

XI Regional Meeting of Latin America and the Caribbean countries in the framework of the UNCCD

Panama, 17 - 21 July 2006

1. BACKGROUND

In accordance with article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and the decision of its Conference of Parties (COP), particularly decision 11/COP.1, each Party to the Convention is required to communicate, through the UNCCD secretariat, reports on measures undertaken to implement the UNCCD.

The Conference of Parties by its decision 1/COP.5 established a Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) that will convene its fifth session from 4 to 13 October 2006 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Decision 9/COP.7 decided that CRIC 5 would review updates to reports already available and/or new reports submitted by regions other than Africa, as well as review selected global agenda items stemming from the implementation process and the process of communication of information to the COP, but particularly deriving from the implementation of the Bonn Declaration (decision 8/COP.4).¹

In order to analyse in depth the national reports formulate by LAC countries, exchange experience, lessons learned and good practices as well as to prepare some conclusions and recommendations to be considered at CRIC 5 following the seven key thematic topics established at COP 5,² a regional meeting will be convened from 17 to 21 July 2006 in Panama City, Panama.

The meeting will bring together the Latin American and the Caribbean country Parties, representatives of relevant LAC regional and sub-regional organizations and institutions, NGOs, international organizations, developed countries and cooperation partners. The discussions will contribute to strengthen the quality of the third reporting exercise, identify case studies to be presented at CRIC5 and provide inputs to the same.

¹ The strategic areas of the Bonn Declaration read as follows:

- Sustainable land use management, including water, soil and vegetation in affected areas,
- Sustainable use and management of rangelands
- Development of sustainable agricultural and ranching production systems
- Development of new and renewable energy sources
- Launching of reforestation/afforestation programmes and intensification of soil conservation programmes
- Development of early warning systems for food security and drought forecasting
- Desertification monitoring and assessment

² According to decision 1/COP.5, country Parties agreed to structure the review process of the CRIC on the basis of the following *seven key thematic topics*:

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

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The main objectives of the XI LAC Regional Meeting include:

1. To analyse the LAC national reports, including country profiles, along the seven key thematic topics as well as to assess this third reporting process in order to improve, among others, the procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports; the analysis should also take into consideration the global agenda items contained in decision 9/COP.7. For ease of reference, a compilation of the seven thematic topics and the global agenda items is provided in the table below.
2. To give a follow-up to the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) report and strategy development to foster the implementation of the Convention;
3. To assess the implementation of the Convention at the regional level through the application of the Regional Action Programme (RAP), identifying achievements and bottlenecks in view of establishing a sustainable implementation strategy;
4. To examine the achievements within the frame of the different Subregional Action Programmes (SRAPs) and identify the steps forward;
5. Prepare and agree on common positions of the countries of the region on the various issues to be dealt at CRIC 5, including the formulation of conclusions and recommendations to the Committee;
6. To agree on a programme of work in the region till the celebration of COP 8 in 2007.

Seven key thematic topics 1/COP.5	Global Agenda Items as contained in decision 9/COP.6
Participatory process involving civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations	
Legislative and institutional frameworks and arrangements	
Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusions of partnership agreements	Review of available information regarding the mobilization and use of financial resources and other support by multilateral agencies and institutions, with a view to enhancing their effectiveness and efficiency towards the achievement of the objectives of the Convention, including information on the activities of the Global Environment Facility, the GM and its Facilitation Committee
Linkages and synergies with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies	
Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought	Consideration of necessary adjustments to the elaboration process and the implementation of action programmes, including review of the enhanced implementation of the obligations of the Convention i.e. specific thematic and sectoral areas mentioned in decision 8/COP.4: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable land use management, including water, soil and vegetation in affected areas, • Sustainable use and management of rangelands • Development of sustainable agricultural and ranching production systems • Development of new and renewable energy sources • Launching of reforestation/afforestation programmes and intensification of soil conservation programmes • Development of early warning systems for food security and drought forecasting • Desertification monitoring and assessment
Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment	
Access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how	Consideration of ways and means of promoting know-how and technology transfer for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought, as well as promoting experience sharing and information exchange among Parties and interested institutions and organizations
	Consideration of ways and means of improving procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and format of reports to be submitted to the COP

3. EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Participants are provided with an overview on national reports findings;
- Experiences are shared and lessons learnt withdrawn on specific technical and scientific activities and initiatives undertaken to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought;
- Common issues, trends and constraints with regard to how Parties are implementing the Convention at the national, subregional and regional level are identified. These include, among others, the level of compliance to the decisions taken by the Committee on Science and Technology (i.e.: programmes, projects and activities related to the use of benchmarks and indicators; early warning systems for drought mitigation, and the assessment and monitoring of desertification; traditional knowledge; issues related geographical and/or environmental information systems and databases specific to desertification) as well as the need/provision of technical and financial assistance;
- The needs for capacity development that focus on the exchange and transfer of information, technologies and technical know-how are assessed;
- Common official positions on the main issues to be dealt at CRIC 5 based on a consensual and effective participation strategy, are discussed and agreed upon by the countries of the region;
- Conclusions and recommendations to CRIC 5 are formulated;
- An overall programme of work 2006-2007 related to the priority activities to be implemented in the region is prepared.

4. ORGANISATION OF THE MEETING

The UNCCD Secretariat, jointly with the pertinent authorities of the government of Panama, will facilitate the organisation of the meeting.

LAC national focal points and experts, local communities, national, subregional and regional NGOs, international agencies, institutions and co-operation partners will be invited to attend the meeting that will be held in Panama City (Panama) from 17 to 21 July 2006.