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COMMITTEE FOR THE REVIEW OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION
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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

Addendum

**Synthesis and preliminary analysis of information contained in reports submitted by
Northern Mediterranean and Central and Eastern European country Parties
and other affected country Parties**

Summary

1. In accordance with article 26 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and decision 11/COP.1, each Party to the Convention shall report on the measures it has taken for the implementation of the Convention. Decisions 11/COP.1 and 1/COP.5 request the secretariat to prepare a synthesis and preliminary analysis of the national reports submitted

by affected country Parties, setting out the trends emerging in the implementation of the Convention.

2. This present synthesis and analysis report of Northern Mediterranean (NM), Central and Eastern European (CEE) and other affected country Parties is based on 21 national reports as follows: 4 from NM, 12 from CEE, 2 from country Parties covered by both annexes IV and V and 3 from other affected country Parties. All reports are posted on the UNCCD website <www.unccd.int>.

3. Although there is a growing awareness of general environmental threats such as drought and climate change, most NM country Parties have experienced difficulties in implementing national legislation and strategies addressing land protection and desertification. This is due mainly to the inadequate priority given to these issues in national political agendas and a lack of coordination among national institutions and between national and local authorities. These factors have consequences for the mobilization of financial resources specifically targeted for the elaboration and implementation of national action programmes.

4. Despite these difficulties, many NM countries have made some progress in implementing the Convention but need to take steps to improve the awareness of the general public about land degradation and desertification and the direct involvement of scientists and researchers in decision-making processes.

5. The growing number of the reports presented by affected CEE country Parties demonstrates the intention of these countries to continue addressing land degradation, drought and desertification issues. Moreover, their efforts have been strengthened through upgraded participatory processes, improvements to institutional and resource mobilization mechanisms, efforts undertaken to ensure synergy with other ecological conventions, and activities towards mainstreaming the UNCCD process into economic development strategies.

6. Nevertheless, in spite of some improvements, the task of implementation of the UNCCD continues to be a big challenge to affected CEE country Parties. In fact, the barriers to significant progress have been similar to those noted during the previous reporting exercise – difficulties experienced by countries with economies in transition in mobilizing financial and technological resources, institutional shortcomings, unsynchronized efforts of different actors, etc.

7. Three affected developed country Parties, not covered by any regional implementation annex, gave information on the implementation of the UNCCD in their countries.

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I. SYNTHESIS AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REPORTS SUBMITTED BY NORTHERN MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRY PARTIES

A. General

1. At the end of July 2006, 11 Northern Mediterranean (NM) countries are under Annex IV of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and have declared themselves as affected countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey. Four countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia) are under both Annex IV and Annex V. Montenegro and Serbia are still in the process of acceding to the UNCCD.

2. This part of this document is a synthesis and preliminary analysis of six reports that were officially submitted by affected NM country Parties (Albania, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Turkey) by 7 August 2006. One report was submitted in French and one in Spanish with summaries in English. This document updates information contained in document ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.1 which was prepared on the basis of national reports submitted by affected NM country Parties to CRIC 1.

3. Because NM country Parties acceded to the UNCCD at different times, four of the seven reporting countries (Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey) are reporting for the third time and one (Albania) for the second time; these countries reported on activities carried out between 2002 and 2006, avoiding, if possible, repetition of activities they had already mentioned. One country (Slovenia) is reporting for the first time, so its report contains details of all the activities carried out in combating desertification and related fields from the entry into force of the Convention for that country. Only three reporting NM countries adopted their national action programmes (NAPs) and are implementing them. The different stages of implementation of the UNCCD caused some variation in the information and data contained in the reports as well as in their organization.

4. Seven of the 11 NM country Parties are members of the European Union (EU). Two countries are candidate countries to the EU; one of these is a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The two other NM countries are countries with an economy in transition. Therefore, the social, economic and political situations in NM countries are very different. At the same time, they share their geographical position as NM countries and their cultural heritage and, in addition, relations between them are historically based and confirmed in a network of international political agreement, at bilateral and multilateral levels. Only 4 of the 11 countries are eligible for official development assistance (ODA) funding, and some of them took advantage of national capacity self-assessment (NCSA) activities. As for the reporting process, one reporting country (Albania) is funded under the medium-sized project (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 (see ICCD/CRIC(5)/4, paras. 6 and 7).

B. Overview of reports and trends observed

5. Five NM countries have been undertaking subregional activities under regional implementation Annex IV since 1997. After late accession to the UNCCD of six other NM countries, currently 11 country Parties are working at regional level under this Annex. Of the 11 NM country Parties, only four have already adopted their NAP; one of these four countries has not submitted its third report. The three others which approved their NAPs are in the implementation or revision phase. Despite these problems, the analysis of the six available reports allows some general trends to be identified, and could constitute a first approach to an assessment of the state of Convention implementation in this region.

6. NM countries experience some common problems of land degradation and desertification such as soil erosion caused by salinization of soil and groundwater, soil sealing, loss of quantity and quality of productive soil, water shortages, climate change, drought, deforestation, littoralization, forest fires, landslides and flooding, agriculture practices such as overgrazing and overexploitation, and tourism pressure in coastal areas. NM countries share an unsustainable use of soil and water resources inducing land degradation and desertification, which is land degradation in its most severe degree.

7. Some peculiarities could be observed in the Adriatic area, where the main concern is increasing drought and land degradation caused by heavy pollution and the effects of recent conflicts. Land degradation seems not to be considered as the main environment problem endangering sustainable development. But various environmental changes (e.g. frequent drought and forest fires) have been recognized, together with their consequences on land and vegetation degradation.

8. Even if all countries consider participatory processes and community involvement a key element for more successful implementation of the Convention, most of the countries still seem to find it difficult to organize a real participatory process through a programmatic involvement of local communities. Participatory processes could only be successful if they are adequately empowered by decision makers and immediately followed by decisions on various activities. The Aarhus Convention is considered an important tool for enhancing participatory processes. National coordinating bodies (NCBs) are improving their capacities in information diffusion and awareness raising.

9. Even if most countries have NCBs established, and their legislative and institutional have been improved, land degradation and desertification issues are not yet among national priorities. Most NCBs have a multidisciplinary composition that reflects the intersectoral approach needed.

