



**- MINUTES OF THE FORTH INTERSESSIONAL MEETING OF THE CST17 BUREAU -
29 NOVEMBER 2025 PANAMA CITY (IN THE MARGINS OF CRIC 23)**

1. The forth intersessional meeting of the Bureau of the 17th session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST17) took place in a hybrid format on Saturday, 29 November 2025, from 11h00 to 13h00 (EST time, UTC – 5), with participation both in-person in the margins of the 23rd Session of the Committee on the Review of the Implementation of the Convention held in Panama City, Panama) and online via Zoom.

2. Four CST17 Bureau members attended the meeting (see Annex I) The meeting was chaired by Dr. Nicholas Webb, CST Chair.

3. The meeting was convened to review progress on CST science-policy deliverables ahead of CRIC 23, receive updates on the development of the Global Land Outlook, Third Edition (GLO3), and discuss CST Bureau preparations and possible contribution to the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework (IWG-FSF) and the road to COP17. Two lead authors of GLO3 from the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) joined the meeting virtually to present the results of the ongoing work of the SPI and to brief the CST Bureau on the current status of the development of GLO3.

I. Adoption of the Agenda.

4. The agenda of the meeting was adopted without any amendments (see Annex II).

II. Outcomes of the GLO 3 Lead Authors Working Meeting

5. The secretariat reported on the outcomes of the SPI GLO3 Lead Authors' Working Meeting held in Bonn from 20 to 22 October 2025, including the outcomes of internal consultations with the secretariat's substantive units regarding the theme and scope of the GLO3, efforts of the SPI to ensure the communication potential of the report, and refinements to the structure and language flow and format of the report resulting from the work of this hands-on working meeting.

6. SPI lead authors Dr. Elizabeth Huber-Sannwald and Dr. Nichole Barger shared the presentation they had prepared for Interactive Dialogue planned for CRIC23 Agenda item 5 Consideration of priorities for science-policy guidance. The SPI lead authors presented an overview of the GLO3 structure, focus and narrative centered around the role of land in building resilience leading to human security. They also described the efforts of the SPI to synthesize the latest science with respect to identifying solution pathways, enabling conditions, and future system trajectories to 2030 and 2050. They noted that improvements to the working draft of GLO3 had been incorporated based on feedback from the secretariat's substantive units and refined further by inputs from executive management, with the aim of strengthening the potential impact of the report, its narrative coherence and its policy relevance. They closed their presentation by highlighting cross-cutting methodological updates and enhanced integration of policy-relevant case studies in GLO3.

7. As part of their presentation, the SPI lead authors recalled guidance from the UNCCD Executive Secretary, emphasizing the need for GLO3 to clearly connect science to policy and to the needs of people on the ground. They also noted her emphasis on a number of current UNCCD priorities, including the importance of private-sector engagement, innovation, transformative financing mechanisms, drought resilience, food security and improved communication of the science in accessible, non-technical language.

8. CST Bureau members emphasized the need for solution-oriented and policy-relevant messages to appear clearly in each chapter. They stressed the importance of ensuring that the report resonates



with local communities and decision-makers and requested special attention be given to graphical clarity and terminology consistency.

9. During the discussion on GLO3, CST Bureau members emphasized the importance of presenting the human security concept clearly and prominently, noting that it should serve as an anchoring theme throughout the report. They stressed that GLO3 must be meaningful and accessible to ordinary citizens, including farmers and local communities, and should communicate scientific findings in ways that resonate with lived experience. Members also requested that each chapter present policy-relevant, solution-oriented key messages upfront to support clearer uptake by decision-makers, and noted that recent disasters in Indonesia and the Caribbean underscore the urgency of connecting the report's analysis to real-world impacts and resilience needs. In addition to these substantive points, the Bureau offered several technical and editorial suggestions, including the need to clarify graphs and legends—particularly those related to drought and mapping—and to replace wording referring to “potential databases” with language reflecting the use of actual evaluated project databases. Members recommended re-labelling Chapter 4 to highlight an ongoing assessment of evaluated projects as being distinct from traditional inclusion of case studies. The assessment is intended to provide insights about how those projects address resilience and human security, while case studies will be designed to support findings in all chapters of the report.

III. Discussion on the Science Agenda during CRIC 23

10. The secretariat briefed the CST Bureau on preparations for the Interactive Dialogue under CRIC Agenda Item 5, anticipated for the morning session of 1 December 2025.

