## 2. Operational objectives

24. The operational objectives and the outcomes that were defined for each of them were designed to support the achievement of the strategic objectives in the short and

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<sup>2</sup> A total of 71 countries (approximately 42 per cent of all affected country Parties) provided information on the impact indicators. However, not all Parties provided quantitative information, so the global coverage of data ranged from 7 to 36 per cent depending on the question (see ICCD/CRIC(11)8-ICCD/CST(S-3)/6).

<sup>3</sup> United Nations General Assembly document A/RES/66/288, paragraphs 205–209.

medium term (three to five years). Their overall connection with the strategic objectives, however, was not readily obvious.

25. In The Strategy, the operational objectives were formulated as activities rather than time-bound results (e.g. what should be accomplished by 2013). The outcomes expected for these objectives were mostly defined in terms of changes that could be observed, but their precise meaning and connection with the operational objectives was not always clear. This is due in part to the nature of the objectives: not all can be logically forced into a framework of defined objectives, outcomes and measures.

26. Nevertheless, there is evidence of progress in realizing many of the outcomes related to the operational objectives, although the progress has been uneven. One key success has been the incorporation of UNCCD concerns into larger international discussions, which is called for under operational objective 1. This includes, among other things, the prominent role played by DLDD issues in the sixteenth session of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development in 2008–2009, the designation by the United Nations General Assembly of 2010–2020 as the United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification, the United Nations General Assembly high-level meeting on “Addressing desertification, land degradation and drought in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication” in 2011, and the High-level Meeting on National Drought Policy in 2013 involving WMO and FAO. In addition, UNCCD-related concerns were included in the Rio+20 outcome document “The Future We Want”, as noted in paragraph 19 above. The number of visits to the UNCCD website, which has grown sharply since 2008, indicates the increasing awareness of and interest in the Convention.

27. Operational objective 3 on science, technology and knowledge is another example of progress towards achieving the Parties’ goals. The two UNCCD scientific conferences and other areas of work of the CST have fostered a variety of scientific activities addressing DLDD issues, including the monitoring and assessment of progress towards strategic objectives 1–3. The sequence of the scientific conferences displays a logical progression: the first scientific conference focused on conceptual issues regarding trends in DLDD, the second conference explored the economics of DLDD, and the third conference will centre on policies for combating DLDD as a way to eradicate poverty and expand sustainable development.<sup>4</sup> The preparatory process for each conference as well as the sessions have allowed researchers and scientific networks to share information and make specific recommendations on DLDD issues. In this regard, the conferences have begun to provide a needed scientific basis for decision-making under the UNCCD, as well as for policies and programmes addressing DLDD on a broader scale. As a means of improving the provision of scientific advice, the Ad Hoc Working Group to further discuss the options for the provision of Scientific Advice focusing on desertification/land degradation and drought issues (AGSA) has made recommendations for improvement. The implementation of the AGSA’s recommendations could establish a system for seeking scientific advice at both global and regional level.

28. Through the work of the secretariat, the UNCCD has maintained close ties with the conventions on climate change and biodiversity. The extent to which DLDD has been taken

<sup>4</sup> The exact conference themes are as follows:

First scientific conference: “Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water management”

Second scientific conference: “Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas”

Third scientific conference: “Combating DLDD for poverty reduction and sustainable development: the contribution of science, technology, traditional knowledge and practices”.

into account in these other conventions and their intergovernmental bodies has varied, but some instances of substantive linking can be noted, such as the thematic programme for dry and sub-humid lands biodiversity under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Recent exchanges between the Bureau of the CST and the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity & Ecosystem Services (IPBES) on the work programme of the multidisciplinary panel of experts form another example. A solid scientific basis for connecting DLDD with the issues addressed by the other Conventions is still largely being developed.

29. Reports submitted by affected country Parties show that there has been some progress in developing integrated investment frameworks (IIF) and integrated financing strategies (IFS), that many countries are currently in the process of developing these tools, and that the Global Mechanism (GM) has provided assistance efficiently in developing the IIF/IFS. However, there are still numerous countries that have not yet designed a systematic approach to mobilize resources for national UNCCD implementation. The effectiveness of the IIF/IFS depends primarily on their ability to leverage financial support, and reports from the Africa region suggest that they have obtained relatively little relevant support so far.