10. Many countries are making efforts to favour the involvement of scientists and researchers in decision-making processes as well as in field operational activities, encouraging their direct connections with local stakeholders and decision makers. Representatives of the scientific community are, in several cases, members of NCBs and in some cases national focal points also belong to the scientific community, facilitating these processes. But some difficulties in defining the role of focal points and NCBs, such as overlapping of their functions, have still not been overcome.

11. In EU member countries, EU legislation and strategic frameworks play important roles in pushing improvements on national institutional and legislative frameworks, particularly for soil, water, and agriculture issues. Even so, national legislation and strategies dealing directly with land protection and desertification are still missing.

12. Although the importance of achieving synergy between land degradation and desertification, climate change and biodiversity is recognized, few activities have been planned or realized. The increase in the frequency of droughts in most NM countries emphasises the need for an integrated sustainable water management regime, and urges the promotion or the improvement of early warning activities.

13. The improvement of scientific knowledge relating in particular to indicators and monitoring systems, decision-making processes and agriculture and land rehabilitation techniques, is strongly supported by European Commission funded projects and, in some cases, by nationally funded research projects. Their results could relate to all NM countries which strongly request improvement of exchange experience and networking activities, and the innovative use of traditional knowledge.

C. Synthesis of information provided in reports submitted by
Northern Mediterranean country Parties

1. Participatory processes involving civil society and non-governmental
and community-based organizations

14. All reports underline that participation of by civil society and the non-governmental organization (NGO) community is crucial to the success of the preparation phase of NAPs as well as in the implementation phase. In particular, the involvement of many different groups (central and local authorities, NGOs, local communities, etc) is indicated as essential in giving guidance to NAP preparation because of the need to embody all interests and all available information.

15. NM countries having NCBs encourage civil society and NGO participation, involving them directly in NCBs, particularly where civil society and NGOs are organized through representative bodies. Also some NCB members are representatives of the scientific community, which favours the establishment of scientific connections with other environmental conventions. In some cases, an officially established technical and scientific body supports the NCB.

16. Most reports also describe the involvement of stakeholders in NAP preparation activities. In many cases, their involvement consists of participating in drafting phases of activities and in public discussion through the organization of workshops, meetings, round-table discussions and conferences. In addition, most reports recognize the importance of involving institutional local authorities in the NAP process. In general, stakeholders' commitments are growing in line with the advancement of the NAP process, from preparation to implementation.

17. Consultations are organized in many countries, in order to build a favourable environment for NAP adoption. Some countries took the opportunity for consultations organized within NCSA projects. Reports highlighted the importance of involving concerned interest groups, such as farmers, the tourism sector, and infrastructure management organizations, in the

NAP implementation phase, in order to develop implementation tools, “tailor made” to their specific demands.

18. Some countries mentioned that public participation in decision-making processes could be improved by taking advantage of the ratification of the Aarhus Convention, the fulfilling of its requirements and the inclusion of its principles and obligations in the legislative framework.

19. In many countries, land degradation and desertification problems are generally not considered as a priority compared with other major environmental problems such as climate change. Desertification is considered by the media as a limited threat, in limited areas; it is not considered a serious threat unless there is evidence for extreme consequences. However, general interest in desertification issues is undoubtedly growing, in particular because of the effects of drought, and as a result of the economic interest of professional organizations in forest and agriculture sectors. And interest is higher among people who are directly affected by these problems.

20. The general lack of environmental knowledge, especially knowledge about land degradation, drought and desertification, is one reason for limited public participation in activities relating to combating land degradation and desertification and mitigating drought effects.

21. Education and training activities have been mentioned in very few reports, even if these activities should be considered one of the main tools in spreading knowledge about land degradation, drought and desertification issues.

22. In many reports, the availability of a large information distribution system using modern information technologies and Internet based tools (i.e. dedicated websites) is considered of fundamental importance in supporting the exchange of experiences. Several reports stress the impact of informative campaigns in fields relating to desertification issues, such as climate change, land management, and agriculture organization. Some reports regret the lack of interest of the media in the UNCCD and land degradation and desertification issues, despite their interest in some individual thematic areas, such as natural disasters (drought, landslides and floods), and in individual examples of soil and groundwater pollution.

23. One report concludes that participatory processes involving affected communities can be successful only if adequately empowered by decision makers and immediately followed by decisions on various activities.

24. Only a few countries reported the involvement of women, noting their low participation, despite the absence of national and local institutional barriers. Nevertheless, it seems that efforts are being made to overcome this.

25. Some countries produced specific UNCCD informative materials such as books and leaflets. Awareness raising activities were carried out in most countries on the occasion of the yearly celebration of the World Day to Combat Desertification, often reaching a larger public. The celebration of the International Year of Deserts and Desertification (IYDD) also strongly enhanced these activities.

2. Legislative and institutional frameworks and arrangements

26. Of the six affected NM countries that submitted their reports, three have adopted their NAPs and are at different stages in the implementation phase, depending on when the NAP was adopted. Of the other three reporting countries, one submitted its NAP for adoption in 2005, one is ready for NAP adoption possibly in 2007, and one is preparing its NAP. One of the three other countries that are implementing their NAPs, reported the need to review it to take account of the new data and information relating to the extent and characteristics of desertification in its territory, and to the development of its institutional framework. One other NM country has adopted its NAP, but did not submit a report.

27. The differences in the speed of NAP processes seems to be related, partly, to the effectiveness of legislative tools and to the different degrees of awareness, at institutional level and among civil society, of the urgency of combating desertification. Most reports recognize the need to improve national legislative and institutional frameworks specifically to address land degradation, drought and desertification issues. Also the need for better integration of these issues into existing laws and provisions was frequently stressed.

28. There have been some improvements at legislative level in land and water management, in several cases pushed by European Union (EU) directives that have been approved (e.g. the EU Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC) or which are being elaborated (EU Soil Thematic Strategy). These directives, together with the EU strategies, are generally recognized as a crucial institutional support for EU member countries, as well as for candidate countries. Also sustainable development national strategies (SDNS) are considered the most important framework where specific provisions are or should be included. Sustainable management of soil, forests, water resources, waste and hydrogeological risk (flooding, landslides and earthquake) mitigation, and of agriculture practices is in most countries integrated into these strategies. Also territorial planning legislation, integrated management of coastal areas and sustainable tourism initiatives and laws are in most countries, taken into account in SDNS.

