



Convention to Combat Desertification

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The 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)

Revised procedures for the participation of civil society organizations in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Revised procedures for the participation of civil society organizations in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

Note by the secretariat

Summary

By its decision 5/COP.9, the Conference of the Parties (COP) set the basis for implementation of the revised procedures for the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification.

The same decision requests the Executive Secretary to report at the tenth session of the COP on the implementation of that decision and the results achieved.

The present document contains the report by the Executive Secretary and includes some conclusions and recommendations towards ensuring a more balanced and effective participation of CSOs based on the results achieved so far, for consideration by the COP.

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I. Introduction and background

1. At the recommendation of the Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations,¹ decision 3/COP.8 requested the secretariat to develop “revised procedures for the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs) in United Nations Conference to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) meetings and processes, including clear selection criteria and a mechanism to ensure a balance of participants from different regions”.
2. By decision 5/COP.9, Parties adopted the revised procedures² and the eligibility criteria³ for the participation of CSOs in the Conference of the Parties (COP) and other UNCCD activities. The COP requested the secretariat to apply these criteria starting from the ninth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 9).
3. Furthermore, Parties agreed on “additional mechanisms and procedures to select candidates by the eligible criteria” as contained in the annex to the above-mentioned decision, including the establishment and functioning of a selection panel.
4. Paragraph 7 of decision 5/COP.9 requests the Executive Secretary to report at the tenth session of the COP (COP 10) on the implementation of the decision and results achieved. The report by the Executive Secretary is contained in the present document, and includes some conclusions and recommendations based on the results achieved so far, for consideration by the COP.

II. Implementation of decision 5/COP.9 and results achieved

A. Revised procedures for the participation of civil society organizations in the Conference of the Parties and other activities of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

5. Pursuant to the annex to decision 5/COP.9, the Executive Secretary was requested to convene a selection panel in order to select candidate participants from eligible CSOs according to the agreed criteria. The selection panel would comprise two members nominated by civil society networks and two members appointed by the secretariat.
6. Following this mandate, and as a result of consultations⁴ with the CSOs accredited to the COP, the following members were appointed:

¹ Recommendation no. 9 of the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU/REP/2005/5, entitled “Review of the management, administration and activities of the secretariat of the UNCCD”) states: “The Executive Secretary should, as a matter of priority, propose revised procedures for the participation of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the COP and other activities, including clear selection criteria and a mechanism to ensure a balance of participants from different regions.”

² As contained in document ICCD/COP(9)/4/Add.1 and its corrigendum.

³ (a) Geographical balance, (b) Turnover regime, (c) Consideration of representative networks, (d) Expertise balance, and (e) Gender balance.

⁴ A request was launched on 13 September 2010 to accredited CSOs asking them to nominate their representatives for the selection panel

(<http://www.unccd.int/cso/docs/letter%20selection%20panel%20ENGLISH.pdf>).

- (a) Mr. Patrice Burger⁵
- (b) Mr. Emmanuel Seck⁶
- (c) Mr. Rui Zheng⁷
- (d) Mr. Richard Byron-Cox.⁸

7. A total of 142 requests to participate in the CRIC 9 and Committee on Science and Technology (CST) S-2 sessions were received from CSOs by 31 December 2010, out of which 126 requests were from organizations eligible to receive financial support. The contributions pledged by donors to this effect sponsored the participation of 18 CSO representatives.

8. In order for the selection panel to fulfil its mandate, the secretariat had provided it with:

- (a) Information on the estimated amount of funding available for the participation of CSO representatives at CST S-2 and CRIC 9;
- (b) The list of organizations recommended for funding in accordance with the revised procedures⁹ and the eligibility criteria contained in the annex to decision 5/COP.9;
- (c) A proposed theme for the open-dialogue session at CRIC 9, and further work in preparation for COP 10;
- (d) Draft terms of reference (ToR) defining the obligations and responsibilities of the sponsored organizations,¹⁰ with regard to (c) above.¹¹

9. The first meeting of the panel took place on 14 January 2011 through telephone conferencing, and deliberated on the aforementioned items. Further results of the selection process, and the adherence of the same to the selection criteria, are reported in the annex to this document.

10. With regard to the provisions contained in paragraph 3 of the annex to decision 5/COP.9, the secretariat states that pledges from developed Parties were made very late in this process, and the selection panel could inform the organizations selected only approximately four weeks before their participation.

11. The current selection panel, which is expected to serve for one term lasting until the next session of the COP, will meet again in preparation for COP 10 and will conduct a similar exercise. The next meeting of the selection panel will also review reports from the sponsored organizations which participated in the CRIC 9 and CST S-2 sessions. A brief updated report on the process could be provided orally, upon request to the President of the COP.

⁵ CARI (Centre d'actions et de réalisations internationales), France: National NGO, member of DRYNET network and promoter of GTD – Groupe de Travail Désertification.

⁶ Environnement et Développement du Tiers Monde (ENDA TM), Senegal – member of ENDA International network and of the Réseau International des ONG sur la Désertification Africa network.

⁷ UNCCD, Officer in Charge of Regional Coordination Function/Regional Coordination Units.

⁸ UNCCD secretariat, Programme officer -Facilitation, Capacity-Building and Monitoring of Implementation Unit.

⁹ As contained in document ICCD/COP(9)/4/Add.1 and its corrigendum.

¹⁰ The ToR are available at <http://www.unccd.int/cso/docs/CRIC9CSTS2-CSO_ToRfinal.pdf>.

¹¹ ToR of the selected organizations were initially discussed during the civil society consultations which took place at the occasion of CRIC 7 (Istanbul, 13 November 2008).