30. With regard to regional level, the UNCCD core budget has financed staff to support four Regional Implementation Annexes, but otherwise the Regional Coordination Units (RCUs) have limited resources. Two of the five Regional Implementation Annexes opted to establish regional coordination committees as part of their Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCMs). Regional and subregional action programmes (RAPs and SRAPs) were already established before the adoption of The Strategy in the African, Asian and Latin American and the Caribbean regions, but the level of implementation of most of these programmes has been low and they are not aligned with The Strategy. The thematic programme networks launched to support RAP implementation are not connected with CST work, and most of them are reportedly not effective.

31. Reporting on progress made towards achieving the operational objectives has also proven difficult, particularly during the second leg of the fourth reporting process (2012–2013). This is evident in the low levels of reporting by most Parties through the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS), for which a number of reasons were identified. All countries seemed to have problems because of the complexity of the indicators used in reporting. Other problems that were mentioned by Parties included a lack of financial, human and other resources, as well as time to collect and analyse the data required for the report and limited capacity with regard to data collection and analysis. Many affected country Parties did not receive the needed technical assistance and timely financial support that they requested. The results of the reporting process have not stimulated targeted action to the extent that could have been expected, considering that the operational objectives involve many key aspects in the UNCCD process.

32. One example of challenges arising from the formulation of the operational objectives and the outcomes is the mixing of national and international-level outcomes between operational objectives 1 and 2. This has made it difficult to clearly determine which entity should be undertaking which activity and subsequently reporting on them.

33. Another difficulty in monitoring and reporting on progress in achieving the operational objectives has been ambiguity in how measurements related to the indicators is to be conducted. For example, one outcome under operational objective 1 relating to awareness-raising is to be measured through the number of information events organized and the audience reached. This seeks to measure two different things, ‘information events’ and ‘audience reached’ where the concept of ‘information event’ is broadly defined. Both

‘information events’ and ‘audience reached’ have been difficult for most countries to measure, and the reporting on these indicators is not optimal for guiding targeted action.

34. In addition, some changes in the definitions of the indicators after the 2011 reporting cycle has meant that data from the 2013 reporting are not always comparable with those from 2011, which further complicates matters. The lack of comparable data means that it is difficult to measure whether the targets set were reached, or to discern trends in implementation. Consequently, reliable information on the achievement of the five operational objectives and the outcomes that have been defined for each objective is only available to a limited extent. This suggests a major problem with the Parties’ use of PRAIS for reporting, a finding that was frequently reiterated during discussions among Parties at CRIC 11.

35. Resolving many of the above-mentioned issues does not necessarily require a revision or renegotiation of the operational objectives, but they and particularly the outcomes should be updated for the remaining five years of The Strategy to provide more clarity and facilitate enhanced levels of reporting in the future. Updating means adjusting the way in which the operational objectives and their outcomes will lead to the achievement of the strategic objectives. Such an update would take into account the difficulties with reporting identified in the evaluation, assist in strengthening the connection between the operational objectives and the strategic objectives, and ensure that the outcomes under each operational objective are consistent and clearly defined. Simplifying the indicators so that they can be more easily measured and providing default data sources may increase the quality and quantity of reporting, and may convince Parties to use the indicators in their own management protocols.

36. With regard to progress documented at the national level, especially on operational objective 2, only eleven countries reported aligning their national action programme (NAP) with The Strategy, although an additional 54 stated that they planned to do so by 2015. The NAP alignment process has recently intensified through several subregional capacity building workshops, but it is not yet certain whether the target – 80 per cent of affected countries having aligned NAPs – will be met by 2014. In general, there is little evidence that DLDD has been appropriately incorporated into relevant national policy areas and plans. The extent to which CSOs have participated in the awareness raising, implementation/ realignment of NAPs at country level is not well known. The extent to which national efforts to address DLDD have been connected with activities targeting the other two Rio conventions is also variable. In terms of why the alignment and mainstreaming of NAPs and/or synergistic implementation have not happened, the most cited reason is the lack of targeted financial resources.

37. One factor affecting the progress at national, subregional and regional levels is the lack of targeted capacity-building. The outcomes defined for operational objective 4 are aimed at ensuring that affected country Parties undertake a national capacity self-assessment. Most countries that have reported state that they have done so, but many of them undertook the assessment some time ago. While numerous DLDD-related capacity-building initiatives have been reported by both affected countries and their development partners, there is little evidence that they helped advance the implementation or alignment of action programmes nationally or regionally. This finding suggests a significant gap between the current capacity-building initiatives and the capacity-building needs concerning the implementation of action programmes.