29. All reports mention the growing completeness of the general legislative framework in the environmental field, in soil management and in the agriculture sector, and most of them recognize the positive effects of such legislation on combating land degradation and desertification and mitigating drought effects. But there are no laws directly focused on desertification.

30. In general, land degradation, drought and desertification are not considered as a priority, even if some reports state the growing effectiveness of institutional and administrative structures dealing with land protection. Ministries dealing with these issues often do not have an active policy and their direct involvement is often weak. Coordination between institutional stakeholders and research institutions is generally recognized as important but is reported as being weak. There is a need for a more effective institutional framework to support that coordination. EU rules for funding projects often require such coordination.

31. Most of reporting countries have already established an NCB with the aim of coordinating all interested national institutions. Ministries of agriculture, environment and forests are always represented, as well as, in many cases, ministries of planning, finance and research. In some countries, especially affected developed countries, the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs is a member of NCBs. In many reporting countries NCBs include members of scientific institutions and universities, and representatives of local stakeholders and of NGOs. The composition of NCBs reflects the inter- and multidisciplinary character of land degradation, drought and desertification issues as well as the intersectoral approach needed. Their working procedures vary; in some countries NCBs meet very often and act as an operative body, whereas in other countries meetings are much less frequent, and NCBs act as a strategic body. Where NAPs are adopted, the coordination of institutions is difficult, even if such coordination is envisaged in the NAPs.

32. Lack of institutional capacities, missing regulations and a lack of adequate personnel staff for NCBs are frequently represented as obstacles to fulfilling the requirements of the UNCCD.

33. Many reports, especially from affected developed countries, raise issues of the role of focal points. In particular, focal point coordination with NCBs might have some overlap: reports stress the need to better define their respective functions and boundaries. The presence of focal points in NCBs seems to be a first stage in improving their coordination.

34. All reports described possible modalities and tools for improving relations and collaboration between national and local institutional stakeholders. The evolving process of decentralizing the institutional framework has experienced difficulties that should be overcome through the improvement of consultative mechanisms.

3. Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusion of partnership agreements

35. Almost all countries, including affected developed countries, notice a lack of financial resources, and some of them also complain of a lack of human resources, for the UNCCD process. Some countries have only small budgets for NAP preparation. Very few countries use financial resources from the national budget directly for NAP implementation. Most reports consider the need to improve the general availability of financial resources as the key issue for NAP implementation. In some countries, financial resources for the NAP come from other programmes on sustainable land management, forestry and forest fires and agro-environmental measures. Only one EU country reported the use of its own specifically targeted financial resources for NAP implementation at institutional level, and the use by decentralized authorities of funds from other sources, primarily EU Structural Funds, for implementation at field level.

36. Reports from NM countries eligible for international funding, that are preparing NAPs, show funds coming from such organizations as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Bank, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO). These resources have been used for capacity-building activities as well as for preparing national reports. In addition, some of these countries also indicated that funds coming from bilateral cooperation are used for these activities.

37. Partnership agreements between universities, local agencies and NGOs are mentioned, even though these agreements are difficult to implement. EU member States as well as partner countries underline the intensive and positive cooperation with the European Commission. For

instance, the Directorate General (DG) Research funded new projects such as DESURVEY (surveillance system for assessing and monitoring of desertification) and DG Regio (regional policy), in the framework of international cooperation of national administrative regions, and also funded several activities through the Interreg (interregional cooperation in the EU) programme (among them, DesertNet). These funds are used mainly by the Group of Annex IV countries. These countries might cooperate in enhancing partnership with other eligible NM countries in using these funds. The scientific and technical cooperation framework for NM countries, developed at regional level with the technical assistance of the UNCCD secretariat, is facilitating the establishment of partnerships and cooperation processes.

4. Links and synergy with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies

38. Reports do not contain relevant information on links and synergy with other environmental conventions. Only one report clearly describes the country's intention to pursue synergy by using results from its international projects. Most reports indicate that UNCCD issues are integrated into the various national environmental and development plans (e.g. forest, agriculture, spatial planning, water resource development, socio-economic plans). Some synergy is indicated in reported operational field activities where the efforts carried out by different national and local authorities and institutions are integrated.

5. Sustainable land-use management, including water, soil and vegetation

39. Most reports underline the growing interest in establishing or further developing land management systems, in some cases by reviewing land ownership. Land-use is usually managed through the planning and development programmes of the agricultural sector.

40. For the agriculture sector, reports from EU member States and candidate countries illustrate national-level activities that each country has to carry out in following the European requirements (European Directives such as European Water Framework Directive, and the new European Community Agriculture Policy (CAP)) to enhance the sustainable use of soil and water resources. The need to integrate the management of water resources with sustainable soil management is fully recognized, but many countries assert that this integration should be enhanced.

41. The reports do not allow a clear understanding of the concrete impact, at local level, of the general national policy frameworks on land-use management and in achieving sustainability.

42. Only a few countries reported on effective activities in pilot sites aiming to integrate soil and water management, biodiversity protection and agriculture sustainable practices, as well as social topics.

6. Development of sustainable agriculture and ranching production systems

43. The reports focus on the importance of good sustainable agricultural practices because of their positive impacts on the environment protection and, especially, on minimizing land degradation. Of key importance is integrating environmental programmes and rural development plans with land degradation, drought and desertification policies. The above-

mentioned CAP requires that development of agricultural systems should take into account environmental sustainability and management of natural resources.

44. One country reported the entry into force of a specific policy on rangelands in the framework of agriculture sector policies.

7. Development of new and renewable energy sources

45. The importance of programmes carried out to promote and develop the use of renewable energy sources, which contribute to the implementation of the Convention, is mentioned in only one report.

8. Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought

46. All countries with NAPs envisage rehabilitation of degraded land as one of their priority aims but only a few country reports describe related field activities. Reforestation is perceived as a key activity for rehabilitating degraded land. Some pilot projects to test other methods to rehabilitate degraded land have been promoted by some countries, but funding for follow-up work is often lacking. In addition, reports do not provide information on indicators or other quantitative measures to monitor success of activities designed to rehabilitate degraded land or on the methodologies used.

