

CLOSING PRESS RELEASE

The eighth session of the COP in Madrid responded to the expectation for new dynamics to bring the UNCCD forward

Bonn, 17 September 2007 – A successful Eighth Session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 8) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) has concluded in Madrid, with endorsement by the 191 country Parties of the highly anticipated ten-year strategic plan and framework for the UNCCD. Further concrete steps have thereby been taken towards effective implementation of the UNCCD.

The Convention, unlike its sister conventions on climate change and biodiversity, has previously lacked defined goals and a time frame for achieving them. The ten-year strategic plan, which aims at targets against an established time frame, therefore fills an important gap and significantly strengthens the Convention at a critical juncture, marked by a strategic move from assessment to action.

The ten-year plan sets out operational objectives on issues including awareness-raising, policy framework, science and technology and capacity-building. It also further defines the coordination and respective mandates of the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, so as to enhance coordination and integration.

The strong support of the Parties for the new strategic plan confirmed the viability and importance of the institutional framework of the Convention and of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, as a key intersessional body of the COP with a critical mandate.

On the final day of the conference, discussions on the budget continued late into the night. However, by the early hours of the next morning, final consensus could not be reached for conjunctural reasons. The Japanese delegation was technically not in a position to finally endorse the budget, which it had previously agreed upon ad referendum.

Nevertheless, the endorsement of the proposed budget by the whole international community at the level suggested, clearly underlines the strong political support and commitment from Parties to enable the secretariat, the Convention bodies and its global mechanism to fulfill their respective mandates in the light of the new ten-year strategy.

An extraordinary session of the COP will be convened in New York on the sidelines of the 62nd session of the General Assembly to finally adopt the budget of the Convention.

Note to journalists: For more information, see <http://www.unccd.int> or contact the press office at : press@unccd.int