38. Another factor is that the financing called for in operational objective 5 has not been as effective as expected. As noted above, the most cited reason for limited progress at national level is the lack of targeted financial resources. Measuring the extent of resource mobilization has proven difficult, not only because of the low rate of reporting by developed countries (only 30 per cent), but also because the instructions on what should be reported have not been consistent over time. However, one clear indicator is provided by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) that is expected to be a designated source of international funding for UNCCD implementation. Of its focal areas covering the three Rio conventions, only 3.4 per cent of national and 4.5 per cent of regional projects were requested by countries for activities within its focal area on land degradation. In addition, Parties reported delays in receiving funds they requested. The percentage of projects requested by countries under the other Rio convention focal areas that had DLDD-related elements is also unclear. Funding provided to the land degradation focal area is one of the smallest allocations in the GEF. Moreover, it appears that due to the complexity of GEF procedures and capacity limitations in affected country Parties to access GEF funding, affected country Parties have not taken full advantage of the allocated resources.

## **C. Recommendations**

### **1. Planning, monitoring and evaluation, and improved implementation of The Strategy**

#### *a. Strategic and operational planning and reporting*

39. The following recommendations are made about strategic and operational planning and reporting.

*Recommendation 1.* The strategic objectives should be maintained as they are, but the impact indicators should be revised to reflect a plausible causal relationship between what is observed and what the implementation of the Convention is expected to influence based on, *inter alia*, the recommendations of the AGTE, the CST and the CRIC, and taking into account the need to link them with any updated operational objectives. The impact indicators should be revised to ensure that they are more easily measurable by Parties, provide reliable information, and reflect changes taking place on the ground, based on national and regional specificities as well as the existing data collection systems and databases.

*Recommendation 2.* For the remaining period of The Strategy, the operational objectives should be updated to represent the anticipated results by 2018 and to make their role in achieving the strategic objectives clearer. The update would include corresponding amendments to the related outcomes and performance indicators. It should be presented in a logical framework that defines clear outcomes and measurable indicators, sets out the interconnections between the operational objectives, and indicates the types of data to be collected.

*Recommendation 3.* The performance indicators should be simplified and made more realistic based on e-SMART criteria<sup>5</sup> and taking into account national and regional specificities as well as the existing data collection systems and databases. The aim is to enable progress towards achieving the operational objectives to be more easily measured and reported, and to ensure reporting results are more reliable and relevant to the UNCCD process.

*Recommendation 4.* Updating the performance indicators should involve a revision of the guidelines and templates for reporting, including the specification of the responsible reporting entities, data sources and data acquisition methods. In addition, the PRAIS mechanism for reporting should be reorganized to, inter alia, allow for the use of various sources of information and types of data, building on the reporting results in 2011 and 2013. The PRAIS portal should be made more user-friendly including the CSO component and the format of the national reports should be improved to allow for their use as an essential tool for raising awareness about DLDD issues among interested stakeholders.

*Recommendation 5.* Reporting entities should make plans to acquire over the upcoming reporting cycles data on performance and impact indicators. Such entities and the UNCCD secretariat should maintain databases or a record of existing databases containing the data collected and reported on, as well as information on technical, economic, social and environmental aspects related to desertification as appropriate. The PRAIS portal and related capacity-building tools could be used for this purpose.

*Recommendation 6.* The UNCCD secretariat and the subsidiary bodies of the Convention should, subject to the availability of resources, support the development and implementation of systematic monitoring processes as requested by affected countries to provide reliable information on DLDD, as well as information on technical, economic, social and environmental aspects related to DLDD. Parties, donors and financial institutions should also provide technical and financial support for this purpose.