47. Most reporting countries describe some programmes dealing with the improvement of vegetal coverage and, in particular, forests and woodland. These include measures to control soil erosion and land degradation as well as to improve soil productivity. In many countries programmes on forest fire prevention and mitigation of their effects have been launched.

48. Severe drought is prevalent in most countries in southern and eastern Europe; in some of these countries drought is reported as the most important threat causing desertification, and it is therefore perceived as a priority. Due the growing problem of drought, and its visible impact on soil productivity, especially in the agricultural sector, much more attention is being paid to drought, and some countries report their interest in establishing national and local observatories as a first step towards early warning systems. One affected EU country has already created a National Drought Observatory. Some reports highlight interest in participating in the future Drought Management Centre for South-eastern Europe (DMCSEE) programme to be established within the context of the UNCCD and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) mandate. Two technical workshops have been held with the participation of some NM countries. This process is described in ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/Add.2.

9. Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment

49. All reporting countries reported their deep engagement in drought and desertification monitoring and assessment, in accordance with decisions of the Conference of the Parties (COP), even if more work should be done. Many countries are establishing a basic list of soil and land indicators at national level; some countries state that previously used indicators will be compiled in a single list and harmonized; and some countries have taken advantage of the European Environment Agency indicator list and Corine Land Cover (CLC) 2000 project that includes NM

countries. Several reports refer to EIONET (European Environment Information and Observation Network), national environmental information systems and other potential networks such as EMERALD, Natura 2000 and Environment Watch. The activities under these networks and institutions are at different stages of implementation and could represent an important asset for many countries, as they deal with systematized information on many environmental thematic areas (such as air, waste, soil, biological diversity) and sub-areas (such as air quality, waste dump cadastre). EIONET could be used to harmonize indicator setting process between NM countries.

50. Affected EU countries report their involvement, together with other European partners, in many scientific projects on benchmarks and indicators, such as DISMED (Desertification Information System for the Mediterranean), DESERTLINKS (Combating Desertification in Mediterranean Europe: Linking Science with Stakeholders), and INDEX, that constitute important reference bases. The DesertWatch project, promoted by the European Space Agency (ESA), is elaborating an indicator system based on physical indicators furnished by remote-sensing tools; this indicator system is validated at field level with the direct involvement of NCBs. Most reports underline the urgency of the elaboration and diffusion of social and economic indicators in all these projects.

51. National activities undertaken in the framework of the GEF NCSA are helping eligible NM countries to use appropriate indicators for monitoring land degradation, drought and desertification and other related environmental issues.

52. Some affected EU countries mention their intention to establish and to implement soil-monitoring systems in line with the future EU Directive on Soil Protection. This Directive will oblige these countries to establish and implement monitoring systems containing indicators relating to land degradation and desertification.

53. Even if most reports show the national attention paid to a continuous assessment of forest resources, only a few mention that a national forestry inventory has already been completed.

54. Drought is perceived as one of the priority areas for intervention (see also paragraph 48 above), but its monitoring is generally left to meteorological institutions.

10. Access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how

55. Some reports describe national technical and scientific research projects on rehabilitation of degraded land or on the prevention and mitigation of effects of forest fire, as well as the use of innovative techniques and methods to improve knowledge about land degradation, drought and desertification at local and national scale. New research projects are aiming to elaborate scenarios and decision support systems for decision makers or to develop methods for sustainable management of environmental resource (soil, water, etc.). Other reported projects have the objective of enhancing the diffusion of technological and scientific knowledge. Reports generally note a positive effect of the European Soil Thematic Strategy process on giving impulse to national scientific activities.

56. Most countries observe that access to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how, at both national and local levels, directly depends on the availability of financial resources and

on the existence of national scientific capacities. This access is also linked to the effective participation of the national scientific community in international technical cooperation and networking.

57. At international level, several countries participate in projects funded by the European Commission. Scientific activities funded by the EU DG Research, as well as activities between national administrative regions in the framework of Interreg Programme funded by the EU DG Regio, stimulate knowledge enhancement as well as cooperation and networking (see document ICCD/CRIC(5)/4/Add.2). Even if national technical cooperation and networking are partially supported by international institutions such as the EU, most NM countries, even EU member States, complain about the scarcity of financial resources available for national technological and scientific activities.

58. Some reporting countries expressed considerable interest in the use of traditional knowledge and in the availability of related information. One country reported on an international conference on the integration of traditional knowledge and new technologies for combating drought and desertification. The same country is drafting a project to establish an innovative information management system on traditional knowledge.

D. Lessons learned from the reports submitted by Northern Mediterranean country Parties

1. Lessons learned from the process of preparation and implementation of national action programmes

59. The status of NAPs varies across NM countries because countries acceded to the UNCCD at different times. NAP finalization in NM countries is very slow and little progress has been observed between second and third reporting processes. There is an emerging need to revise NAPs because of changes in institutional frameworks and in environmental conditions, even if the implementation process has not been completely finalized. Difficulties in cooperation between national institutional stakeholders, as well as lack of financial and human resources, constrain NAP preparation. Also NCBs' difficulties in cooperating with decentralized institutions are widely recognized as a major concern for NAP implementation.

60. Even if awareness land degradation and desertification is increasing, land degradation and desertification are not yet considered a national priority and they are not given sufficient support. Climate change and increasing frequency of drought are well recognized as priority fields for action. NAP preparation, finalization and implementation indirectly benefit from the current improvement of national institutional frameworks relating to prevention and mitigation of drought and climate change.

2. Lessons learned from the system for the presentation of reports

61. NM countries, particularly countries that have updated their previews reports, experienced difficulties in precisely following indicators proposed in the Help Guide. Reporting process requirements, in particular proposed indicators, are not easily fulfilled by NM countries. The "Declaration on the commitments under the Convention to enhance implementation of the obligations of the UNCCD" the so-called "Bonn Declaration" annexed to decision 8/COP.4, (ICCD/COP(4)/11/Add.1), contains provisions for assessing the implementation of the

Convention. Several reports address the seven strategic areas for actions, as prescribed in the Help Guide, but do not provide sufficient information.

62. Most reports focus their description mainly on organizational and institutional approaches (policies, plans, programmes) and give less attention to describing operational field activities. No reports give information on results achieved.