B. Enhancing the effectiveness of input from civil society to the meetings of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies

12. Paragraph 4 of decision 5/COP.9 requests the secretariat to “facilitate active participation of CSOs in the process in preparation for the meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of input from civil society”.

13. It is recalled that at its meeting on 1–2 March 2010, the CRIC Bureau invited accredited CSOs to report to CRIC 9 on best practices, using the same template and guidelines being devised for the other reporting entities, while continuing to provide information to the national focal points.

14. At the same meeting, the CRIC Bureau also recommended the facilitation of a wide civil-society-driven consultation process on how effectively to use information on best practices compiled for CRIC review, to ensure wide diffusion of such information and to translate the lessons learned in this process into policy recommendations. The CRIC Bureau further directed that the consultation process should be launched at CRIC 9, making use of a more interactive style of exchange, and should lead to further deliberations at COP 10.

15. In this regard, and within the framework of the CRIC 9 and CST S-2 sessions, the secretariat facilitated interactions among COSs via electronic means as well as through the organization of a CSO preparatory meeting immediately before the sessions.

16. In its preparations for COP 10, the secretariat is establishing a community of practice to facilitate exchange and interaction among civil society. Furthermore, in coordination with the Korean CSO network to combat desertification, the secretariat will facilitate the CSO preparatory meetings prior to COP 10.

C. Open-dialogue sessions with civil society representatives within the programme of work of the Conference of the Parties

17. Decision 5/COP.9¹² also requests the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Bureau of the COP, to ensure that the programme of work of the COP includes open-dialogue sessions with civil society representatives during the first week of the COP. Pursuant to this provision, during COP 10 two half-day open-dialogue sessions will be convened, on Friday 14 October and Wednesday 19 October 2011.

D. Contribution to the Supplementary Fund of the Convention and consultations in order to ensure wider, more predictable and balanced participation of civil society organizations in meetings of the United Nations Convention Combat Desertification

18. Paragraph 6 of decision 5/COP.9 also invites developed country Parties and international and financial organizations to contribute to the Supplementary Fund for CSO participation, and to consult with the secretariat “with a view to making the participation of the CSOs in these meetings more predictable and balanced, and to inform the secretariat in advance of any pledge in order to ensure better predictability of funding and better organization of the civil society inputs to the process”.

¹² Paragraph 4.

19. In the light of this request, the secretariat informed developed country Parties and international and financial organizations on the estimated cost of supporting the participation of 30 representatives of civil society at CRIC 9 and CST S-2 in Bonn, Germany, which totalled 109,892 euros.

20. A limited number of developed countries provided financial contributions to the Supplementary Fund for this purpose, while one country decided to support directly the participation of CSO representatives and agreed to consult with the secretariat regarding the selection of these representatives. In this case, the selection process was also done in accordance with the mechanism established by decision 5/COP.9 and following the same eligibility criteria as those established for the Supplementary Fund.

21. The total contributions enabled the participation of 18 CSO representatives. In addition, 22 representatives from 13 CSOs participated in CST-S2 and CRIC 9 on their own budget.

III. Opportunities for assessing the revised procedures, with particular regard to widening the mandate of the selection panel

22. After a first preliminary assessment of the tasks discharged by the selection panel, as reported in this document, the COP may wish to consider confirming, amending or extending its mandate.

23. In consideration of the need to conduct consultations among CSOs, including during the intersessional period, and the role to be played by the sponsored organizations according to the agreed ToR, the selection panel could also be entrusted with the task of facilitating these consultations and monitoring the process, and reporting to the COP through the secretariat.

24. After the finalization of the selection of CSO candidates to receive financial support to attend COP 10, the COP may wish to conduct a full assessment of the work of the panel and the effectiveness of the actions carried out during its mandate, with a view to undertaking corrective measures if required.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

25. **The COP at its tenth session may wish:**

(a) To take note of the report by the Executive Secretary on the implementation of decision 5/COP.9;

(b) To entrust the selection panel with the additional task of facilitating consultations among COSs during the period between sessions of the COP, to monitor the process in close consultation with the CRIC Bureau, and at the end of its mandate to report to the COP through the secretariat;

(c) To reiterate invitation to developed country Parties, international and financial organizations and relevant stakeholders to substantially and promptly contribute to the Supplementary Fund of the Convention in order to ensure wider participation of CSOs in UNCCD meetings;

(d) To request the UNCCD secretariat to continue using all possible means, including state-of-the-art information and communication technology, to facilitate

interaction among CSOs and to ensure the active involvement of civil society in UNCCD processes.

Annex

Outcome of the selection process for CRIC 9/CST S-2

(a) Geographical balance

	<i>Number of funded organizations</i>	<i>Actual percentage</i>	<i>Target percentage</i>
Annex I	9	50 %	50 %
Annex II	5	28 %	25 %
Annex III	3	17 %	20 %
Annex IV	-	-	-
Annex V	1	6 %	5 %
Total	18	100 %	100 %

(b) Turnover regime

	<i>Actual percentage</i>	<i>Target percentage</i>
Past participants	56 %	60 %
First-time participants	44 %	40 %
Total	100 %	100 %

(c) Representative networks

	<i>Actual percentage</i>	<i>Target percentage</i>
International networks	50 %	30 %
Other networks and individual organizations	50 %	70 %
Total	100 %	100 %

(d) Expertise/experience

	<i>Actual percentage</i>	<i>Target percentage</i>
Expertise in sustainable land management matters	72 %	50 %
Other expertise	28 %	50 %
Total	100 %	100 %

(e) Gender balance

	<i>Actual percentage</i>	<i>Target percentage</i>
Female representatives	72 %	50 %
Male representatives	28 %	50 %
Total	100 %	100 %