*Recommendation 7.* The UNCCD secretariat – subject to the availability of resources and in cooperation with Parties, relevant organizations and other stakeholders – should undertake a series of capacity-building activities on NAP alignment, performance and impact reporting in each region or subregion as a matter of priority. In addition, the necessity and effectiveness of these activities for 2014–2015 and 2016–2017 should be carefully examined, subject to the availability of resources. The capacity-building activities should include regional workshops, on-line consultations and distance learning, and they should involve the RCMs. To further simplify the reporting process, the secretariat could make indicator values derived from global datasets available to all through pre-populated PRAIS forms for those indicators for which global datasets are available. It could include the use of existing datasets and the development of guidelines and standardized methodologies for the

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<sup>5</sup> Criteria applied for the selection of UNCCD performance indicators and impact indicators for strategic objective 4. ‘e-SMART’ stands for economic – Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Relevant – Time-bound. Economic: The data and information required for the indicator are available at a reasonable cost. The cost is affordable and worthwhile. Specific: The indicator clearly and directly relates to the outcome. It is described without ambiguities. Parties have a common understanding of the indicator. Measurable: The indicator is preferably quantifiable and objectively verifiable. Parties have a common understanding of the ways of measuring the indicator. Achievable: The required data and information can actually be collected. Relevant: The indicator must provide information which is relevant to the process and its stakeholders. Time-bound: The indicator is time-referenced, and is thus able to reflect changes. It can be reported at the requested time.

(Source: ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.1. -

available at <[www.unccd.int/php/document2.php?ref=ICCD/CRIC\(8\)/5/Add.1](http://www.unccd.int/php/document2.php?ref=ICCD/CRIC(8)/5/Add.1)>).

Parties. These would effectively become ‘default indicators’ that the Parties could accept, reject, or replace with indicators based on their own data sources.

*b. Policy and programme improvements*

40. The following recommendations are made regarding policy and programme improvements:

*Recommendation 8.* Building on the incorporation of DLDD issues in ‘The Future We Want’, the secretariat, in accordance with its mandate, should continue to actively participate in the consultations and events related to the post-2015 development agenda and the elaboration of sustainable development goals. Parties, intergovernmental organizations and CSOs are invited to include DLDD issues in their inputs to the post-2015 development agenda discussions as appropriate.

*Recommendation 9.* Countries are encouraged to use the information generated through the CST and other means that demonstrates the key role of DLDD in addressing climate change impacts, as well as biodiversity loss, to strengthen the incorporation of DLDD issues into the processes of the UNFCCC, CBD and other relevant agreements while respecting the individual mandates of these processes.

*Recommendation 10.* Parties should make efforts to reach out to policymakers and planners in order to enhance the mainstreaming of DLDD issues into the domestic and the development cooperation agenda and to allocate funds for that purpose, as appropriate.

*Recommendation 11.* Parties should promote targeted scientific research activities on DLDD, including scientific cooperation at national, subregional, regional and international levels, harness traditional knowledge, and use the results of these activities in policies and decision-making to benefit public, private and CSO efforts to address DLDD.

*Recommendation 12.* The COP should make its evidence-based recommendations about key DLDD priorities known so that they can be taken into account by the GEF Council when it considers the focal area strategies and the funding modalities for its sixth replenishment.

*Recommendation 13.* In order to improve reporting by developed country Parties on strategic objective 4 and operational objective 5, the possibility of using existing data systems could be considered.

*Recommendation 14.* The GM – subject to the availability of resources and as requested by Parties – should increase its capacity-building support to affected country Parties to assist them in better identifying and accessing internal, external and innovative sources of funding, building on the recommendations of its recent results and impact assessment process.

*Recommendation 15.* The COP may wish to consider the role that new initiatives, including the Changwon Initiative, could play as tools for strengthening the implementation of the UNCCD and its Strategy.

*Recommendation 16.* The COP should request the secretariat and GM to ensure that the draft Convention programme budgets reflect the outcomes of the mid-term evaluation. The COP should also continue assessing programme budget proposals on the basis of results achieved in the current biennium and the likelihood that the funded activities will obtain the necessary outcomes.

*Recommendation 17.* At COP 13, Parties should agree on a new strategy to further improve the implementation of the Convention. The new strategy should, inter alia, address the challenges identified through the mid-term and final evaluation of the implementation of The Strategy.

## 2. Committee on Science and Technology

41. The following recommendations are made:

*Recommendation 18.* The sessions of the CST, the scientific conferences and other processes and events concerning the science–policy interface for the UNCCD should be organized sequentially and in a manner that optimizes the use of scientific knowledge in UNCCD decision-making, taking into account the recommendations of the AGSA.

*Recommendation 19.* The themes and future development of the scientific conferences should be designed to address specific topics and emerging issues for which the CST is expected to provide advice or make recommendations to the COP.