63. Country profiles were required for the first time and only a few countries submitted them. The information contained in country profiles can help to improve the analysis of the impact of policy on land degradation and desertification and on UNCCD implementation only if sufficient numbers of them are available.

64. Unfortunately, the reports from unfunded NM countries were sent to the secretariat late, up to two months after the deadline. These countries faced difficulties in preparing their reports. In addition, not all expected reports have been produced.

65. In the third reporting process, one country reported for the first time, and five countries from the second reporting process updated their reports. All reports furnished a complete picture of the country. However, the quantity and quality of data and information differed, reflecting the level of evolution of their environmental information systems as well as the stages of implementation of the Convention

E. Conclusions and recommendations for Northern Mediterranean country Parties

66. Since 2002, the level of implementation of the UNCCD and the number of country Parties in the NM region have been slowly increasing. The NM region, even though it has a small number of countries, has countries which are still in the process of accession to the Convention; countries which have newly acceded since 2002; countries preparing or finalizing their NAPs; and countries implementing and even reviewing their NAPs. Consequently the reports submitted by NM countries at CRIC 5 vary widely in scope and information content. The current report format cannot take account of this range of situations, and does not facilitate a coherent regional analysis.

67. It is becoming accepted that because the NAP process is dynamic, it needs to be reviewed and updated as it progresses into the implementation phase. But this can be done only if the tools developed for the elaboration phase of the NAP process were conceived with sufficient adaptability to follow the evolution of the institutional framework and environmental conditions.

68. In NM countries increasing attention is being given to environmental protection issues, in particular, to water resources management and the increasing problem of drought. This awareness is associated with the development of a favourable institutional framework. But land degradation and desertification issues are still not given priority within the management of natural resources of NM countries. The weak recognition given to UNCCD implementation is probably due to a lack of political awareness and a scarcity of relevant information. NCBs should promote the enhancement of communication and information dissemination; this could improve the awareness of civil society, and the consequent pressures of civil society on national decision makers.

69. The direct involvement of local economic, social and political stakeholders, and their strong networking with the scientific community, contribute positively to the UNCCD implementation process. Therefore pressure by civil society and advice from the scientific community could help to urge national decision makers to improve UNCCD implementation and to accelerate NAP preparation. But there is still a need for a more effective cooperation between focal points and NCBS, and between national institutions and local stakeholders.

70. Results from scientific projects on indicators and benchmarks should be applied more systematically to promote the implementation of the UNCCD. Using appropriate indicators and benchmarks would, for example, facilitate a better assessment of the participatory process.

71. The scientific communities and political authorities in NM countries have different views on what is meant by land degradation and desertification, and clarification and common understanding are needed. It is necessary to better understand the influence of land degradation and desertification on soil productivity, and consequently on agriculture and on various environmental services.

72. The difficulties experienced by NM countries at national level should be taken into account in developing UNCCD implementation activities at NM regional level. Building partnerships among NM countries and developing more regional activities to enable these countries to share their experience at operational level, could help to overcome some of these difficulties.

73. The results of the many scientific studies conducted at national and regional levels, in particular those funded through the European Commission, are not presently used efficiently, and should serve as a basis for launching more operational activities required by NM countries such as improving knowledge exchange, developing information systems on best practices, and establishing a coherent NM regional system of benchmarks and indicators.

74. Recent global assessments of land degradation and desertification, such as the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, were based on the loss of ecosystem services. The cost of the social and economic losses due to land degradation, desertification and drought should be further investigated at national level.

II. SYNTHESIS AND PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN REPORTS SUBMITTED BY CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRY PARTIES

A. General

75. By the date of this synthesis, 20 countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) had become Parties to the Convention. Not all CEE country Parties declare themselves as being affected country Parties. National reports have been received from the following 14 CEE affected country Parties: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Hungary, Latvia, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Three reports were submitted in Russian with summaries in English.

76. This part of the present document is a synthesis and preliminary analysis of the national reports that were submitted by affected CEE country Parties by 10 August 2006. This document updates information contained in document ICCD/CRIC(1)/5/Add.1, which was prepared on the basis of national reports submitted by CEE affected country Parties at CRIC 1 held in Rome in 2002.

77. Of the 14 reports from CEE affected country Parties, 5 are from countries submitting for the first time (Latvia, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia), in some cases because of recent accession to the UNCCD, and 4 (Albania, Belarus, Bulgaria and Hungary) are second submissions. For the other five (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Romania), it was their third reporting exercise. These various stages of implementation of the Convention created some discrepancies in the analytical approach of the national reports, in particular because only 4 of the 14 affected reporting country Parties have adopted a NAP.

78. Not all CEE countries are eligible for funding as seven are members of the European Union (EU) and three are candidate countries. In addition, some CEE countries are also emerging donor countries, being affected or not. Of the 14 national reports submitted, 9 (Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Romania and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) were funded by the medium-sized project (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 (see ICCD/CRIC(5)/4, paras. 6 and 7). In the framework of this MSP, funded countries were requested, in addition to preparing the national report following the Help Guide, to undertake self-assessment and to validate their reports through a validation workshop. The affected CEE reporting countries in the EU (Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia and Slovenia), as well as the Russian Federation, funded their own reporting process.

B. Overview of reports and trends observed

79. The reporting CEE country Parties are affected by several environmental threats. Most of them are affected by land degradation, drought and deforestation. Parties of the region are at different stages of the implementation of the Convention. Four (Armenia, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Romania) have already prepared their NAPs, and five others (Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) consider that their NAPs are close to finalization.

80. Four reporting country Parties are members of the EU (Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia and Slovenia) and two others (Bulgaria and Romania) have been pursuing policies aimed at joining the EU. Six reporting country Parties (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Russian Federation) are members of the Commonwealth of Independent States with various socio-economic development patterns and policy orientations. These differences among the country Parties complicate the task of identifying common emerging trends in the UNCCD process.

81. Nevertheless, a number of common trends in the process of the implementation of the Convention are becoming more evident, at least for some country Parties. There is an important transformation in the ecological consciousness of all countries, which reflects a growing

common understanding that a top-down and sectoral approach for a successful struggle against land degradation, drought and desertification is unacceptable. Not only scientific communities and governments but other stakeholders have been realizing that a bottom-up approach is the only valid way to combat these natural and man-made disasters.

