



U N C C D

Final Report
of the
IX regional meeting of the
Latin American and the Caribbean country Parties
to the United Nations Convention to
Combat Desertification and Drought

Bogotá, Colombia, from 18 to 20 June 2003



IX REGIONAL MEETING OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICACIÓN AND DROUGHT

(Bogotá, Colombia, June 18 - 20, 2003)

Final Report

I. Background

1. The Regional Annex for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNCCD) establishes the need to hold regional meetings in order to strengthen cooperation and exchange among the country Parties and to apply the regional implementation annex.

2. In this context, Parties of Latin America and the Caribbean held eight regional meetings thus far one in Argentina, Mexico, Cuba, Antigua and Barbuda, Peru, El Salvador, Chile and Barbados in order to identify high-priority actions and establish and develop the subregional and regional cooperation through a Regional Action Programme to combat desertification.

3. The IX regional meeting of Latin America and the Caribbean country Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification was held, in collaboration with the Government of Colombia, in Bogotá from the 17 to the 20 June 2003.

II. Objectives of the Meeting

4. The objectives of the IX LAC regional meeting were the following:

- Make the *state-of-the-art* of the National Action Programmes in the region and discuss a calendar of activities within the process of NAP design/finalisation, to comply with the provisions of the Recife Declaration.
- Analyse the achievements within the frame of the different Subregional Action Programmes and identify the steps forward.
- Review and assess the Regional Action Programme (RAP), after 5 years from its approval, and agree on further developments for the period 2003-2007, including financial strategies. The following issues were discussed during the regional meeting, especially in the light of the thematic components of the Programme:
 - RAP Thematic Programme Network (TPN-1) on Benchmarks and Indicators of desertification and drought in LAC
 - RAP Thematic Programme Network (TPN-2) on Information Exchange DESELAC;
 - RAP Thematic Programme Network (TPN-3) on Integrated Water Management;
 - RAP Thematic Programme Network (TPN-4) on Agroforestry and poverty eradication;
 - RAP Thematic Programme Network (TPN-5) on Best Practices and Traditional Knowledge;
 - RAP Thematic Programme Network (TPN-6) on Sustainable Renewable Energies



- Prepare and agree on a common position among the countries of the region at the Second Session of the CRIC and the Sixth Session of COP that will take place in August-September 2003 in La Havana, Cuba, especially as regards the new financial perspectives, including the GEF Operational Programme 15.
- Discuss other issues related to the implementation of the Convention at the regional level, including the participation of the civil society in the process.

III Participation

5. All the Latin America and Caribbean country Parties, as well as regional and subregional intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, agencies of the United Nations system were invited to the Meeting. There were 28 government representatives as well as 12 representatives from international, regional and subregional organizations and 12 nongovernmental organizations from the regions. Numerous institutions of Colombia also attended the meeting. The list of participants is attached as Annex V of the present report.

6. Before the meeting, a technical segment was held on June 17 to finalise the 2002-2003 process on benchmarks and indicators of desertification and drought that consisted in the celebration of meetings on the issue in the different LAC subregions. The report of the technical segment is attached in Annex IV of this document.

POINT 1 OF THE AGENDA: OPENING OF THE MEETING

7. The Opening Ceremony of the official segment of the Regional meeting took place on Wednesday, June 18 2003 in the Hotel La Fontana, Bogotá, Colombia. Mr. Gregoire de Kalbermatten, UNCCD Deputy Executive Secretary, Hon. Luis Hernandez Ojeda, Ambassador of Cuba in Colombia and Mr. Jaime Duarte, Vice-Chancellor of Colombia, took the floor.

Point 2: Election of Executive Board and approval of the preliminary agenda of the Meeting

8. The Meeting decided that the following countries composed the Executive Board:

Presidency:	Colombia	Mrs. Andrea Alban
Vice-presidency:	Barbados	Mrs. Karen Smith
Rapporteur:	Panama	Mrs Abril Méndez

The participant delegates approved the Provisional Agenda, with modifications in the subjects' order of discussion. The definitive agenda consists in Annexed III of this report.

Point 3: From the CRIC 1 towards the CRIC 2 and COP 6

9. The UNCCD Secretariat went through the results of the CRIC 1 and the identified priorities. Among them, the promotion of the participatory process, the support to the national action programmes conceived as fundamental instruments to land rehabilitation, the efficient and sustainable use of natural resources, fostering at the same time the fight against poverty and the information exchange among all the different actors at all levels.

10. Cuba presented the working plan to prepare CRIC 2 and COP.6 and informed delegates on the various issues related to the decisions that, in accordance with the conclusions and



recommendation of the CRIC 1 and the agenda of the CRIC 2, will be submitted to the consideration of the COP.6. Additionally, the working plan for the CRIC 3 was briefly presented.¹

11. With reference to COP.6, the UNCCD Secretariat presented the preliminary agenda and indicated the activities with parliamentarians and artists. Regarding the financial aspects of the UNCCD implementation mechanisms, it was mentioned that an assessment was carried out of the work of the GM and results achieved in its first period of activity.

12. On the decision to make the GEF a financial mechanism of the Convention, delegates were informed about the GEF Council approval of the Operational Plan that allocates 160 million USD to land degradation (60 million USD for capacity building and 100 million USD for implementing traditional and new practices for sustainable land management). Secondly, still on financial matters, the Secretariat introduced the UNCCD budget issue, pointing out the difficulties encountered particularly due to the US dollar devaluation toward the euro, in a way that the 2004-2005 budget proposal foresees an increase of 60% for the Secretariat and 70% for the Global Mechanism, respectively. In this light, and considering the 20% deficit, the payment of the outstanding obligatory contributions to the UNCCD regular budget was claimed to the countries. Thirdly, the Secretariat informed about the high level round table and the interactive ministerial dialogue that during the COP.6, will discuss respectively about the Convention as an instrument to reach the Millennium Declaration objectives, poverty eradication and food security as well as the new opportunities to strengthen cooperation within the framework of the official development assistance, particularly to promote sustainable development in arid ecosystems

13. Delegates from Argentina, Uruguay and Barbados took the floor proposing to integrate issues related to the regional coordinating units and pay more attention to the specificities for the Caribbean insular countries.

Point 4: Report of the LAC Facilitation Unit on the activities carried out in the region during the period 2002-2003:

14. The Secretariat of the Convention presented a report on the activities carried out in the above-mentioned period. In particular, it was underlined that the aim was to achieve the programmatic objectives to address CRIC 1 and to comply with COP decisions as in the case of NAP design, finalisation and implementation, including the elaboration of financial strategies for more predictable resources, the strengthening of cooperation through existing and new tools, as the Global Mechanism or the GEF Operational Programme 15. Additionally, it was pointed out that the country national reports gave inputs and guidelines for the activities of the Secretariat, particularly as regards the issues of integrated water resource management, the development and use of benchmarks and indicators of desertification and drought,² the dissemination of best practices and

¹ Among these themes, there are: resource mobilization, including coordination and partnership agreements; promotion of private sector participation and economic opportunities in arid, semi arid and dry sub humid regions/countries; capacity building including participatory processes, legislative and institutional frameworks as well as the promotion of synergies; monitoring and assessment, including the improvement of the reporting process; awareness raising, information and communication; rehabilitation of degraded land. Other decisions regard the review of the policies, operational modalities and activities of the Global Mechanism; review of the execution of the Secretariat functions; designation of the GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD and collaboration with the Facility as well as with multilateral agencies; review of the Bonn Declaration on the Commitments under the Convention to enhance the implementation of the obligations under the UNCCD.

² In this context, 2 subregional technical workshops were organised for the Caribbean (St. Lucia, February 2003) and Mesoamerica (Honduras, April 2003) and contributions for the holding of the workshop in South America (Argentina, September 2002) were given through consultants and the publication of the final results.



traditional knowledge, the improving of agroforestry initiatives for land rehabilitation, information harmonisation and dissemination through DESELAC³ and the publication of documents, the promotion of renewable energies, etc. It was also mentioned the definition of a joint working programme between the Global Mechanism and the UNCCD Secretariat to achieve the objectives identified at the national, subregional and regional levels, the reactivation of the Regional Coordinating Unit in Mexico City and the fostering of international and south-south cooperation on various issues, particularly capacity building with the aim to strengthen the national coordinating body, involve youth in activities for combating desertification and generating incomes, the strengthening of RIOD, etc.

15. The delegate from Dominican Republic and the representative of IICA, among others, took the floor to mention, respectively, the cooperation among Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba for national capacity building and the accreditation of IICA before the Convention.

Point 5: Report of the President of the Regional Executive Committee

16. The delegate from Barbados, as the President of the REC, presented the activity report of the Committee in the period 2002-2003, highlighting the operational difficulties encountered due to language problems, the lack of financial resources and of an effective communication mechanism. Nevertheless, the Committee constantly worked for having the GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD and for preparing CRIC 1, CRIC 2 and the COP.6. Among the final recommendations, the President of the REC, after having acknowledged the Secretariat for its efforts in involving the REC in the COP Bureau meeting held in New York in April 2003, underlined the need to strengthen the Committee, analysing its functions and looking for operational solutions.

Point 6: Report of the Global Mechanism

17. The representative of the GM presented the tasks undertaken within the Convention implementation process, highlighting the identification of potential financial resources, the promotion of platforms for cooperation and multilateral agreements as well as the support to the participation of civil society and community based organisations. The support given to some countries of the region was detailed, particularly as concern the design, finalisation or review of their respective NAPs and the implementation of projects at the national, subregional and regional levels.⁴ The consolidation of strategic alliances with IFAD, UNDP, FAO, UNEP, UNCCD, IADB, World Bank, CAF, CARICOM, AECI, OAS and GTZ was also emphasised. It was also stressed that the majority of those activities were coherent with the joint working programme with the Secretariat.

18. Delegates from Paraguay and Brazil took the floor to acknowledge the GM for the support received for the NAP and to claim a bigger NGOs' participation in NAP design and implementation in all countries.