*Recommendation 20.* The recommendations of the CST and the UNCCD scientific conferences should be translated by the COP into guidance to advise policymakers on how policies could address the issues identified as priority.

*Recommendation 21.* The CST should make increased use of input and feedback from national and regional scientific cooperation platforms and CSOs, which may involve improving the role of DLDD-related science and technology at national level, especially the Science and Technology Correspondents (STCs), and encouraging interaction between local, national and regional scientific networks dealing with DLDD issues.

*Recommendation 22.* The CST should make recommendations to the COP for a decision on how the UNCCD should interact with IPBES, IPCC and other relevant scientific coordination organizations.

*Recommendation 23.* The CST should recommend follow-up action for disseminating the outcomes of the scientific conferences and other CST activities that are relevant for other environmental policy discussions and once adopted by the COP, resources for this should be made available.

*Recommendation 24.* The secretariat should increase its efforts to draw media attention to the outcomes of CST activities, and further use the internet, publications, the scientific knowledge brokering portal and other communication tools in raising awareness on these outcomes.

*Recommendation 25.* The CST should explore a means for enhancing the role of TPNs and STCs and effectively linking them to the CST processes, including improving the flow of information on scientific priorities and best practices on DLDD issues from and to national, regional and global levels.

## 3. Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

42. The following recommendations are made:

*Recommendation 26.* Sufficient time should be allocated for discussions among Parties on the review of implementation at intersessional CRIC meetings. When assigning additional tasks to the CRIC, consideration should be given to the resulting time constraints.

*Recommendation 27.* The CRIC should ensure that data and information from the reporting process are available and accessible to all, especially at national and local level, including on best practices.

*Recommendation 28.* Discussions by Parties and other stakeholders during the CRIC intersessional meetings should, as appropriate, be translated into topics and recommendations for COP decisions with the aim of contributing to improved policies and programmes at national level.

*Recommendation 29.* The intersessional CRIC session outcomes (including on best practices) should be synthesized into information material to guide Parties in enhancing the implementation of the Convention.

*Recommendation 30.* Working modalities between the intersessional meetings of the CRIC and RCMs should be improved to encourage the effective implementation of NAPs, SRAPs and RAPs and to build capacity for the national and local implementation of The Strategy.

*Recommendation 31.* Scientific considerations based on the outcomes of the CST should be better integrated into the exchanges during the intersessional CRIC, so as to improve the incorporation of science into policy considerations under the UNCCD.

*Recommendation 32.* The intersessional session of the CRIC, based on its review of performance indicators, should give recommendations to UNCCD entities on priorities to be included in their work programme and budget.

#### **4. Regional coordination mechanisms**

43. The following recommendations are made:

*Recommendation 33.* The mandates for the regional committees, RCUs and TPNs should be established or revised, based on regional priorities, in order to specify and strengthen their role in implementing priority activities set by the regions; establish links between RAPs, SRAPs and other regional environmental agreements, processes and institutions, including those focused on land management and other DLDD-related issues; clarify the respective roles of the secretariat and the GM in facilitating regional activities, which may involve the development of joint two-year work programmes; and promote regional scientific cooperation.

*Recommendation 34.* Regional committees should be established or activated under all Regional Implementation Annexes of the UNCCD as appropriate with the aim of guiding and promoting regional cooperation and supporting the incorporation of DLDD issues into various regional processes, involving representatives of CSOs and the scientific community where appropriate.

*Recommendation 35.* The RAPs and SRAPs should be reviewed by their respective regions and subregions to ensure that they reflect regional priorities and synergies with regional programmes, and that they are consistent with and support the implementation of The Strategy, taking into account the updates proposed through the mid-term evaluation. The review of SRAPs and RAPs should also contribute to strengthening synergies at national level in addressing DLDD and climate change/biodiversity loss.

*Recommendation 36.* RCUs should strengthen cooperation and partnerships with CSOs and other key UNCCD stakeholders (e.g. farmers, women, youth). Opportunities for further collaboration with the host institutions and the host countries of RCUs should be explored.

*Recommendation 37.* To improve financial support to RCMs, a systematic approach to mobilize resources for RCMs and their activities could be developed in all regions, with the assistance of the GM. This approach could involve various sources, including the GEF and regional partnership platforms that are outside the Convention budget.