82. This transformation in ecological consciousness has changed attitudes on the formulation of NAPs. Actually, the participatory process involving all stakeholders is considered as a precondition for preparing a credible NAP. The same attitude concerns all other elements of the legal and regulatory framework regarding the implementation of the UNCCD. The growing seriousness of the approach towards the UNCCD process contributes to progressive development of different kinds of policy actions and measures stimulating an increasing participation of various actors in UNCCD implementation.

83. All CEE country Parties continue to demonstrate some progress in the area of legal and institutional capacity-building relating to implementation of the UNCCD. Against this generally positive background, the measures taken in this area since the second reporting exercise vary widely depending on individual country Parties' experience within the UNCCD process as well as on their particular economic, social and political situations. Some of the CEE country Parties have elaborated their NAPs and undertaken a number of relevant measures in order to harmonize their national legislation with the EU environmental laws and legislation in accordance with the European Community (EC) Common Agricultural Policy. Some other country Parties' activities in this area have been limited to NAP preparation and establishment of NCBs. A coherent and functional legal framework regarding the implementation of the UNCCD does not yet exist in any reporting country Party of the region and the distances to be overcome by each of them to reach this goal are different.

84. All reporting countries of the region are Parties to a number of closely interlinked environmental conventions. So it is logical that these Parties have tried to ensure synergy in their implementation of these conventions to avoid unnecessary duplication. All reporting countries continue to coordinate the implementation of these conventions through one ministry. In most of the countries a cooperative process between the relevant ministries, agencies, scientific and planning organizations, local administrations and land users involved in environmental protection is under way.

85. Many CEE country Parties have been identifying their potential needs for implementation of global environment conventions. In some country Parties the preparation of national environment strategies is under way. Some country Parties intend to integrate their NAPs into their national development plans.

86. All CEE country Parties explicitly or implicitly state that the scarcity of financial resources is one of the major handicaps hampering national efforts to reduce land degradation and increase the restoration of degraded lands. Most of them also try to explain some of the causes of these constraints such as the low priority of land degradation and drought in the budgetary financing; diversion of resources allocated to the UNCCD to other activities; bad coordination and inappropriate allocation of resources among different activities to combat land degradation, drought and desertification; and revenue collection from use of natural resources.

87. Among the measures mentioned in the reports to ensure better mobilization of resources are: identification of additional financial sources; major changes in the revenue collection; creation of national financial mechanisms for rational use and protection of nature; accumulation and effective use of funds allocated to financing actions in the field of land management, restoration and protection; and upgrading the role of insurance systems, central or regional relief funds and guarantee funds.

88. Since the previous reporting exercise, some progress has been made relating to measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought. Various measures in line with decision 8/COP.4 seem to be under implementation or planned. There is some indication of a shift from reactive measures to preventive ones, as shown by the increasing attention by some country Parties to drawing up the maps for soil types, and especially drought sensitivity maps for individual countries, subregions or regions, and also by the efforts of many countries to develop early warning systems for food security and drought forecasting.

89. During the period between the second and the third reporting exercises there have been some changes from the simple recognition of the importance of measures relating to land degradation, drought and desertification monitoring and assessment, to their practical application. The degree of application varies across countries from starting preparatory work to creating partial or nation-wide monitoring systems for disaster analysis and forecasting.

90. Academic and research systems in many country Parties have been undergoing reorganization to better fit emerging market economies and during the period of reorganization their capacities to produce appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how for the implementation of the environmental conventions are limited. Many countries are still deficient in financial and consultative support to combat ecological disasters. The scarcity of technology resources can hinder the UNCCD process in the region. Under these circumstances, an important increase in external financial and technical assistance would be required. Nevertheless, some affected country Parties from CEE underline their strong intention to promote their national technology and know-how in the markets through the UNCCD mechanisms.

91. A growing number of the reports by affected CEE Parties demonstrate the intention of these countries to continue to address land degradation, drought and desertification issues. Moreover, their efforts have been strengthened through upgraded participatory processes, some improvements of relevant institutional and resources mobilization mechanisms, efforts undertaken to ensure synergy with other environmental conventions, and activities towards mainstreaming the UNCCD process into economic development strategies.

92. But in spite of some improvements, the implementation of the UNCCD continues to be a big challenge to the affected country Parties of the region. In fact, the barriers to progress are the same as those reported during the previous reporting exercise – difficulties in mobilizing financial and technological resources, institutional shortcomings, lack of coordination among different actors, etc.

93. Responding to frequent requests from affected country Parties at the COP, funds were made available to some affected CEE country Parties.

C. Synthesis of information provided in reports submitted by Central and Eastern European country Parties

1. Participatory processes involving civil society and non-governmental and community-based organizations

94. The analysis of reports received from affected CEE country Parties shows that all Parties have a clear common understanding that a top-down and sector approach will not be successful for combating land degradation, drought and desertification. All reports recognize that the bottom-up approach is the only valid way to combat these environmental threats. Hence the participatory process is considered as a precondition for preparing a credible NAP and for successfully implementing the UNCCD. The reports provide examples of various policy actions and measures stimulating the participatory process. These reports provide some information on the achievements reached as well as shortcomings and constraints of these measures during their implementation.

95. Most country Parties' reports demonstrate progressive development in this area, in particular on increasing the involvement of various stakeholders from governments, NGOs, private foundations, scientific communities, media, local authorities and communities. Two country Parties reported on the establishment of Aarhus Centres during the reporting period. The reports also mention some gradual improvement in organization and in a content of conferences, seminars, workshops, awareness campaigns, publications, and audio-visual materials aimed at different layers of stakeholders; and in inclusion of environmental protection courses into national high school programmes and university curricula. At the same time, the reports note a vast diversity of speed, degree of involvement in and promotion of the participatory process. Some reports give information on administrative experience relating to the participatory process.

96. However, in many country Parties only a small number of stakeholders have been involved in the UNCCD process. Reports do not provide information on effectiveness of participatory process. In some cases the representation of stakeholders in NCBs is poor. One country Party report recognizes a limited involvement of stakeholders in the process of preparing its NAP and, as a result, this country is now looking forward to revising its NAP using a "bottom-up" approach. The low effective involvement of NGOs and especially local communities in the preparation and implementation of NAPs is explained in some country Parties by the fact that these actors do not have sufficient funds, and in others by psychological constraints inherited from the past.