Point 7: Report of the Committee of Science and Technology

³ The UNCCD Secretariat, thanks to the contribution of the Government of Spain, reactivated the DESELAC web page, that nowadays appears with a new graphic and in an updated format. With the aim to develop the project from its design and architecture to the fully network functioning, an expert in web design has been employed.

⁴ Among other, it was mentioned the support for NAP and other national projects to El Salvador, Panama, Brazil, Peru, Guatemala, Haiti, Cuba, Mexico, Argentina and Dominican Republic; to regions as Hispaniola, the English speaking Caribbean, the Chaco Americano, Puna Americana and Mesoamerica, providing support from cooperation partners and promoting south-south cooperation; the search for opportunities within the GEF for Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina and Peru. At the regional level, the support to initiatives related to the harmonisation of public policies, as well as the development and use of benchmarks and indicators was also mentioned.



19. The representative of Argentina, member of the Group of Expert of the CST, presented the activity report of the Committee and the results achieved, among others, in the elaboration of a common set of benchmarks and indicators for monitoring and assessing desertification, in early warning systems, the updating of the World Atlas of Desertification (review of the cartographic works, establishment of criteria and Terms of Reference for the new Atlas as well as development of cartography), elaboration of a scientific research plans on land degradation (review and prioritization of current scientific activities, identification and prioritization of new research needs, identification of research programmes at the international and regional levels, elaboration of a comprehensive report), the preparation of a glossary on desertification, the definition of a network for information exchange among national coordination centres (recommendations on the use of databases, creation of Internet discussion forums, development of a meta-database). Among its priorities, there were mentioned the need to strengthen relationships with other conventions, improve the integration between NAPs and RAP, promote the Group of Independent Expert's activities (GOE) created by decision 17/COP.5, which approach should be multidisciplinary and focus on desertification and land use.⁵

Point 8: State of the PAN. Two case studies

- **The NAP of Colombia**

20. The general objective of the NAP-Colombia is combating land degradation and desertification, promoting the sustainable ecosystems management and guaranteeing food security. Among the specific objectives there are the definition of environmental guidelines, the promotion of community participation, the preparation of project portfolios and the national capacity building through educational programmes and professional training. The representative of Colombia presented the progresses of the NAP and the analysis made to identify the most degraded areas of the country. Among the major causes of the desertification process, that affects 48% of population, overgrazing, erosion, deforestation, compaction were mentioned. The perspective for 2020 is related to the discussion and implementation of strategies, actions and mechanisms for preserving natural resources and mitigating land degradation processes, particularly in drylands.

- **The NAP of St. Lucia**

21. The delegate of St. Lucia informed about the different phases of the NAP formulation process. From the holding of the national awareness seminar, the most relevant actors were involved, research and collection of information were started, to define in a more detailed way the NAP framework which first draft would be presented at the end of August 2003. Among the major identified causes of degradation process in St. Lucia (a process that determined an increasing impoverishment and vulnerability of population and land), there were the lack of land and water conservation policies, the pressure of the growing population on land resources, the small size of the island, deforestation, mining exploitation and intensive agriculture. To face these challenges, the design of land and water conservation programmes are fundamental, as well as the institutional capacity building, the support to participation at all levels, the promotion of the use of traditional and modern technologies and practices together with the development and use of benchmarks and indicators to monitors and assess desertification process. Finally, the delegate informed that ST. Lucia would finalise and officially approve the NAP at the beginning of 2004.

⁵ The GOE programme of work includes 28 themes, 10 of which make part of the programme 2003-2004. Among them, there are the following: desertification assessment, vulnerability (B&I), land conservation and rehabilitation (traditional knowledge and modern technology), poverty reduction and sustainable development in drylands, development of synergy with other initiatives. LAC countries are represented within the GOE with 5 members: 2 from Chile, 1 respectively from Argentina, Brazil and Cuba.



Point 8: Calendar of activities needed to comply with the Recife Declaration

22. The UNCCD Secretariat informed about the steps to be done to comply with the obligations stemming from the Recife Declaration that establishes that parties should finalise their respective NAPs by 2005. The proposed calendar foresees a targeted support to countries in accordance with the stage of NAP preparation in which they are. The hope is to have the majority of NAPs approved by the first semester of 2004.

Point 9: Report on the achievements of the Subregional Action Programmes

23. Presentation of the subregional action programmes of Gran Chaco Americano, Puna American, Mesoamerica, the Caribbean and the Hispaniola Ecosystem were made.

- **Gran Chaco Americano** (Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay): The representative of Argentina informed the participants that 1 million/km² is affected by severe degradation menacing the enormous biodiversity existing in the considered area. He referred to consultation processes initiated at the governmental level among the 3 countries and mentioned the future strategies identified to advance in the design and implementation of concrete projects with impacts on social, economic and environmental degradation. Among the cooperation partners he mentioned the GEF, GM, CIDA, OAS, UNDP, AECI, GTZ and USAID.
- **Puna Americana** (Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru): The representative of Chile described the mentioned ecosystem and the objective of the project that is aimed at promoting sustainable development of Puna, articulating the NAPs of the affected countries, raising awareness and increasing participation of all the actors involved in the related processes. He also mentioned some priority activities, as for instance, the SRAP-Puna formulation (UNCCD-GM), the development of socioeconomic indicators (ECLAC-GTZ), the SRAP-Puna Trust Fund project (FAO Italy), the project on Sustainable Development and Local Knowledge (OAS-AECI), the project for strengthening SRAP-Puna (GEF-UNDP) and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (RIDES-WRI).
- **Mesoamerica**: The representative of Belize emphasised the Subregional project on Early Warning and the delegates from El Salvador and Costa Rica mentioned the need to formulate a subregional programme, profiting of the fact that, currently, all the countries of the subregion are in NAP preparation phase.
- **The Caribbean**: The Secretariat mentioned the subregional programme of the Caribbean as a pending issue that should be discussed as soon as possible, paying particular attention to the peculiarities and vulnerability of the small insular countries of the subregion.
- **Hispaniola** (Haiti and Dominican Republic): The representative of the Dominican Republic described the PAN-FRO achievements since 2001 and explained that the programme is conceived as a political tool for combating desertification and including negotiation mechanisms, as the Interinstitutional Working Group (which operates within a clear legal framework that imposes the respect of subsidiarity and complementarity principles), the promotion of synergy, the coordination and information on programming cycles of national and international institutions, the promotion of local participation. Among the most relevant results, he mentioned the definition of a national agenda, the consolidation of a national consulting process, the creation of strategic cooperation alliances, the collaboration



agreements with GM, GTZ, FAO, UNDP and Canada, the development of project proposals for the Artibonito river basin, the integration of a number of initiatives along the frontier and the design of the project on the harmonisation of public policies.

Point 10: Presentation of the project on harmonization of public policies

- **24. General context:** The representative of Mexico and the consultant from UNEP informed about the Mexican case study and a document that UNEP prepared at the beginning of 2003 concerning the reasons at the basis of the process of harmonisation of public policies: less state interventions, scarce public resources, no integration among initiatives and programmes. The main objective mentioned was the correction of the negative effects on the combat against desertification and the best use of existing resources. Other objectives were the development of a methodology, the promotion of learning capacities as well as the creation of a network for mutual assistance and the negotiation of international financial support. The components of the projects were the following: national performances, analysis of the international context to identify trends and margins of manoeuvre for reforms, elaboration of a data basis that includes lessons learnt, promotion of technical and financial assistance also through catalytic participation of international bodies. As regards the perspectives, it was foreseen the continuation of pilot initiatives and of the law on land conservation, the dissemination of the experience in other 5 countries, technical assistance and, finally, the involvement of international organisations and the strategic alliance with them.
- **25. The pilot case in Mexico:** The delegate of Mexico presented the experience developed in the country on the subject, emphasising the need of preventive urgent actions to face natural resources degradation. The preliminary assessment included the analysis of the existing political instruments and the systematisation of the collected information within an matrix for the evaluation of the impacts on the environment of the identified economic programmes and tools. That matrix was at the basis of discussions that allowed the redefinition and appropriate adjustments of each programme. The objective of the project were the following: provide political capacity to the authority for the environment with the aim to comply, among others, with the obligations stemming from UNCCD, rationalise the dispersed measures related to natural resources management, promote the coordination among the institutional actors, improve the contracts for land tenure, land protection and environmental services. In particular, the delegate explained the scheme of contracts for land tenure that promote fairness and corresponsability among the contracting parties. The report on the application of measures at the local level is still pending.

Point 11: Review and Update of the Regional Action Programme in LAC

26. The Secretariat's consultant in-charge of analysing the achievements of the RAP in LAC and proposing its updating, presented the study on the general structure of the RAP, its objectives and basis for development, also in the perspective of being instrumental to NAP process, representing the first axe of the RAP together with the subregional, crosscutting and cooperation axes.⁶

⁶ The LAC RAP integrates 4 axes for implementing the Convention: 1) UNCCD implementation at the national level (including, in particular, all those activities to support NAP formulation, approval and application, to comply with decision 8/COP.4); 2) UNCCD implementation at the transnational ecosystems level (Subregional Action Programme of Gran Chaco, Puna, Mesoamerica, the Caribbean and Hispaniola); 3) implementation of crosscutting activities and programmes, with DESELAC, benchmarks and indicators, traditional knowledge, water management, agroforestry, renewable energies, synergy, drought, public policies, capacity building and education, financial issues and gender issues; 4) horizontal cooperation within the UNCCD framework, particularly the south-south component as already



- **Point 11.a: Conclusions of the technical segment on benchmarks and indicators (B&I) of desertification and drought**

27. The facilitator of the technical segment of the meeting, held on June 17, after having analysed the results of the 3 subregional working groups, concluded the following:

- the region has rich technical experience in benchmarks and indicators
- it is necessary to continue the undertaken and on-going projects
- B&I must be at the decision-makers' service
- within a regional thematic network on B&I, it is proposed to develop subregional programmes, with agreed and clear conceptual frameworks and well identified phases.⁷

28. It was emphasised that each subregion recognised the need to develop a regional programme on B&I, create a monitoring system and establish a working agenda reflecting the peculiarities and the objectives proposed, Those were the following:

- **Mesoamerica:** Already during the workshop organised in Tegucigalpa, the subregion expressed its interest on the subject, as demonstrated by the level of participation in the event and the follow-up given to it. In that occasion participants indicated a preliminary set of indicators, data sources, timing and management models. They also advanced in filling the planning matrix, developing the first 3 phases. Finally, they agreed on a calendar for the preparation of a subregional proposal to be finalised by mid-august 2003.
- **The Caribbean:** The group focused in the analysis of indicators from phase 1 to 4 (development of indicators), considering the biophysical indicators very useful and necessary. Additionally, the group considered poverty as a specific theme, since its mitigation is a fundamental objective of the Convention and its reduction a priority in the Caribbean Agenda.
- **South America:** The group decided that the existing projects on indicators will be executed within the CCD implementation framework and agreed on the proposal made by the Secretariat, to be submitted to the consideration and input of the Parties. Among the short-term activities, countries agreed on the organisation of a subregional workshop on B&I with the aim to strengthen the efforts already made, create a basic working structure to be coordinated by Argentina and 2 sub-coordinators, respectively from the South Cone (Uruguay) and the Andean region (Colombia) as well as their representatives from RIOD, facilitate the communication among subregional experts supporting the experiences and information exchange on the issue. Additionally, countries agreed on presenting within 30 days the results of a questionnaire presented during the technical segment on the state-of-the-art of B&I.

experimented within the interregional platform of cooperation between Africa and LAC and among the same LAC countries. At the same time, the RAP proposes a number of actions corresponding to each thematic axe.

⁷ The following phases were proposed: 1) implementation of participatory process to identify desertification information needs of potential users; 2) definition of objectives and capacities of the Desertification Monitoring System (DMS); 3) establishment of geographic unit for the analysis; 4) selection of indicators; 5) establishment of biophysical and socioeconomic baselines for the selected indicators; 6) implementation of protocols for collecting data and assessing indicators; 7) institutional articulation; 8) implementation of the national (subregional and regional) Desertification Monitoring System.



29. The representative discussed extensively the issue, since the Secretariat's consultant had to design a TPN proposal on B&I, that is included in Annex IV of this report as result of the technical segment.

- **Point 11.b: Regional Thematic Programme Network on information: DESELAC**

30. The UNCCD Secretariat presented the new DESELAC web site, emphasising the history of the network and its importance as an interactive mechanism for communication and exchange of technical, scientific and socio-economic information among all the involved actors in combating desertification. It was also underlined that the new site offers an illustrative platform, efficient and easy to use for everybody, including the children to whom an entire section of the network have been dedicated. The different pages were described in details, as well as the access modalities to information and documents, the possibility to have thematic forums and on-line conferences, the links with the official national web sites and other sites with relevant issues for the Convention, the space available for NGOs, exhibitions, maps, statistics and pictures. The Secretariat informed that the inputs received from the countries were taken into consideration when DESELAC was designed.

31. Participants acknowledged the Secretariat for the work undertaken to reactivate DESELAC.

- **Point 11.c: Regional Thematic Programme Network on water**

32. The UNCCD Secretariat started from the conclusions and recommendations of the technical workshop on integrated watershed management held in Venezuela in 2001, among which there were the promotion of democratic participation of users in the implementation of appropriated initiatives for the sustainable water resources management, the establishment of preventive measures and early warning systems against drought, including the coordination at the regional and international level, the strengthening of cooperation and information dissemination among all countries on water issues as well as the development of bi-multinational strategies for managing shared watershed, including conflict resolution mechanisms. The following objectives of the thematic programme were presented:

- Promoting cost-efficient approaches to use scarce water resources;
- Reducing land degradation caused by inappropriate water management;
- Designing innovative strategies to achieve the development objectives and the promotion of sustainable and integrated water use;
- Testing appropriate methodologies for the rehabilitation and sustainable use of degraded land;
- Fostering community income generating activities aimed at combating poverty;
- Filling the existing gaps in the region as regards the integrated water management in drylands, establishing synergy among the on-going initiatives;
- Contributing to the development of strategies for the water and watershed management in drylands;
- Contributing to the institutional development for the sustainable water and watershed management at the national, subregional and regional levels;
- Fostering the technical and scientific information exchange and dissemination among all users, considering DESELAC as a key tool in the region;
- Establishing dynamic databases on water resources management related to combating desertification.

33. Finally, it was also specified that the TPN was part of the UNCCD-GM joint working programme, that for its preliminary design a consultant was engaged and that strategic alliances



were being established with specialised institutions, such as CAZALAC, UNESCO, FAO and OAS among others.

34. Delegates from Uruguay, Chile y Brazil took the floor stressing their interest in integrated water resource management. In particular, Brazil that at the moment coordinates the Interamerican network on water, offered to countries of the region the support for developing a TPN on water. Additionally, Uruguay offered to hold the next workshop in the region within the UNCCD framework. Also the representatives of the GM, of the NGO Ecológica, IICA and SICA took the floor mentioning, respectively, the priority of the support to NAP, the promotion of a water-related project specifically for Mesoamerica, the issue of water governance as discussed during the world water summit in Japan, the availability of technical and logistic support to the UNCCD consultant that would work in Mesoamerica.

- **Point 11.d: Other opportunities of action in the combat against desertification and drought**
 - **Point 11.d.1: Regional Thematic Programme Network on Best Practices and Traditional Knowledge**

35. The UNCCD Secretariat mentioned the importance of the issues detailed in chapter 26 of Agenda 21 and during the COP.5, when a decision on the subject was adopted, mentioning that the promotion of traditional knowledge had to be considered a priority for the country Parties at the moment of formulating their national reports. At the IV LAC regional meeting, country Parties decided to ask for the development of a regional project to rescue and identify the existing traditional knowledge and technology in LAC. As a consequence, they approved a proposal from Peru for the design and articulation of the initiative, with Peru as the coordinator and Mexico, Guatemala, Cuba and Argentina as subregional coordinators. At the V LAC regional meeting, the Secretariat submitted to the participants a document on traditional knowledge and technologies, mentioning that more than 2000 technologies identified in South America needed to be validated within the NAP framework. At the time of the second UNCCD reporting exercise in 2002, some LAC countries presented positive experiences on traditional knowledge and sustainable practices for soil conservation, while during the CRIC 1 the region presented some technologies related to biomass increase and zero tillage. The criteria used to achieve TPN final results on best practices are based on objectives identified at the local level to progress in desertification and drought matters and include them within governmental strategies. The recognition and the mainstreaming of those TPN themes are essential to implement activities at the local level using traditional knowledge.⁸ It was also foreseen the organisation of a workshop on best practices and traditional knowledge to collect the necessary elements for the launching of the programme in LAC.

36. The representative from Italy took the floor to underline how the issue of best practice and traditional knowledge should be strictly linked to water resource management. The delegate from Colombia offered her country to hold the mentioned workshop.

- **Point 11.d.2: Regional Thematic Programme Network on agroforestry**

⁸ At the local community and other stakeholders level, the criteria to be adopted are the following: bottom-up approach; sustainable economic security; adaptation capacity to socio-economic and environmental problems; sustainable land and water use for present and future generations; equal and fair participation in negotiations; information exchange among stakeholders; education and training. At the governmental level: maintenance of soil productivity potentials; improvement of water availability and quality; identification and adoption of sustainable technologies and practices to improve social and economic living standards; increasing of agricultural, silvicultural and agroindustrial production.



37. The consultant of the UNCCD Secretariat emphasised the history of agroforestry within the Convention, mentioning decision 12 COP.4 and the recommendations of the VIII regional meeting in Barbados that offer the basis for the development of this thematic axe, especially as support to NAPs and RAP. The subregional working group, composed by Mesoamerica, the Andean region, the South Cone and the Caribbean, was confirmed and it was also agreed that it would decide the basis of the thematic network. The strategies and objectives, the way to define scopes, prioritise decisions and promote the issue using the existing networks in LAC were mentioned. Among the guidelines identified, there were the following:

- Research and agricultural networks to review experiences on agroforestry production;
- Evaluation of the opportunities for technical programmes in relation to affected populations;
- Socio-economic evaluation;
- Promotion of information exchange and joint activities in regional projects;
- Support to the introduction of appropriate techniques for handling plagues and diseases;
- Promotion of alternative sources of energy;
- Identification of financial opportunities within the GEF Operational Programme 15;
- Identification of opportunities for the development of environmental services, agroforestry and ecotourism projects.

38. Among the awaited results, the following were mentioned: courses and workshops, transfer of know-how, better legal and land property frame, useful and accessible information system, raised level of culture and knowledge on agroforestry, increased use of Internet.

39. The delegate from Cuba, with the support of the representative from Costa Rica, suggested to unify the TPN on traditional knowledge with the TPN on agroforestry, due to the elements they have in common and to explore all the existing financial opportunities; the delegate from Uruguay proposed to promote synergy with the of climatic change themes; the delegate from Ecuador mentioned agroforestry activities as tools for job creation to combat poverty; the delegate from Brazil pleaded for the integration of the three axes of water, traditional knowledge and agroforestry; finally, the Secretariat recognised that FAO, Mexico and Chile should integrate the initiative and mentioned also the importance to develop national networks promoting the synergy among them. For the relationship with the existing TPNs, 2 pilot workshops will be held in the LAC subregion, in South America (Chaco-Puna) and Hispaniola, respectively.

- **Point 11.d.3: Regional Thematic Programme Network on renewable energies**

40. The delegate from Venezuela presented a proposal for launching a TPN on renewable energies, and to this aim identified the activities to be developed for creating a cooperation mechanism that would facilitate the identification and implementation of enabling activities⁹ and, at the same time, promote and strengthen national and local technical framework on renewable energies issues through the strengthening of national capacities. A timetable of activities and projects on renewable energies within the NAP framework would allow clarifying the national energy matrix, the measures and policies to promote or discourage initiatives on renewable energies in rural areas, approve their application and use the technical know-how derived from learning-by-doing processes within sustainable and environmental friendly programmes and projects. Among the identified activities, there were the following: collection and analysis of

⁹ Reference was made to activities for mainstreaming initiatives on renewable energies within the NAP and the national development strategies and policies. In the majority of the countries of the region, those initiatives will be integrate, when appropriate, within the strategy to eradicate poverty and the ACP-EU programmes.



available information, diagnosis of the national system, identification of project portfolios in each NAP and RAP, monitoring activities and the holding of a regional workshop in Venezuela with the aim to disseminate the preliminary results and used methodologies as well as to propose a plan for the TPN-renewable energies launching. It was anticipated the willingness to assure the interrelation among the subregional programmes.