## **Annex**

### **Proposed updates to operational objectives, outcomes and indicators**

The following logical framework presents the proposed updates to the operational objectives, outcomes and performance indicators, including a provisional indication of the reporting entities and methods of collecting data. This framework would form the basis for reporting during the remaining five years of The Strategy. Further specification of the data needed, terms and definitions, reporting entities and methods of collecting data would be provided in the reporting templates, guidelines and glossary that would be updated after COP 11. These specifications should particularly emphasize the partnership among all Parties in implementing the Strategy.

*Operational objective 1: To increasingly influence relevant international, regional, subregional, national and local actors to implement policies, plans and programmes to address DLDD issues.*

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance indicator of outcome</b>	<b>Reporting entities and methods of collecting data</b>
Outcome 1.1: DLDD issues and the synergies with climate change adaptation/mitigation and biodiversity conservation are effectively communicated among key constituencies at the international, regional, subregional, national and local levels.	1.1.1: Extent and nature of national and regional awareness-raising and communication activities focused on DLDD and/or DLDD synergies with climate change and biodiversity, and the type of audience for each.	All Parties: Narrative and multiple choice responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions. Secretariat/GM: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. Regional/national level: Narrative and multiple choice responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions. Other reporting entities: to be defined.
Outcome 1.2: Increased awareness and use of knowledge on DLDD and UNCCD initiatives, methods and approaches among stakeholders at international, regional, subregional, and national levels.	1.2.1: The extent to which online information tools and social media on DLDD are used	Secretariat: Statistics on the UNCCD website, social media and other information tools. GEF, United Nations agencies and IGOs, subregional/regional reporting entities, and CSOs: Where available, statistics. Other reporting entities: to be defined.
Outcome 1.3: DLDD issues are addressed in relevant meetings and processes, including those pertaining to food security, climate change, biodiversity, forests, water, rural development, sustainable development and poverty reduction.	1.3.1: The extent to which DLDD-related elements are found in decisions at international, regional and subregional level, especially in relevant United Nations meetings and processes.	Secretariat: Narrative response to targeted questions in the reporting template on progress. United Nations agencies and IGOs, subregional/regional reporting entities: Narrative response to targeted questions in the reporting template. Other reporting entities: to be defined.
Outcome 1.4: Civil society organizations (CSOs) and the scientific community at the level are increasingly engaged in Convention processes and address DLDD in their advocacy, awareness-raising and education initiatives.	1.4.1: a) Degree of engagement of CSOs and science and technology institutions participating in DLDD-related processes and advocacy efforts at the national, regional and international levels. a) The extent to which CSOs and science and technology institutions are engaged in DLDD-related processes and advocacy efforts at the international level	All countries: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions. Secretariat: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions. CSOs: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. Other reporting entities: to be defined.

*Operational objective 2: To improve the development and implementation of policies, plans and programmes to combat DLDD at all levels.*

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance indicator of outcome</b>	<b>Reporting entities and methods of collecting data</b>
Outcome 2.1 Increased number of affected country Parties, subregional and regional entities have finalized the formulation/revision of NAPs, SRAPs, or RAPs, and TPNs, and have these aligned with The Strategy and are implementing them.	2.1.1: Number of affected country Parties, subregional and regional entities having developed/aligned or being implementing their NAPs, SRAPs, RAPs or TPNs.	Affected Parties and subregional/regional reporting entities: Responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. Secretariat/GM, GEF, United Nations agencies and IGOs: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. Other reporting entities: to be defined.
Outcome 2.2: Developed country Parties mainstream UNCCD objectives, DLDD and SLM interventions into their development cooperation programmes/projects in line with their support to national sectoral investment plans.	2.2.1: The extent to which UNCCD objectives, DLDD and SLM interventions are mainstreamed in the development cooperation programmes/projects of developed Parties, and how this is done.	Developed Parties: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions. Secretariat/GM: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. Other reporting entities: to be defined.
Outcome 2.3: Mutually reinforcing measures and synergy among action programmes related to DLDD and climate change mitigation/adaptation and biodiversity are established or strengthened so as to enhance the impact of interventions.	2.3.1: The extent of synergistic planning/programming related to the three Rio conventions and the benefits synergies have on DLDD efforts.	All reporting entities: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. Other reporting entities: to be defined.