2. Legislative and institutional frameworks and arrangements

97. All reports show some progress, and provide information on measures aimed at strengthening legislative and institutional frameworks, which vary widely depending on individual countries' economic, social and political situations, as well as experience in combating these phenomena in the framework of the UNCCD. But the results of implementing these measures are relatively modest. No reporting CEE country Party yet has a coherent and functional legislative framework relating to the implementation of the UNCCD.

98. Three countries report that they have not yet adopted Land Codes. Five country Parties report the establishment of supporting legal grounds for combating land degradation within their

newly adopted environment protection system. The same countries report that several measures have been recently undertaken in order to harmonize their current national legislation with EU ecological laws and legislation in accordance with the EC Common Agricultural Policy. One country reported on the creation and use of information management tools to support strategic decision-making.

99. Since the previous reporting exercise one country has finalized and officially adopted the NAP but it is not being implemented due to the absence of financial resources. Five CEE country Parties are close to finalizing or are in the process of drafting the text of their NAPs. One country Party stated that the NAP adopted before the second reporting exercise must be reviewed and updated in cooperation with interested international partners by using a bottom-up approach. Three country Parties established NCBs during the reporting period.

3. Resource mobilization and coordination, both domestic and international, including conclusion of partnership agreements

100. All reports consider adequate financing as a key element for successful actions to combat land degradation, drought and desertification, and that the scarcity of financial resources is one of the major handicaps hampering national efforts to reduce land degradation and to restore degraded lands. Some countries report that budgetary resources are primarily allocated for other economic and social goals, and that resources initially allocated to soil conservation and land protection are being diverted to other purposes. In some cases national tax codes do not stimulate utilization of extra-budgetary funds.

101. There are examples in the reports of inappropriate distribution of resources among the different sectors and of inadequate coordination on mitigating the effects of drought. In some cases the national budget lacks a budgetary item for direct implementation of the Convention. Sometimes, the practice of revenue collection from use of natural resources is among the main constraints for sustainability of natural resources management.

102. One country Party considers that the system of governmental and local authority control, regulation and support should be further improved, that the sources and means of compensation should be determined, and that the insurance system, central or regional relief funds and guarantee funds should play a role in supporting populations who have suffered great losses because of drought.

103. As an important new development, one country Party report presents a financial mechanism relating to the rational use and protection of the environment, which is based not only on fiscal penalties for ecological damage and payments for land use but also on economic stimulation of measures to reduce negative impacts of economic activities on the environment. Another country Party provides information on its intention to activate local authorities to mobilize additional resources through NGOs and to involve temporarily unemployed people on implementing the NAP.

104. Most country Parties state that in the immediate future the main objectives of mobilizing and utilizing funds should include identification of additional financial sources, centralization of the available resources, further improvement of the investment climate, development of enabling

economic mechanisms for combating land degradation, and accumulation and effective use of funds allocated for activities relating to land management, restoration and protection.

105. Some CEE country Parties note that so far no projects have been launched in their region with the assistance of the Global Mechanism (GM). Even consultative or logistical assistance is not being provided to affected countries of Annex V. These countries want the GM to start activities in affected country Parties of this region. The reports contain almost no information on utilization of the GEF operational programme 15 (OP 15) on sustainable land management by affected CEE country Parties.

4. Links and synergy with other environmental conventions and, as appropriate, with national development strategies

106. All reporting CEE countries are Parties to Rio conventions and they are trying to ensure synergy between them, and thus avoid duplication. The reporting countries are trying to coordinate implementation of these conventions through one ministry, usually Ministries of Environment. In most countries cooperative processes have been established with other relevant ministries, agencies, scientific institutions, local governments and land users. However, this process needs to be improved substantially. A country reported on the role played by the Joint Liaison Group (JLG) of the Rio Conventions, which comprises the officers of the conventions' scientific subsidiary bodies, the Executive Secretaries, and members of the secretariats. The objective of the JLG is to improve coordination among the conventions.

107. Only four country Parties report finishing the implementation of a project on national capacity needs self-assessment (NCSA) which helped them to identify their potential needs for implementing the three Rio conventions and enabled them to develop some joint projects in the areas of land degradation, drought and desertification, biodiversity and climate change.

108. Only two reports mention preparation of national environmental strategies. Another two reports mention that the NAPs were integrated into their poverty reduction strategy programmes (PRSPs); in one case the NAP is considered as a part of the National Economic and Social Development Plan. In two cases, establishment of national parks is put forward as an example of concrete implementation of all three Rio conventions. No reports provided information on links with the global compact of meeting the Millennium Development Goals.

5. Sustainable land-use management, including water, soil and vegetation

109. Some CEE country Parties mention various measures on sustainable land-use management, in particular preparing codes for agricultural and environment good practice, providing irrigation subsidies to farmers, improving water distribution and irrigation systems, and establishing a programme on maintenance and use of rehabilitated lands that aims to stimulate competitive agricultural production, based on environmentally clean products, and at protecting soils and waters from degradation. One country reports that, at legislative and programme levels, its national water management policy generally conforms to the Convention's guiding principles and to European legislation. However, the area of water resources management lacks coordination between all concerned institutions.

6. Development of sustainable agriculture and ranching production systems

110. A few CEE country Parties give information on agricultural activities such as formulation of land cadastres for agriculture and forests, creation of land improvement funds, initiation of national programmes on creation of forest belts, and financing of pasture rehabilitation. Some mention difficulties and constraints relating to the fact that in the market economy they can no longer use the old crop rotation system, or implement conservation tillage practices, strip cropping, soil nutrient management, and other soil conservation measures that would prevent further land degradation.

7. Development of new and renewable energy sources

111. Only one CEE country Party reported on two pilot projects on renewable energy on systems to produce biogas from animal waste, and on planting fast-growing tree species.

8. Measures for the rehabilitation of degraded land and for early warning systems for mitigating the effects of drought

112. There is much more information on rehabilitation and early warning systems in the current reports compared with the second reporting exercise. All the reports mention measures which have been implemented or planned in accordance with decision 8/COP.4. Some reports examine national experiences in this area and identify several economic, legal, administrative and logistical constraints hampering implementation of such measures. One country Party reports on some land and environment protective measures, which are being undertaken in the Chernobyl area.

