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**REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION AND OF
ITS INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 22,
PARAGRAPH 2 (a) AND (b), AND ARTICLE 26 OF THE CONVENTION,
AS WELL AS DECISION 1/COP.5, PARAGRAPH 10**

**REVIEW OF THE REPORTS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF AFFECTED COUNTRY
PARTIES OF REGIONS OTHER THAN AFRICA, INCLUDING ON THE
PARTICIPATORY PROCESS, AND ON EXPERIENCE GAINED
AND RESULTS ACHIEVED IN THE PREPARATION AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTION PROGRAMMES**

**Review of reports on implementation by affected Northern Mediterranean and
Central and Eastern European country Parties and other affected country Parties,
including on the participatory process, and on experience gained and results achieved
in the preparation and implementation of action programmes**

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This document sets the background to the review of reports on implementation by affected Northern Mediterranean (NM) and Central and Eastern European (CEE) country Parties and other affected country Parties, and gives an overview of the reporting process. The synthesis and preliminary analysis of the reports is given in document ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/Add.1; progress made in the formulation and implementation of subregional and regional action programmes in the Regional Implementation Annexes for the Northern Mediterranean (Annex IV) and for Central and Eastern Europe (Annex V) is described in document ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/Add.2; and a compilation of summaries of the reports is contained in document ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/MISC.3. A report on the regional meeting of affected NM and CEE country Parties and other affected country Parties preparatory to the fifth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention is contained in document ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/Add.3.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. According to article 22, paragraph 2 (a) and (b), and article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Conference of the Parties (COP) shall review the implementation of the Convention and its institutional arrangements. By its decision 1/COP.5, the COP decided to establish the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) as a subsidiary body of the COP to assist it in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention.

2. Following decision 11/COP.1 on communication of information, and in accordance with decision 9/COP.7 on the programme of work of the CRIC 5, the Committee at its fifth session will review the reports on implementation by affected country Parties of regions other than Africa, including reports from Northern Mediterranean (NM), Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) and other affected country Parties.

3. In accordance with provisions of decisions 11/COP.1 and 1/COP.5, the secretariat prepared the following documentation for review at CRIC 5:

(a) A synthesis and preliminary analysis of reports submitted by affected NM, CEE and other affected country Parties, setting out the trends emerging in the implementation of the Convention (ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/Add.1);

(b) A document on progress made in the formulation and implementation of subregional and regional action programmes in the Regional Implementation Annex for the Northern Mediterranean (Annex IV) and the Regional Implementation Annex for Central and Eastern Europe (Annex V) (ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/Add.2);

(c) A compilation of summaries of national reports from affected Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern Europe and other affected country Parties (ICCD/CRIC(5)/MISC.3).

4. In the terms of reference of the CRIC annexed to decision 1/COP.5 the secretariat is requested to take advantage of its ongoing activities at the regional and/or subregional levels to disseminate information stemming from its preliminary analysis and to obtain regional feedback with a view to enriching the Committee's work base. The outcome of the regional meeting for NM, CEE and other affected country Parties in preparation for CRIC 5, convened from 24 to 27 July 2006 in Bonn, Germany, is presented in document ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/Add.3.

5. Aware of the observation expressed in the past by the affected developing country Parties that the quality of national reports could be improved if the funding for reporting activities were more consistent, and in order to respond to the numerous related requests by the affected developing country Parties, the secretariat has sought funds to support the preparation of national and regional reports to be submitted to CRIC 5 by all eligible countries, including CEE countries. As was done for Africa, this support has been achieved through a medium-sized project (MSP) of the Global Environment Facility (GEF).

6. The objective of the MSP called "Global (Asia/Pacific Latin America and Caribbean, Europe and Central Asia) Supporting Capacity Building for the Third National Reporting to CRIC 5/COP 8" of the World Bank, which was approved in March 2006, is to support the eligible affected non-African country Parties in their efforts to enhance their capacity to prepare and/or formulate their national reports so as to fulfil their obligations under the UNCCD, and at

the same time to build country capacity and strengthen a multi-stakeholder consultation process for UNCCD implementation.

7. The agency that is implementing this MSP is the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on behalf of the World Bank. The executing agency of this MSP is IFAD, through which the amount granted by the GEF was channelled. The MSP cofunding from IFAD was sent directly to the UNCCD secretariat in March 2006 and the GEF/MSP contribution was transferred to the secretariat through IFAD in May 2006. For this purpose, two memorandums of understanding between IFAD and the UNCCD secretariat were signed, one in March 2006 and the other in May 2006. The first grants to the affected eligible CEE country Parties were transferred to them from the UNCCD secretariat immediately upon receipt from IFAD.

II. OVERVIEW OF THE REPORTING PROCESS

8. In accordance with article 26 of the UNCCD and decision 11/COP.1, each Party shall communicate to the COP, for consideration at its ordinary sessions, reports on the measures which it has taken for the implementation of the Convention.