Point 12: Debate in plenary on the RAP 2003-2007 proposal, including thematic components and its financial strategies

41. After having received information on the various components of the RAP, the representatives and delegates from the following organisations and countries took the floor: UNEP, Argentina, UNCCD Secretariat, Mexico and Costa Rica. Among the main elements of the debate, it can be mentioned the proposal to establish priority areas (watershed, water, production, environment and capacity building) and continue working along the guidelines for LAC agreed upon in Johannesburg, assuring a better coordination among the existing programmes and higher coherence with the political initiatives in the region. It was pointed out that the TPNs are networks that integrate the RAP and that the terms of reference would be established in cooperation with national institutions interested in each of the themes, as well as with international institution specialised in the respective themes of the TPNs and with the GOE of the CST. To this aim and agreeing on the idea of thematic programme networks, it was proposed the formulation of a questionnaire containing the elements for the TPN design and implementation, including the information on technical, financial and human resources through which each country could contribute for the functioning of the network, not only at the government level but also through centres of excellence and experts.

Point 13: Debate in plenary on proposals for the COP.6

42. The Secretariat reiterated the need to submit to the President of the CRIC, no later than July 30, the proposal for the agenda of the next Conference of the Parties. Delegates from Uruguay, Dominican Republic, Argentina, Cuba, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Ecuador, St. Lucia, Peru, Brazil, Honduras and the representatives of UNDP, GM, UNEP and UNCCD took the floor.

43. Among the main elements of the debate, it can be mentioned the need to involve the private sector in implementing the Convention, discuss the cost and functioning of the RCUs taking into account decisions 3 COP.3, 4 COP.4 and 6 COP.5, promote and support the regional participation in the CST list of expert, approve the proposal to designate the GEF as a financial mechanism of the Convention and endorse its OP15, explore the existing additional financial sources, include NAP financing into the GEF activities, deal with co-financing issues and the role of the implementing agencies to promote the access to GEF funds. Participants were also informed about the possibility to organise parallel events at the COP.6 on specific matters and projects.

44. After a ample debate, the representatives of the countries at the IX regional meeting decided to create a contact group for elaborating proposals of decisions to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties. Such a group, facilitated by the Secretariat, started preparing a concrete proposal of decisions for the following day.

45. Finally, the delegate from Cuba pointed out that documents of the regional meetings should be mad available at least 6 weeks before the event.

Point 14: Activities to be developed during the biennium 2003-2004 at the regional level

46. Participants discussed the activities to be undertaken in the short term (biennium 2003-2004). The UNCCD Secretariat reaffirmed the need to give priority to the accomplishment of the Recife



Declaration on NAP finalisation, highlighted the on-going programmes in the Chaco and Puna and stressed from one side the strengthening of the Hispaniola programme and on the other the lack of development of the programmes in Mesoamerica and the Caribbean. Additionally, the UNCCD Secretariat informed about the activities that were being developed, particularly to implement decision 24 of the VII LAC regional meeting on the strengthening of national capacities. Among those activities, the following were mentioned: the UNV-UNCCD joint project to strengthen a national critical mass and foster NAP processes; the 3 requests for organising national or subregional workshops on synergy; the collaboration with ECLAC to support B&I in the region and design proposal on payment of environmental services in arid, dry and subhumid areas; the pilot project on youth and environment financed by the Italian Government in Argentina; the strengthening of RIOD; the UNCCD-GM joint working programme for NAP implementation in Bolivia and Peru. The UNCCD Secretariat also underlined the importance to nominate the next Regional Executive Committee and make it operative in a way to offer an added value to the region.

47. The delegates from St. Lucia, Peru, Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Argentina, the GM, Dominican Republic and Honduras took the floor. The debate stressed the willingness to use training opportunities on various issues related to the Convention and take into account the lessons learnt and the experiences gained for future planning and strategies, establishing clear priorities, effective mechanisms and concrete measures to address poverty. In particular, participants suggested the elaboration of a unique document gathering the activities supported by the UNCCD Secretariat, the GM and other cooperation partners that act in the region with the aim to achieve more coherence in implementing the initiatives and have only one working programme in the region. To this aim, a contact group was created for reporting on the following day. Additionally, participants claimed that major attention should be paid both to the planning of water related activities, since 2004 will be the international year of water, and on monitoring activities of on-going initiatives.

48. Finally, participants were informed about the offer of Guatemala to host the X LAC regional meeting in 2004.

Point 15: Presentations by the international agencies and institutions as well as the civil society organisations

49. The representatives of UNDP (both of the office in Colombia and the regional office in Mexico) and UNEP gave a brief introduction of the support given to activities to combat desertification and drought in LAC. Since the organisations are both GEF implementing agencies, the representatives underlined the new perspectives created by the Facility and the approval of its OP15 that will offer predictable resources to address the combat against desertification. In this context, also the role of the GM and the efforts of the UNCCD Secretariat to identify priorities and create a list of experts for the design of GEF eligible projects were mentioned.

- **Point 15.a: A case study on best practices in Colombia**

50. The delegate from Colombia, with the GTZ assistance, presented the experiences made on water and soil conservation in the Andean area, mentioning the identified problems, the proposed solutions as well as the achieved socio-economic and environmental benefits.

Point 16: Wrap-up session on RAP 2003-2007 and the short-term activities 2003-2004

51. The contact group that realised the integration of existing or planned activities in the region in the UNCCD framework presented the results of its work, following the 4 priority axes identified for the RAP. The debate stressed the fact that, with the exclusion of NAPs, all the activities were listed



in accordance with the availability of concrete resources for their implementation and not in term of importance. Some countries and no governmental organisations claimed the need to integrate the gender perspective among the priority issues, since it was already part of the RAP approved in Cuba in 1997. Additionally, participants agreed on joining efforts to study at the regional level the environmental cost of inaction. Finally, the RAP schedule 2003-2004 was presented mentioning that the proposed matrix would be updated in accordance to new cooperation opportunities and other activities to be included by the countries of the region.

Point 17: Presentation by the NGOs

52. The representative of the NGO Proterra (Peru), on behalf of the NGOs attending the meeting, claimed the need to promote civil society participation in all the UNCCD-related issues, in accordance to the text of the Convention. Following the results of the forum of Andean NGOs held on June 16 2003, the NGOs called upon the government representatives to integrated the participation principle mentioned in the text of the Convention within the institutional structure and legal framework so as to allow focal points to count on the fundamental support from civil society, especially in NAP design, formulation, implementation and monitoring process.

53. On behalf of the Caribbean NGOs, the representative of CNIRD underlined the importance of strengthening the Caribbean network and developing civil society capacities to achieve the Convention's objectives.

Point 18: Discussion of the decision of the LAC IX regional meeting

54. Argentina presented the work made by the contact group composed by Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, St. Lucia, Uruguay, Cuba and Argentina related to the draft of 11 decisions. The delegate read the decisions that were discussed, emended and approved one by one by consensus among the countries of the region. The final text of the decisions is in Annex I of this report.

Point 19: Report of the drafting committee of the LAC IX regional meeting

55. The representative of Honduras took the floor on behalf of the drafting committee. He explained the organisation of work and presented the results of the report to be sent to all participants and posted on the UNCCD Secretariat and DESELAC web pages.

Point 20: Closing ceremony of the IX LAC regional meeting

56. The meeting ended its works at 15 o'clock on June 20, 2003. Participants and the UNCCD Secretariat acknowledged the people and the Government of Colombia. The representative of Colombia, on behalf of the Government, declared officially closed the IX regional meeting of Latin American and the Caribbean country Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought, acknowledging the contributions of participants and donors who made that made possible the successful organisation of this meeting.

Bogotá, Colombia, June 20, 2003



ANNEX I

DECISIONS
OF THE LAC COUNTRY PARTIES TO THE
IX UNCCD LAC REGIONAL MEETING

Decision 1	Agenda of work for NAP implementation in the LAC countries 2003-2005
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Recalling that Articles 9 and 10 of the Convention and Article 3 of Annex III of the Convention;

Recalling Decision 8 COP 4 referring to the Declaration of the commitments assumed under the Convention to improve compliance with UNCCD obligations inviting affected developing country to accelerate the process of preparation and implementation of NAPs to have them complete by the end 2005 at the latest;

Welcoming the establishment of a joint programme between the Global Mechanism and the UNCCD Secretariat to better respond to the needs of affected country Parties, notably at the national level;

Bearing in mind that the Parties in the Latin American and Caribbean adopted at their Seventh Regional meeting Decision 1 reaffirming their commitment to have their National Action programmes prepared by 2005 and calling on the Secretariat to fulfil its mandate in this regard;

Noting that at their Eight Regional meeting Parties were encouraged to make every effort to ensure that their National Action programmes are completed by the 2005 deadline as identified by Decision 8 COP 4;

Cognisant of the fact that only seven countries in the region have completed and adopted their National Action Programmes to date;

Parties attending this meeting

DECIDE

1. **To** reaffirm the will of LAC country Parties to reach their goal set up in the Recife Declaration,
2. **To call** to the Secretariat, the Global Mechanism, the Global Environment Facility, UNEP, UNDP, and all other pertinent international agencies, as well as donor and cooperation countries, to ensure the compliance of the commitments of developed country parties to assign, in a predictable and concrete manner, the appropriate necessary resources to ensure the compliance with the agreed deadline,
3. **To give priority** to the following listed activities that shall be executed by 2005

Priority / Activity	Expected Date
<i>National Awareness Seminars in the remaining 4 countries of LAC:</i> Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago	December 2003