*Operational objective 3: To increase the extent to which science and technological knowledge about DLDD is applied to both national and international policymaking and programme formulation, as a means to become a global authority on scientific and technological knowledge pertaining to DLDD*

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance indicator of outcome</b>	<b>Reporting entities and methods of collecting data</b>
Outcome 3.1: National monitoring and assessments on biophysical and socioeconomic trends in affected countries are supported.	3.1.1: Number of affected country Parties and subregional/regional entities to have established or supported national monitoring systems	<p>Affected countries: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions.</p> <p>Developed countries: Narrative responses to targeted questions</p> <p>Secretariat/GM: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template.</p> <p>Subregional/regional reporting entities and United Nations agencies and IGOs: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template.</p> <p>Other reporting entities: to be defined.</p>
Outcome 3.2: National, regional and global baselines for assessing progress in meeting strategic objectives 1–3 are established and used	3.2.1: The extent to which affected Parties set baselines for assessing progress in implementing The Strategy and utilize them in reporting.	<p>Affected countries: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions.</p> <p>Secretariat: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template.</p> <p>Subregional/regional reporting entities: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions.</p> <p>Other reporting entities: to be defined.</p>
Outcome 3.3: Knowledge on biophysical and socioeconomic factors and their interactions in affected areas is improved to enable better decision-making and is used by national, regional and international decision-makers.	3.3.1: The extent to which recommendations on scientific advice on DLDD, including that generated through UNCCD processes, are implemented and used by decision-makers.	<p>Affected countries: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions.</p> <p>Secretariat: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template.</p> <p>Other reporting entities: to be defined.</p>
Outcome 3.4: Knowledge of the interactions between climate change adaptation/mitigation, mitigation of the effects of drought, and the restoration of degraded land in affected areas is improved in order to develop tools for decision-making.	3.4.1: The extent to which decision-making reflects knowledge about the interactions between climate change, biodiversity and DLDD.	<p>Affected countries: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions, based on clear definitions.</p> <p>Other reporting entities: to be defined.</p>

*Operational objective 3: To increase the extent to which science and technological knowledge about DLDD is applied to both national and international policymaking and programme formulation, as a means to become a global authority on scientific and technological knowledge pertaining to DLDD*

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance indicator of outcome</b>	<b>Reporting entities and methods of collecting data</b>
Outcome 3.5: Effective knowledge-sharing systems related to DLDD that include traditional knowledge are in place at the global, regional, subregional and national levels and are used by policymakers.	3.5.1: The extent to which DLDD information from knowledge-sharing systems is used to support decision-making.	All reporting entities: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions.
Outcome 3.6: Science and technology networks and institutions relevant to DLDD are committed to supporting UNCCD implementation.	3.6.1: The extent to which scientific networks and institutions participate in UNCCD processes at all levels.	All Parties: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions. Secretariat: Statistics of participation. Other reporting entities: to be defined.

*Operational objective 4: To increase the extent to which capacity-building leads to the application of technologies, knowledge and experience in implementing policies and programmes more effectively*

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance indicator of outcome</b>	<b>Reporting entities and methods of collecting data</b>
Outcome 4.1: Affected countries have developed and adopted a plan to apply knowledge and experience on DLDD at national and local levels to the implementation of programmes.	4.1.1: Number of affected countries that have adopted a capacity-building plan or other methodologies and instruments to improve the application of DLDD knowledge using material provided by the secretariat and the GM.	Affected countries: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions.  Other reporting entities: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template.
Outcome 4.2: Affected countries implement the resulting plans to improve programme delivery at the individual, institutional and systemic levels to tackle DLDD issues at the national and local levels.	4.2.1: Number of affected countries engaged in building capacity to combat DLDD on the basis of recommended methodologies and instruments with the support of the secretariat, the GM, developed countries or other partners	Affected countries: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions.  Developed countries: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template.  Other reporting entities: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template.