9. The first reporting exercise for NM and other affected country Parties was conducted in 2000 for review at COP 4. The second reporting exercise for NM, CEE and other affected country Parties was conducted in 2002 for review at CRIC 1. The third reporting exercise started with the submission of reports from African countries to be reviewed at CRIC 3, and will be completed with the submission of reports from country Parties in regions other than Africa to be reviewed by CRIC 5.

10. To assist affected country Parties in the preparation of the third national reports, the secretariat adapted the existing Help Guide (prepared for CRIC 3 for the Africa region) and issued a slightly revised version, which was available to Parties in January 2006.¹ In accordance with the pertinent decisions of the COP, the secretariat has prepared a synthesis and preliminary analysis of the national reports submitted by affected NM, CEE and other affected country Parties, setting out the trends emerging in the implementation of the Convention (ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/Add.1).

11. Document ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/Add.1 has a slightly different format than the previous synthesis and preliminary analysis reports. In addition to the seven key thematic topics referred to in decision 1/COP.5, three of the seven strategic areas for action referred to in the annex to decision 8/COP.4 – sustainable land-use management, including water, soil and vegetation in affected areas; development of sustainable agriculture and ranching production systems; and development of new and renewable energy sources – are subject to review by the CRIC. Furthermore, in recognition of the broad focus of the CRIC, the COP, by its decision 9/COP.6, also included in the agenda for CRIC 5 an item on “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”.

12. The first synthesis report for NM and other affected country Parties prepared by the UNCCD secretariat for COP 4 (ICCD/COP(4)/3/Add.3 (B)) was based on five national reports from NM country Parties and five from CEE country Parties. The second synthesis (ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.1) was based on seven national reports from NM, eight from CEE countries, one from a Party covered by both regions and one from one other affected country

¹ The Explanatory Note and Help Guide (ICCD/CRIC(5)/INF.3) is available at <<http://www.unccd.int/>>.

Party. The third synthesis and analysis report for NM, CEE and other affected country Parties (ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/Add.1) is based on 21 national reports (see annex). All reports will be posted on the UNCCD website <www.unccd.int>.

13. There are two types of reporting countries from this region – those that prepare a report using their own funding and those that need financial assistance. All country Parties following decision 11/COP.1 are requested to submit their reports to the UNCCD secretariat at last six months before the session at which they are being reviewed. The COP, by its decision 10/COP.7, decided that CRIC 5 shall be held in September 2006. Therefore affected country Parties that were not depending on external funding assistance were expected to submit their reports in March 2006 at the latest. A letter of reminder, together with the Help Guide, was sent to affected country Parties in January 2006. The deadline for submission of reports was later officially postponed to 31 May 2006 for both funded and non-funded Parties. Despite numerous reminders, the secretariat did not receive the expected reports from NM countries on time. Therefore this third synthesis was prepared at two periods: a synthesis for CEE country Parties and other country Parties, based on reports received by 15 July 2006 and the report from Slovakia that was received at the beginning of August 2006; and later a synthesis for NM country Parties, based on reports received by 7 August 2006.

14. Of these 21 national reports, 6 were from countries submitting for the first time (in some cases because of recent accession to the UNCCD) (Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Russian Federation, United States of America), 5 were second submissions (Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Canada, Hungary), and the other 10 (see annex) were third submissions, reflecting progress on the implementation of commitments under the Convention. These various stages of implementation of the Convention created some discrepancies in the analytical approach of the national reports, in particular because only 7 (Armenia, Georgia, Italy, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Turkey) of the 18 NM and CEE countries have adopted a national action programme (NAP) and the 3 other affected country Parties have national strategies.

15. Of the 21 national reports, 9 were funded by the World Bank/IFAD MSP (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Romania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia).

16. Ten years after the Convention came into force, most NM, CEE and other affected country Parties re-affirmed their resolve to address land degradation and desertification issues as manifested by their efforts in devising planning frameworks and implementing strategies addressing these issues. Positioning desertification strategies in the broader context of sustainable development further bolstered the efforts. The barriers to progress have been the same as reported at previous sessions of the CRIC: difficulties in mobilizing financial resources needed for the elaboration and implementation of NAPs, inadequate capacities of institutions, and unsynchronized efforts from stakeholders, are examples of problems cited for the disjointed efforts. Mainstreaming and integrating the NAPs into the development process have not actually helped to stress the importance of the NAPs and hence their implementation. Identified priorities reflected in the reports of those countries that have NAPs remain unfunded, despite the inclusion of desertification and land degradation as one of the Global Environment Facility portfolios.

17. At the local level, however, the capabilities of grass-roots communities are growing, albeit slowly. The progress needs to be further strengthened, so as to give the communities, which are the direct stakeholders of the Convention, direct help in the rational management of natural resources.

Annex

**LIST OF AFFECTED NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN AND CENTRAL AND
EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRY PARTIES AND OTHER AFFECTED
COUNTRY PARTIES THAT HAVE REPORTED TO CRIC 5**
(as at 17 November 2006)

Albania
Armenia
Azerbaijan
Belarus
Bulgaria
Canada
Georgia
Hungary
Israel
Italy
Latvia
Portugal
Republic of Moldova
Romania
Russian Federation
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Turkey
United States of America