Priority / Activity	Expected Date
<p><i>NAP preparation in 10 countries:</i> Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Honduras, Panama, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Surinam, and Uruguay</p>	March 2004
<p><i>NAP completion / validation in 12 countries:</i> Brazil, Barbados, Colombia¹⁰, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Venezuela.</p>	March 2004
<p><i>NAP completion / validation in 14 countries (after numerals 1 and 2 above have been completed)</i> Antigua & Barbuda, Bahamas, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana Honduras, Panama, St. Kitts & Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Surinam, Trinidad & Tobago, and Uruguay</p>	2 nd half 2004
<p><i>Donor consultations for NAP implementation:</i> Round Table of donors organised in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bolivia • Peru • Argentina 	<p>2003-2004 2004 2003-2004</p>

Decision 2	Activities of the Regional Action Programme for the five-year period 2003-2007
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Recalling that the Conference of the Parties at its first session in Rome in October 1997 adopted Decision 12/CP.1, to support the Regional Action Programme for Latin America and the Caribbean

Noting that the Latin America and the Caribbean Parties approved the Regional Action Programme in 1997, in order to promote the implementation of the Convention at the regional level;

Cognisant of the dynamic nature of the implementation process in the region,

Bearing in mind the need for including ecosystem and crosscutting approaches as well as the need to strengthen training and capacity building activities,

Aware of the achievements made in the implementation of the RAP to date and relying on the participation of civil society organisations,

Considering the discussions on RAP conducted during this meeting,

Parties attending this meeting

¹⁰ The date and the venue will be conditioned to the availability of resources



DECIDE

1. **To approve** the activities of the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Action Programme (LAC-RAP) for the five-year period 2003-2007 included as an Annex I to these decisions,
2. **To adopt** the creation of six thematic programmes which shall be known henceforth as Thematic Programme Network, as follow:
 - TPN-1: Identification and use of benchmarks and indicators of desertification and drought,
 - TPN-2: Information Network on Desertification and Drought (DESELAC),
 - TPN-3: Integrated water resource management and water efficiency programs in LAC,
 - TPN-4: Promotion of agroforestry and combating poverty,
 - TPN-5: Best practices, traditional knowledge and technologies,
 - TPN - 6: Promotion of sustainable renewable energy.
3. **To approve** the Programme of Work for the biennium 2003-2004 which is enclosed with Annex II

Decision 3	Regional Coordinating Unit
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Taking into account decision 3/COP(3), 4/COP(4), and decision 6/COP(5) on the Review of the initiative related to the Regional Coordination facilities

Recognising the role of the Regional Coordinating Unit as the appropriate tool to implement the Convention in the different affected regions;

Noting that to date efforts have not been reviewed by the Conferences of the Parties;

Considering that the Latin America and the Caribbean region has given priority to its establishment, as expressed in the regional Annex III, which article 7 letter b provides for a coordinating mechanism among national focal points with the following objectives:

- (i) to exchange information and experiences
- (ii) to coordinate action at the regional and subregional level
- (iii) to promote technical, scientific, technological and financial cooperation
- (iv) to identify requirements for external cooperation and
- (v) to follow up and assess the implementation of action programmes

Considering that is imperative to have a discussion paper not only under the “programme and budget” item but also as an item in the COP Agenda to discuss on the “need, modalities, feasibility and possible mandate of the Regional Coordinating facilities”;

Taking into account that including the topic under the “Programme and budget” item only, as it appears on the COP 6 Provisional Agenda, does not satisfy the requirement of decision 6/COP(5);

Recognising that, in spite of the financial constraints and institutional weakness, the activity of the Regional Coordinating Unit has proved to be a useful and positive experience for the region;



Parties attending this meeting

DECIDE

1. **To request** the president of the Regional Executive Committee that, in agreement with the President of GRULAC during COP 6, to propose including the topic on the mandate, feasibility, modalities and needs of the Regional Coordinating Unit as an item of the COP Agenda;
2. **To request** the LAC representatives to the Bureau of the COP 6, at the time of approving the Provisional Agenda, to submit the inclusion of a new topic on the needs, modalities, feasibility and possible mandate of the Regional Coordinating facilities, according to decision 6/COP(5).

Decision 4	GEF as a financial mechanism of the UNCCD
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Noting that adequate financial resources for the implementation of the UNCCD should be secured in the aftermath of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) so as to contribute to the eradication of rural poverty, particularly in the vulnerable arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid ecosystems,

Recognising the stated readiness of the GEF to become a Financial Mechanism of the UNCCD,

Welcoming the adoption of GEF's Operational Programme 15 (OP-15) on "Sustainable Land Management"

Parties attending this meeting

DECIDE

1. **To express** appreciation of LAC region countries to the Sixth Conference of the Parties for the GEF offer to act as a financial mechanism of the Convention and recommend its adoption by the Parties,
2. **To request** the Global Mechanism continuing the important role of in mobilizing financial resources and broadening the funding basis for the UNCCD in complement to GEF funding;
3. **To underline** that the funding of enabling activities under OP-15, conceived as actions undertaken by affected developing parties to fulfil their obligation under the Convention, constitutes an essential component of the expected support from the GEF to UNCCD Parties as a means to enhance its support to the implementation of the Convention;
4. **Invite** the GEF implementing agencies to actively contribute to the implementation of this Operational Programme, while fully taking into account the need to finance activities prioritised by affected developing country Parties to the UNCCD to fulfil their obligations under the Convention;
5. **To call upon** GEF executing agencies, including regional development banks and the UNCCD Secretariat to initiate internal actions aimed at adapting their operations according to the OP-15 programme of implementation;
6. **To request**, in this context, the UNCCD Secretariat to organize in close cooperation with GEF implementing agencies, training workshops for UNCCD national focal points on GEF



procedures and projects formulation in the framework of the OP-15, while also taking into consideration opportunities offered under the OP 12.

7. **To urge** the Secretariat to adopt the necessary measures for capacity building in the country Parties in order to facilitate their access to OP-15.

Decision 5	Second CRIC Session
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Taking in consideration Decision 1 COP 5 on the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention,

Bearing in mind the conclusions and recommendations made for the CRIC 1,

Parties attending this meeting

DECIDE

1. **Request** the Secretariat to forward to the Chairman of the CRIC the recommendations from the LAC country Parties on the decisions to be taken by the COP 6 with reference to the final report of CRIC 1

Decision 6	Vulnerability of Small Island Developing States
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Recognizing the importance of the CRIC 1 recommendations on SIDS included in its final report on the basis of the growing vulnerability of Small Island Developing States as it relates to land degradation and drought.

Considering the St. Georges Declaration of Principles for Environmental Sustainability in the OECS.

Taking into account the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation adopted by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held at Johannesburg, South Africa, from 26 August to 4 September 2002, the particular emphasis given to Small Island Developing States;

Recalling the decision of the General Assembly in resolution 57/262 to convene an international meeting in 2004 in Mauritius, including a high-level segment, for a full and comprehensive review of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;

Also recalling the decision to convene regional and interregional preparatory meetings of small island developing States;

Welcoming, in accordance with paragraph 7 of General Assembly resolution 57/262, the regional preparatory meeting for the Caribbean SIDS, to be held in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, from 18 to 22 August 2003;



Recalling the Resolution adopted by CSD-11 on the Preparations for the International Meeting to Review Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;

Parties attending the meeting

DECIDE

1. Reiterates the need to assist small island developing States with the necessary technical and financial resources for the design and application of instruments essential to the implementation of the Convention, such as national, sub-regional and regional action programmes;
2. Invites Governments and participants at the UNCCD Sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to give due attention to the outcomes of the regional preparatory meeting for the Caribbean SIDS as an important step in the preparatory process leading to the International Meeting to Review Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States;
3. Encourages Governments and participants at the UNCCD Sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to also address, within the thematic cluster of issues for that session, matters related to desertification and drought as key component for the sustainable development of small island developing States;
4. Recommends Governments and participants at the UNCCD Sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to adopt a decision on the importance of addressing issues related to desertification and drought for consideration by the International Meeting to Review Implementation of the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Decision 7	Committee on Science and Technology
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Considering the important role played by the Committee on Science and Technology, established by decision 5/CST/COP 1;

Bearing in mind the said Committee's evolution of the themes under the Convention;

Noting the decision considering the need to enhance it as concerns its efficiency and effectiveness;

Recognising the need to secure the inclusion of the Committee's recommendations in the NAPs, SRAPs and RAP;

Cognisant of decision 17/CST/COP 5 on the creation of the Group of Independent Experts and the limited participation of LAC countries on the list of the CST list of experts;
Parties attending this meeting

DECIDE



1. **To call upon** countries on the process of NAP preparation to include CST decisions in the mentioned programmes and in the national reports,
2. **To request** the region's support to the process of improvement of the CST;
3. **To ask** LAC countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Cuba) having representatives in the Group of Independent Experts to provide full support to the work of the said experts;
4. **To encourage** country Parties of the region to submit their proposal to the CST Roster of Experts, prior to COP 7 so as to strengthen the presence of the region, improve their number and in relevant areas established by the Committee;
5. **To recognise** the common interests of the LAC country Parties with the Working Programme of the Group of Independent Experts acting in favour of the improvement of the CST, particularly in the following topics:
 - Benchmarks and Indicators
 - Traditional knowledge
 - Land degradation
 - Early Warning Systems
 - Synergy among environmental conventions
 - Water resources

Decision 8	Date and venue of the X Regional meeting
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Bearing in mind that Regional meetings are hosted on a system of rotation among the four LAC sub- regions namely, Andean, Mesoamerica, South America and the Caribbean;

Noting that based upon this system it is the prerogative of the Mesoamerican sub-region to host the next Regional meeting;

Taking note of the proposal from the Government of Guatemala to host the X Regional meeting;

Considering that the Regional meeting will prepare the Parties for the Third Session of the CRIC;

Reaffirming the right of each Party in the region to host the regional meeting,

Parties attending this meeting

DECIDE

To accept the offer made by Guatemala;

To request the Secretariat of the Convention to make the necessary arrangements with the host country for ensuring the timely and successful holding of the X LAC regional meeting.