113. Some CEE country Parties mention the importance of preparing soil maps and technical guidelines for rehabilitation of eroded lands. One country considers that preparation of drought sensitivity maps, possibly including all European countries, should be one of the most urgent research tasks of the UNCCD process. This Party stated that a joint project proposal had been prepared for fund-raising but that there had been no positive response.

114. Some reports contain information on development of early warning systems for drought forecasting; some countries consider this a priority in their efforts to mitigate the effects of drought. An operational early warning system means an opportunity to shift drought mitigation strategies from crisis management to risk management.

115. Some reports mention socio-economic, legal, institutional, financial, human, logistical and even political constraints which greatly reduce the effectiveness of measures to rehabilitate degraded land and to mitigate the effects of drought.

9. Drought and desertification monitoring and assessment

116. All reports from affected CEE country Parties recognize the importance of drought and desertification monitoring and assessment systems. They demonstrate that the countries are at different stages of preparation and implementation of such systems.

117. One country reports on national system of land-use monitoring, which provides timely information to the land cadastre. Other countries provide information on, for example, systems for forest vegetation and soil – land monitoring, drought monitoring systems operating in water management, and indicators for assessing desertification and drought, which take into consideration particularities of various regions.

10. Access by affected country Parties, particularly affected developing country Parties, to appropriate technology, knowledge and know-how

118. Most of the reports continue to emphasize the role of national research and educational institutions. Some countries underline the positive input from their national scientific communities into development of relevant new technology and know-how, in particular, development of maps for eroded soils, of a methodology for nature-friendly agricultural use of lands, of technology for land rehabilitation, and of benchmarks and indicators.

119. Some reports, however, are less optimistic. In one country the agricultural and forest research system is being reorganized in order to fit better with structural changes in the economy and social sectors and so most of its institutions are suffering from lack of funds, skilled personnel and modern equipment. In some cases, a lack or scarcity of appropriate technology and knowledge seriously hampers efforts by affected CEE country Parties to implement the UNCCD. Even so, one country underlines its readiness to deliver products produced on the basis of national research and development to other countries. Another one mentions its intention to promote its technology, knowledge and know-how to combat droughts, land degradation and desertification through the UNCCD mechanisms.

D. Lessons learned from the reports submitted by Central and Eastern European country Parties

1. Lessons learned from the process of preparation and implementation of national action programmes

120. The lessons learned from this third reporting exercise are similar to those formulated during the second reporting exercise, i.e. the need to integrate NAPs from the very beginning into long-term socio-economic strategies and environmental and sustainable development plans, and to ensure links between NAPs and relevant sectoral programmes. At present, new approaches to NAP preparation are evident from the reports, i.e. a shift from a “top-down” to a “bottom-up” approach.

121. It is still difficult to draw lessons relating to the implementation process because at present only four CEE countries have adopted their NAPs. But what is evident is that shortages of financial resources are still major obstacles to successful implementation of existing NAPs.

2. Lessons learned from the system for the presentation of reports

122. The analytical matrix proposed by the Help Guide is an important instrument for preparing national reports in the standardized form. Careful use of the Guide by the country Parties would facilitate the assessment of the implementation of the UNCCD. Most country Parties have followed the general structure of the Guide but not its indicators, evaluation parameters, remarks and questions. Moreover, the information contained under headings and

subheadings does not always reflect the facts and figures relating to the reviewed period. The reports are descriptive rather than analytical and many do not give a clear answer on the effectiveness of national and international efforts undertaken and their impact on UNCCD implementation.

123. The submission of country profiles by most Parties provides some information on the biophysical and socio-economic indicators of countries of the region. But the information cannot be used to identify links between the degradation of natural resources, and the socio-economic situation, living conditions or human development of an affected country or region.

E. Conclusions and recommendations for Central and Eastern European country Parties

124. The analysis of reports indicates that the extent of implementation of the UNCCD varies widely across the affected CEE country Parties. The success of UNCCD implementation depends on there being political will to convince stakeholders of the importance of the UNCCD process and on governments having the ability to motivate these stakeholders to combat land degradation, drought and desertification.

125. NAPs should be integrated into sustainable development and socio-economic strategies of the countries as early as possible. There is a strong belief that countries should use a “bottom-up” approach when preparing or updating their NAPs.

126. The CEE country Parties which are in transition should take into account that in a market economy, environment protection measures will be successful only when they involve the private sector.

127. Mitigating impacts of drought on the environment and agriculture should shift from crisis management (a reactive approach) to risk management (a preventive approach). Only with a serious increase of external financial resources can appropriate technology and staff be mobilized to create systems to assess, monitor and mitigate the effects of land degradation, drought and desertification.

128. For the affected CEE country Parties international support is a major source of funds and technologies for issues pertinent to UNCCD implementation. In this context the country Parties expect that the GEF will increase its support to the affected Parties of the region, and that the GM will start its activities in Central and Eastern Europe.

129. National reports should be upgraded to become analytical and of practical use to the Parties themselves and for their partners. Country profiles should also be upgraded with a view to ensuring links between the degradation of natural resources and the socio-economic situation of the affected country Parties.

III. INFORMATION ON REPORTS SUBMITTED BY OTHER AFFECTED COUNTRY PARTIES

130. Three affected developed country Parties not covered by any annexes under the UNCCD submitted their reports on their activities to implement the Convention: for one of them it is the first report. Their reports mainly follow the format for affected developed country Parties not preparing action programmes, as given in decision 11/COP.1, paragraph 10 (d). They present the characteristics of desertification in each country, give indications on legislative frameworks, policy context, and land management strategies within the framework of sustainable development management, and also describe the associated activities and programmes providing various data. In addition to the seven key thematic topics as defined in decision 1/COP.5, sustainable management of land-use, particularly of water, soil and vegetation, in affected areas, development of sustainable agriculture and ranching production systems, and development of new and renewable energy sources, are also reviewed and illustrated with figures and maps. One report details the links and synergy with other environmental conventions and national strategies, and the country's support for and experiences of new technologies in arid lands.