*Operational objective 5: To increase the mobilization and to improve the targeting and coordination of national, bilateral, multilateral and private financial and technological resources, in order to increase their effectiveness and impact in addressing DLDD issues.*

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance indicator of outcome</b>	<b>Reporting entities and methods of collecting data</b>
Outcome 5.1: Affected country Parties develop integrated investment frameworks for leveraging national, bilateral and multilateral resources, both private and public sectors, with a view to increasing the effectiveness and impact of interventions.	5.1.1: Number of affected country Parties whose investment frameworks, established within the IFS or other financing strategies, reflect the leveraging of national, bilateral and multilateral resources for addressing DLDD.	Affected countries: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions. GM: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. Subregional/regional reporting entities: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions. Other reporting entities: to be defined.
Outcome 5.2: Developed country Parties provide substantial, adequate, timely and predictable financial resources to eligible affected country Parties to support domestic initiatives to reverse and prevent desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought.	5.2.1: Amount of financial resources made available to eligible affected country Parties by developed country Parties to address DLDD.	Developed countries: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions. Other reporting entities: to be defined.
Outcome 5.3: Parties increase their efforts to mobilize financial resources from international financial institutions, facilities and funds, including the GEF.	5.3.1: Number of DLDD-related project proposals successfully financed by international financial institutions, facilities and funds, including the GEF, and related funding amounts received and, where applicable, leveraged.	GEF, United Nations agencies and IGOs: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, accompanied by statistics where possible Affected countries: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, accompanied by statistics where possible Secretariat/GM: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. Other reporting entities: to be defined.

*Operational objective 5: To increase the mobilization and to improve the targeting and coordination of national, bilateral, multilateral and private financial and technological resources, in order to increase their effectiveness and impact in addressing DLDD issues.*

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Performance indicator of outcome</b>	<b>Reporting entities and methods of collecting data</b>
Outcome 5.4: Innovative sources of funding and financing mechanisms are identified and used to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought, including funding from the private sector, market-based mechanisms, foundations and CSOs.	5.4.1: Number and types of innovative sources of funding and financing mechanisms identified and used to support initiatives, related funding amounts mobilized and, where applicable, leveraged	Affected countries: Multiple choice and narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. GM: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. Other reporting entities: to be defined.
Outcome 5.5: Access to technology by affected country Parties is facilitated through adequate financing, effective economic and policy incentives, and technical support, especially within the framework of South–South and North–South cooperation.	5.5.1: The extent to which financial resources, incentives and technical support related to UNCCD work have increased access to technology by affected country Parties.	Affected countries: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, including examples GM: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. Other reporting entities: to be defined.
Outcome 5.6: National, regional and global baselines for assessing progress in meeting strategic objective 4 are established and used	3.2.1: The extent to which affected Parties set baselines for assessing progress toward strategic objective 4 and utilize them in reporting.	Affected countries: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions. Secretariat: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template. Subregional/regional reporting entities: Narrative responses to targeted questions in the reporting template, based on clear definitions. Other reporting entities: to be defined.

## **Relationship between the updated operational objectives and the strategic objectives**

Below is a presentation of the connections between the strategic objectives and the updated operational objectives. Over the next five years, the periodic reviews to be undertaken by the CRIC should, inter alia, determine the extent to which progress towards achieving the operational objectives is leading to the achievement of the strategic objectives.

### Strategic objective 1. To improve the living conditions of affected populations

Connection with updated operational objective 1: If there is increased awareness of the importance of DLDD issues there are likely to be more policies and programmes for affected populations will lead to an improvement in the living conditions of affected populations.

Connection with updated operational objective 2: If there are improved policies and programmes, there is more likelihood that living conditions will be improved.

Connection with updated operational objective 5: Increases in financial and technological resources will lead to improved living conditions.

### Strategic objective 2. To improve the condition of affected ecosystems

Connection with updated operational objective 1: If there is increased awareness, the condition of the affected ecosystems will be improved.

Connection with updated operational objective 2: If national and international policies and programmes include DLDD, both affected and developed countries will address the improvement of ecosystems.

Connection with updated operational objective 3: The application of the latest science and technological knowledge will ensure that affected ecosystems are improved.

Connection with updated operational objective 5: Improvements in affected ecosystems requires improved resource levels.

### Strategic objective 3. To generate global benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD

Connection with updated operational objective 2: If governments implement effective policies, there will be greater benefits at the global level and if global benefits related to DLDD are to be obtained, they must be encouraged by international agreements.

Connection with updated operational objective 3: Achievement of global benefits requires the application of the most recent science and technological knowledge.

### Strategic objective 4. To mobilize resources to support implementation of the Convention through building effective partnerships between national and international actors

Connection with updated operational objective 4: Resource mobilization requires that persons responsible for programmes are able to apply knowledge and experience.

Connection with updated operational objective 5: The mobilization of resources includes the adequate and increased funding that draw on effective partnerships, bilateral and multilateral as well as public and private.