Decision 9	Composition of the Regional Executive Committee
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Cognisant of Decision 15 of the Six Regional meeting on the composition of the Regional Executive Committee;

Recognising the work accomplished by the outgoing Regional Executive Committee;

Reaffirming its conviction of the importance of the role the Regional Executive Committee must play in helping to co-ordinate activities aimed at better implementation of the Convention in the region,

Parties attending this meeting

DECIDE

1. **The composition** of the Regional Executive Committee will be as follows:

- a. President, Colombia
- b. Vice-president, Barbados
- c. One representative of Mesoamerica, Costa Rica
- d. One representative of the Southern Cone, Brazil
- e. One additional representative of the Caribbean, Dominican Republic
- f. One representative of RIOD, as an observer.

Decision 10	Acknowledgement to the cooperation partners
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The representatives of governments, intergovernmental agencies, and non-governmental organisations attending the IX Regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification hosted in the city of Bogotá, Colombia from 17 to 20 June 2003, cognisant and appreciative of the support that the Governments of Italy and Spain have given to the holding of this IX meeting;

Being aware of the significant support that the Government of Germany has provided for specific projects in the region such as in Mesoamerica, the Caribbean and in South America, and their continuing commitment to efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development and the protection of the environment;

Noting the role-played by international and regional agencies and institutions and their support to the implementation process under the Regional Implementation Annex for LAC,

Parties attending this meeting

DECIDE

1. **To express** their sincere gratitude to the Governments of Italy and Spain, for their support to the holding of the IX UNCCD Regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean.



2. **To express** on behalf of the Peoples and Governments of Latin America and the Caribbean sincere thanks to the Governments of Germany for its support to the regional implementation process.
3. **To request** the mentioned governments and other cooperation countries to continue supporting the region in its efforts to achieve sustainable development through the implementation of decisions taken at this Regional meeting.

Decision 11	Acknowledgement to the Government and the People of Colombia
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The representatives of the governments, international and regional organisations and agencies and non-governmental organizations attending the IX Regional meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Drought, held in the city of Bogotá, Colombia, from 17 to 20 June 2003;

Considering the deliberations of this meeting and cognisant of the efforts of the People and Government of Colombia in ensuring the success of the same,

Parties attending this meeting

DECIDE

1. **To express** their gratitude to the people and government of Colombia for the generous hospitality extended during this IX LAC regional meeting.



ANNEX II.a

The LAC Regional Action Programme 2003-2007

PROGRAMMATIC AXES	ACTIVITIES	GOALS	RESOURCES
Programmatic axe 1: UNCCD implementation at the national level (⇒ National Action Programmes and related activities)	1.1. Support to the organization of awareness raising seminars.	To start NAP process in Bahamas, Belize, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago.	
	1.2. Support to NAP preparation.	To prepare NAP in Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Honduras, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Surinam and Uruguay. (Also the countries mentioned in 1.1.)	
	1.3. Supplementary support to NAP validation.	To complete and/or validate NAP in Brazil, Barbados, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Dominican Republic and Venezuela. (Also the countries mentioned in 1.1. and 1.2.)	
	1.4. Support to NAP implementation	To advance in NAP implementation in Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru.	partial
	1.5. Support to the preparation of national reports	To ensure LAC national reports submission before the CRIC-4 and the further ones.	
Programmatic axe 2: UNCCD implementation at the transnational ecosystems level (⇒ sub-regional programmes and activities)	2.1. Support to the design and implementation of the Gran Chaco Americano Sub-Regional Programme	To consolidate the formulation and implementation process of the SRAP Chaco (Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay)	
	2.2. Support to the design and implementation of the Puna Americana Sub-regional Programme	To consolidate the formulation and implementation process of the SRAP Puna (Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador and Peru)	
	2.3. Support to the design and implementation of the Hispaniola Sub-regional Action Programme	To consolidate the formulation and implementation process of the SRAP Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic)	
	2.4. Support to the design of the Caribbean Sub-regional Action Programme	To formulate the Caribbean SRAP	
	2.5. Support to the design of the Central America Sub-Regional Action Programme	To formulate the Mesoamerican SRAP	
	•		
Programmatic axe 3: Programmes and crosscutting activities implementation	3.1. Benchmarks and indicators (TPN-1) Launch of a regional programme. • Coordination with past and existent initiatives in the region	To have a system of indicators at the regional level that enables the assessment of the desertification processes and their evolution in the region.	



	<p>3.2. DESELAC information electronic network (TPN-2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website design and launch. • Support to the national focal points equipment. • Training in the use of the Website and its tools. 	<p>To have a communication and information tool linking all relevant stakeholders and actors in the CCD implementation process in Latin America and the Caribbean.</p>	
	<p>3.3. Integrated water resource management (TPN-3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of a regional programme • Coordination with past and existent initiatives in the region. • Organization of exchange seminars and/or workshops. • Execution of pilot projects 	<p>To promote sustainable policies on the use of the water resource in the countries of the region.</p>	
	<p>3.4. Promotion of agroforestry to combat desertification and eradicate poverty (TPN-4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of a regional programme • Coordination with past and existent initiatives in the region. • Organization of exchange seminars and/or workshops. • Execution of pilot projects 	<p>To promote sustainable policies related to the use of natural resources, focusing on poor small producers in rural areas.</p>	
	<p>3.5. Best practices, traditional knowledge and technologies (TPN-5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of a regional programme • Coordination with past and existent initiatives in the region. • Execution of pilot projects. 	<p>To have an inventory of best practices, traditional knowledge and technologies, that can be replicated in each country of the region.</p>	
	<p>3.6. Renewable energies (TPN-6)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of a regional programme • Coordination with past and existent initiatives in the region. • Organization of exchange seminars and/or workshops • Execution of pilot projects 	<p>To promote the use of alternative and sustainable energy sources in the countries of the region</p>	



	<p>3.7. Promotion of synergies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a regional programme • Coordination with past and existent initiatives in the region. • Organization of exchange seminars and/or workshops (at the national and sub-regional level) • Execution of pilots projects. 	<p>To promote activities linking the different environmental conventions in the countries of the region.</p>	<p>partial</p>
	<p>3.8. Studies on drought</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching of a regional programme • Coordination with past and existent initiatives in the region. • Organization of exchange seminars and/or workshops • Execution of pilots projects 	<p>To promote the exchange of information on drought, particularly on early warning systems.</p>	
	<p>3.9. Professional training and strengthening of national focal points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch of a NFP support programme, together with UNV. • Design of a training programme on negotiation skills, addressed to decision-makers, governmental and non-governmental technicians. • Training courses on GEF projects design, addressed to governmental and non-governmental technicians. • Design of a proposal concerning the training and the empowerment of civil society entities. 	<p>To strengthen organisational and technical abilities of the participants in combating desertification and implementing the Convention.</p>	
	<p>3.10. Education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional comparative study on education and desertification • Draft proposal for the integration of desertification and sustainable development issues in primary school curricula. • Proposal for the organization of a post-graduate regional course on desertification. 	<p>To incorporate didactic content relating to dry lands sustainable development in primary educational programmes. To improve technical training of the professionals engaged in the combat against desertification.</p>	
	<p>3.11 Public policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative study on policies related to sustainable development. 	<p>To have information on national public policies relating to sustainable development, which can be replicated in the countries of the region.</p>	



	<p>3.12. Financial aspects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round tables with donor organizations and cooperation partners • Training courses on GEF projects design addressed to governmental and non-governmental technicians. • Elaboration of a study on the payment for environmental services as a strategy to combat desertification. 	To promote the information on available financing sources for the implementation of programmes and initiatives within the UNCCD framework implementation in the countries of the region.	partial
	<p>3.13. Gender and desertification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launching of a regional programme • Coordination with past and existent initiatives in the region. • Organization of exchange seminars and/or workshops • Execution of pilots projects 	To promote activities promoting the incorporation of gender issues in the implementation of the CCD in the countries of the region	
Programmatic axe 4: Horizontal cooperation within the UNCCD framework	<p>4.1. Cooperation platform Africa – Latin America and the Caribbean</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot projects implementation on soil salinization in Cuba, Venezuela and Mali. 	To promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge among affected countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.	
	<p>4.2. Horizontal cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of exchange projects between the countries of the region and/or with other regions. 	To promote the exchange of experiences and knowledge among affected countries	



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ANNEX II.b

Activities for the biennium 2003 - 2004

RAP REFERENCE		ACTIVITIES	INDICATIVE DATE
WORKING AXE	ACTIVITY		
1. CCD implementation at national level	1.1. Awareness Seminars	Awareness Seminars in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago 	December 2003
	1.2. NAP preparation.	National Action Program preparation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Grenada, Honduras, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Surinam, Uruguay 	March 2004
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago 	June 2004
	1.3. NAP completion and validation.	National Action Program completion and validation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brazil, Barbados, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Antigua y Barbuda, Dominica 	March 2004
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grenada, Honduras, Panama, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, Surinam, Uruguay 	August 2004
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bahamas, Belize, Guyana, Trinidad y Tobago 	December 2004
1.4. NAP implementation	Round table of donors organized in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peru Bolivia Argentina 	May 2004 July 2004 September 2004	
1.4. NAP implementation.	Support to the implementation of National Action Programme in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Guatemala, Mexico 	2003-2004	
	Support for civil society initiatives in the framework of the Exchange and Training Program.	2003-2004	



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2. CCD implementation at transnational ecosystems level	2.1. Chaco SRAP	Implementation of the Gran Chaco Americano Subregional Action Program (SAP consolidation, development of a project portfolio, etc.)	2003-2004
		Presentation of the Sustainable Development of the Gran Chaco Americano proposal at the GEF.	October 2003
		Presentation of the Integrated Management and Sustainable Development of the Gran Chaco Americano proposal at the AICD.	June 2003
		Implementation of a civil society initiative on experience exchange and land degradation prevention in the Argentine Chaco.	August 2003
		Implementation of three micro-credit initiatives in Gran Chaco Americano Subregional Action Program.	October 2003
	2.2. Puna SRAP	Implementation of the Puna Americana Subregional Action Program (SAP consolidation, development of a project portfolio, etc.)	2003-2004
	2.2. Puna SRAP	Presentation of the Traditional Knowledge Strengthening to Combat Desertification and Poverty in Rural Communities in the Puna Americana proposal at the AICD.	June 2003
		Presentation of the Puna Americana (Food Security Component) proposal at FAO (Italian Trust Fund).	June 2003
		Implementation of three micro-credit initiatives in Puna Americana Subregional Action Program	October 2003
	2.3. Hispaniola SRAP	Support to the PANFRO Program of the Hispaniola Subregional Program (Haiti and Dominican Republic)	March 2004
		Presentation of the Artibonito proposal and the Benchmarks and Indicators proposal at the AICD.	June 2003
		Preparation of proposals to be submitted to the GEF.	June 2004
	2.4. Caribbean SRAP	Preparation of proposal and preliminary launching of the Caribbean Subregional Action Program	December 2004
Preparation of a proposal to be submitted to the FAO Technical Cooperation.		August 2003	
2.5. Mesoamerica SRAP	Preparation of proposal and preliminary launching of the Mesoamerica Subregional Action Program.	December 2004	
3. CCD implementation through crosscutting	3.1. Benchmarks and indicators (TPN-1)	Benchmarks and Indicators Regional Program launching.	June 2003



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activities and programmes, with emphasis in poverty eradication	3.2. DESELAC (TPN-2)	Web site design and launching.	June 2003
	3.3. Water Management (TPN-3)	Integrated Water Resource Management Program launching.	June 2004
	3.4. Agro-forestry (TPN-4)	Promotion of Agro-forestry and Combating Poverty Program launching.	June 2004
		Development of a proposal for project design on poverty reduction.	June 2004
	3.5. Traditional Knowledge (TPN-5)	Best Practices on Traditional Knowledge and Technologies Program launching.	April 2004
	3.6. Sustainable renewable energy (TPN-6)	Sustainable Renewable Energy Program launching.	July 2004
	3.7. Synergies	Organization of workshops on synergies in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argentina • Brazil • Mesoamerica Subregion • Caribbean Subregion 	November 2003 November 2003 March 2004 October 2004
	3.7. Synergies	Pilot project "Youth and Environment" launching, in Argentina.	September 2003
	3.9. Training	Launching of the initiative for strengthening national coordinating bodies (UNV Project)	January 2004
	3.9. Training	Organization of two exchange forum on CCD implementation on the GEF frame work in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mesoamerica • Caribbean 	December 2003 February 2004
	3.9. Training	Organization of a training activity on GEF project preparation.	March 2004
	3.9. Training	Building capacities for negotiating in the national and international forums of sustainable conventions.	December 2004
	3.9. Training	Building capacities at the NGO level. Strengthening of the RIOD-LAC network in Latin America and the Caribbean	April 2004
	3.11. Public Policies	Public Policies Harmonization Project in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • México • Barbados (starting) • Nicaragua (starting) 	2003-2004 August 2003 September 2003
3.12. Financial aspects	Initiative on environmental services in drylands.	2003-2004	
3.12. Financial aspects	Initiative on debt swaps through a project in Peru.	December 2003	



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	3.13. Gender and desertification	Launching of a Gender and Desertification Program	December 2004
4.- Cooperation within the CCD framework	4.1. Cooperation Platform Africa-ALC.	Implementation of three projects on soil salinisation, in the frame work of the Cooperation Platform Africa – ALC, in Cuba, Mali and Venezuela.	2005
	4.2. Horizontal cooperation	Implementation of the second phase of the south-south initiative between Cuba, Haiti and Dominican Republic with the purpose to strengthen capacities on the NAP process.	November 2003
		Implementation of a south-south exchange initiative between Cuba and the countries from Central America with the purpose to strengthen capacities on the NAP process.	November 2003
		Attendance of Latin American and the Caribbean experts in the MEDRAP initiative.	2003-2004



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ANEXO III

Agenda

Wednesday, June 18		
Official Segment of the IX LAC Regional meeting		
1.	09:00 - 09:30	Opening Ceremony of the official segment
2.	09:30 - 09:45	Election of the Bureau of the meeting Analysis and approval of the provisional agenda
3.	09:45 – 10:00	From CRIC-1 to CRIC-2 and the COP-6: achievements and perspectives, including the GEF Operational Programme 15 (“Sustainable Land management”)
	10:00 - 10:30	Questions and Answers
4.	10:30 – 10:45	Report of the LAC Unit Coordinator on CCD implementation in Latin America and the Caribbean during 2002-2003
	10:45 – 10:55	Questions and Answers
	10:55 – 11:10	Coffee break
5.	11:10 – 11:25	Report of the President of the Regional Executive Committee
	11:25 – 11:35	Questions and Answers
6.	11:35 – 11:50	Report of the Global Mechanism
	11:50 – 12:00	Questions and Answers
7.	12:00 – 12:15	Report of the Committee of Science and Technology
	12:15 – 12:25	Questions and Answers
8.	12:25 – 12:45	State-of-the-art of the National Action Programmes (NAPs) in LAC: presentation of Colombia and St. Lucia case studies
	12:45 – 13:00	Questions and Answers
	13:00 – 14:00	Lunch
8.a	14:00 – 15:00	State-of-the-art of the NAPs in LAC: debate and proposal for a calendar of activities within the process, in accordance with the Recife Declaration
9.	15:00 – 15:50	Report on the progresses of the Subregional Action Programmes (SRAPs): short presentations of projects on <i>Gran Chaco Americano, Puna Americana, Mesoamerica, the Caribbean and Hispaniola</i>
	15:50 – 16:15	Questions and Answers



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	16:15 – 16:30	Coffee break
10.	16:30 – 16:45	Project for the harmonization of public policies
	16:45 – 17:15	Five years after the approval of the Regional Action Programme (RAP): Analysis of the achievements, lessons learnt and future strategies
		Questions and Answers
10.a	17:15 – 17:30	Presentation of the conclusions of the technical segment on B&I of desertification and drought in LAC: towards a Thematic Regional Programme Network on <i>B&I of desertification and drought in LAC</i> (TPN 4). Approval of terms of reference, plan of work and activities identified by the Regional Working Group on B&I of desertification and drought in LAC
	17:30 – 18:00	Questions and Answers
10.b	18:00 – 18:15	Report on the progresses of the Thematic Regional Programme Network <i>DESELAC</i> (TPN 3): presentation of the new web site
	18:15 – 18:45	Questions and Answers
Thursday, June 19		
10.c	09:00 – 09:15	Presentation of the proposal of a Thematic Regional Programme Network on <i>Integrated Water Management</i> (TPN 1)
	09:15 – 09:45	Questions and Answers
10.d	09:45 – 10:15	Additional opportunities for action to combat desertification and drought at the regional level:
10.d.1		1. Presentation of the proposal of a Thematic Regional Programme Network on <i>Best Practices and Traditional Knowledge</i> (TPN 5)
10.d.2		2. Presentation of the guidelines for the <i>Promotion of Agroforestry and job creation activities in dry, arid and subhumid ecosystems in LAC</i> (TPN 2)
	10:15 – 10:45	Questions and Answers
	10:45 – 11:00	Coffee Break (in session)
10.d.3	11:00 – 12:00	General discussion on RAP issues related to capacity building, renewable energy and financial matters
11.	12:00 – 13:00	Debate in plenary of the proposal concerning the Regional Action Programme 2003-2007, including its thematic components and financial strategies
	13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
11.a	14:30 – 16:00	(Condt.) Debate in plenary of the proposal concerning the Regional Action Programme 2003-2007, including its thematic components and financial strategies
	16:00 – 16:15	Coffee break
11.b	16:15 – 17:30	Wrap-up and conclusions in plenary on the Regional Action Programme 2003-2007, including its thematic components and financial strategies
		(Finalisation of the draft of the RAP 2003-2207)
12.	17:30 – 18:30	Presentations of the international agencies and institutions as well as the civil society organisations



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Friday, June 20		
12.a	09:00 – 09:30	(Contd.) Presentations of the international agencies and institutions as well as the civil society organisations Presentation by the GTZ: a Colombian case study
13.	09:30 – 10:00	Presentation of the draft of the Regional Action Programme 2003-2007
13.a	10:00 – 11:00	Discussion in plenary and approval of the Regional Action Programme 2003-2007
	11:00 – 11:15	Coffee break (in session)
14.	11:00 – 11:30	Discussion of proposals for the COP.6: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • opening a budget line for the UNCCD LAC Regional Coordinating Unit (RCU) • GEF: a financial mechanism for the UNCCD
	11:30 – 11:45	Questions and Answers
15.	11:45 – 13:00	Discussion of additional decisions of the IX LAC Regional meeting
	13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
16.	14:30 – 17:00	Work of the Drafting Committee
17.	17:00 – 18:00	Presentation and approval of the final document
18.	18:00 – 18:30	Closing Ceremony



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ANNEX IV

Technical Segment on Benchmarks and Indicators of desertification and drought in LAC

The meeting started at 9,45 a.m. with opening words of Andrea Alban, representative of the Ministry of External Relations of Colombia and Sergio A. Zelaya, Coordinator of the LAC Unit of the UNCCD Secretariat, that welcomed the participants and introduced the issue of Benchmarks and Indicators of desertification and drought (B&I) in LAC and informed on the purpose of holding the technical segment of IX regional meeting.

The delegates of Argentina and Cuba address the plenary to express gratitude to the Secretariat for holding the workshop. They also reminded that it was the World Day to Combat Desertification and on such occasion congratulated all participants.

The delegate of Colombia, as the president of the meeting, invited the consultant Fernando Santibáñez to facilitate the technical segment and Mr. Heitor Matallo, Chief of Unit of the Secretariat Regional Coordinating Unit, to make a historical review of the works undertaken in the region on B&I. It was mentioned that the results achieved were partial but very important. It was highlighted the networking and horizontal cooperation among countries, taking into account the peculiarities of each sub-region to agree on a set of benchmarks and indicators for developing national and subregional action programmes. Once agreed upon, the countries could begin generating and sharing information on desertification and drought processes. This would be translated into a regional thematic programme network (TPN) on B&I, with the aim to integrate the undertaken initiatives into a joint programme on the issue. To this aim, participants were informed on the definition of terms of reference and some basic indicators to formulate, on the basis of sub-regional inputs, a proposal of a TPN.

The representatives of ECLAC (ECLAC project on socio-economic indicators, funded by GTZ in Argentina, Brazil and Chile) and IICA (Program IADB-IICA on desertification in South American countries)¹¹ made presentations.

Following the agenda of the segment, the president gave the floor to the delegates of Panama, Saint Lucia and Argentina, for the reporting process on the sub-regional workshops held between 2002 and 2003.

The facilitator of the meeting presented the case study of the project supported by GEF-NHI in which Brazil, Mexico and Chile participate; and on the basis of the presentations of the three previously mentioned countries, submitted the proposal for the launching of a thematic programme network on B&I in LAC.¹² ,

The UNCCD Secretariat representative, the delegates from Chile Cuba, Brazil, Uruguay and a Honduran NGO (Ecológica) took the floor. The comments focused on the following: the presentation of guidelines for preparing LAC national country reports using B&I inputs; the feasibility of the transference and/or approaching of the proposed B&I system to the countries,

¹¹ The programme was launched with a letter of understanding among the participant institutions, including the UNCCD Secretariat, in Rome in November 2002 during the CRIC 1.

¹² He reviewed the pending tasks at the regional level, the fine-tuning of a matrix of common indicators for LAC countries, the harmonisation of information generating systems and the operability of monitoring systems in affected areas. He proposed 8 phases for the launching of a national desertification monitoring system that would allow the countries advancing with similar guidelines, methodologies and speeds.



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particularly to the small island states of the Caribbean, and taking into account the peculiarities of each country; the lack of B&I application to NAPs; the identification of watershed as basic planning unit; the approach evolution to B&I, from the first step with biophysical indicators to the socio-economic indicator; the financing issues related to B&I, considering in particular the planning in accordance to the resources available.

The president of the meeting moved towards the organisation of the working groups that, after the afternoon debate, presented their respective reports, characterised by different approaches. The Mesoamerica group articulated a comprehensive draft proposal and considered that the suggested methodology should be used to develop more the project. The Caribbean group reviewed a set of indicators to be further developed. The South American group presented a series of requests and conclusions, for further consideration.

The delegates from Panama, Barbados, Paraguay and the Chief of Unit of the UNCCD/UCR took the floor. These interventions focused on the issues related to the proposed methodology, the outline of a set of indicators and the identification of a management model. Additionally, a complete review for each subregion was carried out. Each sub-group approved the proposed methodology, mentioning that the same and its conceptual framework would be subject to revision in an appropriate time. The specificities for each subregion are included at the end of this report.

The president proposed that inputs and concrete proposals on the subject were to be sent to the Secretariat before June 30, so to develop the results of the meeting, disseminate them among the countries of the region, give the opportunity for analysing and commenting them and preparing a final proposal to be submitted during the COP.6.

The representatives of the following countries took the floor:

Argentina: expressed disagreement on regards the lack of an extensive debate during the technical segment since in item 10 of the official session agenda indicated that conclusions had to be presented and the activities approved there. She mentioned that there was the need to differentiate the technical segment from the decisions that the countries were to adopt in the official segment of the IX regional meeting.

Panama: referred to the recognition of the regional leadership of Argentina since it was not decided yet and for that reason it was necessary to find an agreement among all the countries, especially in a phases in which the definitions of indicators at the regional level was starting. She also mentioned the survey submitted by Argentina to the participants of the technical segment, criticising that the questionnaire was already assuming the existence of an agreed set of indicators.

Paraguay: clarified that the leadership of Argentina was not at the regional but South America subregional, including the Southern Cone and the Andean subregion.

Uruguay: reminded that at the GRULAC meetings held during the CRIC 1 in November of 2002, Panama, as a GRULAC country member, validated the leadership of the initiative. The position was also in accordance with decision 6 of the VII LAC regional meeting.

The delegate of Argentina explained that the survey was formulated by the group of 25 experts of the UNCCD Committee of Science and Technology (CST) to be disseminated at the worldwide level. She also informed that countries should indicate whether or not they had developed indicators since the information would be put in a world databank.



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Once completed the agenda items, the president closed the session, expressing gratitude, on behalf of the UNCCD Secretariat, to all the participants. The session of the technical segment closed its works at 18 hours of the same day, 17 of June of 2003.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SUB-REGIONAL GROUP REPORTS OF THE TECHNICAL SEGMENT ON B&I OF IX THE REGIONAL MEETING

Mesoamerica

- The proposal will be considered complementary to what is still on-going in the sub-region, in order to solve some weaknesses of the preliminary project draft (i.e. phases 1, 2, 5 and the implementation of the monitoring network).
- The countries of the subregion are committed to finalise a sufficiently articulated document by the COP-6.
- Stage 1 – *Objective*: identification of relevant users of the monitoring system as well as their information needs. *Result*: elaboration of a matrix of users and needs.
- Stage 2 - *Objective*: Definition of objectives and capacities for the monitoring system and formulation of general and specific objective by user. *Result*: identification of a set of objectives by need and by user.
- Stage 3 – *Objective*: establishment of scales and analysis units. *Result*: identification of minimum geographic units for sources of data in each country.

Caribbean

The group proposed a change in the suggested methodology, mentioning that the analysis of the case studies was difficult due the fact that they were in Spanish.

- Categories of biological components
- Change of the general parameter related to vegetation, flora and fauna
- Vegetation was subcategorised in soil texture and organic matter
- Structure - parameters changed to:
 - Carrying capacity
 - No physical issues but dealing directly with socio-economic indicators
 - Poverty should be a category on its own (indicators identified for the new category: average income, GDP, food security, sanitation, nutrition, education, migration, diseases and type of housing)

South America

The group made an ample debate not only on the proposal of work but also on other related subjects. It decided that the projects on indicators will be restricted within the CCD framework, agreeing preliminarily on the proposal that will be further review from the countries. The group considered the disadvantage of not having held a workshop specific for the subregion, since the meeting held in Mendoza was at the LAC region level. Therefore, it proposed that one of the main activities in the future was a workshop at the South American sub-regional level. It agreed on the follow:

- minimum working structure in accordance with the agreements made in November of 2002, based on a general co-ordination (Argentina) and two sub-co-ordinations (Southern Cone and Andean), and duly complemented by the respective RIOD representatives and the representatives of the BID/IICA and GEF.
- use of the electronic mails for coordination and communications, holding of meetings and use of the UNCCD/RCU and the TPN on DESELAC.
- At the national level, the activities will include the national focal points, a technician and a



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representative of the civil society.

- The necessary budget for holding the workshop implementing the future activities related to technical and political focal points co-ordination meetings is of 100.000 US, to be considered by the Secretary.

A second activity mentioned by the South American group was the request to fill in the questionnaire prepared by the group of experts of the UNCCD Committee of Science and technology, in which Argentina has a representative, with the aim to know the situation within the countries of the sub-region on as regards indicators. It was important that countries of other sub-regions also would join the initiative. The survey was made available to all participants both in English and Spanish.



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Agenda of the technical segment on B&I

Point of Agenda	Time	Description
Tuesday, June 17		
Technical Segment on Benchmarks and Indicators (B&I) of desertification and drought in LAC		
TS.1	09:30 – 09:50	Opening of the technical segment
TS.2.1	09:50 – 10:05	General presentation of the achievements in B&I of desertification and drought in LAC at the subregional level
TS.2.2	10:05 – 10:25	Presentations of CEPAL and IDB
TS.2.3	10:25 – 11:10	Presentation of the preliminary results of the 3 subregional working groups (Caribbean, Mesoamerica and South America)
	11:00 – 11:15	Coffee break (in session)
TS.3	11:10 – 11:30	Presentation of a case study on the application of indicators and monitoring systems
TS.3.1	11:30 – 11:40	Questions and answers
TS.3.2	11:40 – 12:10	Analysis of a proposal concerning the working plan
	12:10 – 14:00	Lunch
TS.4	14:00 – 16:00	Debate within subregional groups (Caribbean, Mesoamerica and South America) on the Thematic Regional Programme on B&I of desertification and drought in LAC: working plan as well as technical and financial issues related to the identified activities
	16:00 – 16:30	Coffee break
TS.5	16:30 – 17:15	Presentation to the Plenary of conclusions and recommendations by each subregional group (Caribbean, Mesoamerica and South America)
TS.6	17:15 – 17:45	Wrap-up session
TS.7	17:45 – 18:00	Debate in Plenary: Conclusions and recommendations for a preliminary proposal on the Thematic Regional Programme on B&I of desertification and drought in LAC: working plan as well as technical and financial issues related to the identified activities



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ANNEX V

List of participants

Country	Name & Title	ADDRESS	FAX	E-MAIL
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Argentina	Patricia Maccagno Specialist Secr. Amb. Desarr. Sustent	San Martín 459. 3er. Piso Of. 317	(54) 11-43488532	pmaccagno@medioambiente.gov.ar
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Argentina	Octavio Perez Pardo UNCCD Focal Point Secr. Amb. Desarr. Sustent	San Martín 459. 3er. Piso Of. 317	(54) 11-43488573	oppardo@medioambiente.gov.ar
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Bolivia	German Aliaga Taboada Embajada			
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Brazil	Edson Duarte Congressman Congress of Brazil			
Chile	Wilfredo H. Alfaro Coordinador Nnal. Pancd CONAF			
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Colombia	Andrea Alban Coord. Asuntos Ambientales Min. Rel. Exteriores	Calle 10 # 5 -51 of. Sc 119	562-8610	pmambient@minrelex.gov.co
Colombia	Gladys Pellandi Asesor Agencia Colom. Coop. Intern			
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Country	Name & Title	ADDRESS	FAX	E-MAIL
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