11. The secretariat outlined the planned sequence for the Interactive Dialogue, including the opening by the CRIC Chair, moderation by SPI Advisor Nicole Barger, presentation by SPI Lead author Elizabeth Huber-Sannwald, interventions by CST Bureau representative Michelle Alvarez and the secretariat, followed by interventions from Parties and a concluding summary.

12. Interactive Dialogue panel members were advised to prepare in advance for capturing Parties' comments and suggestions so that they could more effectively respond their interventions. This included taking structured notes referencing Parties and other UNCCD stakeholders by name to support clear and respectful engagement. The secretariat also described internal procedures for recording all interventions in support of their preparation of a summary note that would be introduced in the contact group.

13. It was noted that many Regional Groups were preparing written statements in advance, which would be shared with the CST Bureau where possible.

14. The secretariat reiterated the importance of conveying that GLO3 is a formative and consultative process, with multiple entry points for Party feedback.

IV. Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework (IWG-FSF)

15. The Secretariat updated the Bureau on the work of the IWG-FSF, noting that the group had begun meeting virtually due to delays in regional nominations and had held meetings on 14 October, 06 November, and 14 November 2025.

16. CST Vice-Chair Chay Asdak, a member of the IWG-FSF, summarized recent discussions within the IWG-FSF, noting that the group was launched virtually in October 2025 and has since advanced work on two core areas: the development of a scoping paper reviewing the UNCCD's strategic architecture and financing, and an independent assessment of the current indicator framework. He reported that preliminary findings highlight strengths in several indicators but also reveal significant



gaps related to data availability, methodological consistency, and the integration of social and gender dimensions. He emphasized the importance of shaping a future strategic framework that enhances decision-support, strengthens institutional and financial sustainability, and achieves greater alignment across land, climate, and biodiversity agendas. Inputs gathered during CRIC 23 Plenary as well as daily informal consultations planned during the lunch hour will inform the IWG-FSF at its first physical meeting, scheduled for immediately after CRIC23, all with the aim of contributing to the report of the IWG-FSF due to be completed in April 2026 so that it can be considered during CRIC 24 / COP 17 in August 2026.

17. The Secretariat clarified that CRIC 23 would not produce draft decisions, as it is an intersessional meeting. Instead, its discussions will inform the IWG-FSF's upcoming in-person meeting scheduled for 6–8 December 2025.

V. Road to COP17, Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, 17-28 August 2026

18. The CST Bureau discussed preparations for COP17, emphasizing alignment between CST workstreams, SPI outputs, and UNCCD priorities, particularly regarding drought resilience, the degradation of agricultural soils and Lands, LDN implementation, and the future functioning of the SPI.

19. The secretariat noted ongoing coordination efforts of the CST Bureau, with support from the secretariat, to ensure timely delivery of CST and SPI contributions to the COP17 process.

VI. Any other business

20. The CST Chair and the CST Bureau vice Chairs reiterated appreciation for the work carried out by the secretariat and expressed commitment to supporting the SPI and IWG-FSF processes in the days ahead.

21. The secretariat informed the CST Bureau of potential delays in the adoption of the CRIC agenda due to political sensitivities around the potential proposal by some Parties of new agenda items, which could affect session scheduling and travel plans. The secretariat committed to providing updates. The CST Chair thanked CST Bureau members for their flexibility and highlighted the importance of maintaining clear communication throughout CRIC 23.

22. The Bureau reiterated its concern regarding persistent communication challenges with National Focal Points (NFPs) and Science and Technology Correspondents, particularly in the context of the forthcoming regional consultations on GLO3. The Bureau emphasized the need for improved coordination and timely engagement, stressing that continued difficulties may adversely affect inclusive regional input and preparation for GLO3.

VII. Next meeting

23. The CST Bureau noted that the scheduling of its next meeting would depend on the outcomes of CRIC 23 and the IWG-FSF meeting in early December, as well as on any additional needs that may arise in the coming months. The secretariat recalled that, given resource constraints, no further in-person meetings were anticipated for this cycle and that virtual or hybrid modalities may be required to support continued work on GLO3 and all other deliverables in the UNCCD science agenda that will ultimately be reported on at CST 17/COP 17. The CST Bureau further agreed that their next meeting would be tentatively scheduled for early 2026 and would provide an opportunity to consider the remaining elements of the SPI work programme that were not addressed during the present session, as well as a number of other science activities being conducted outside the work of the SPI. Accordingly, the date of the next CST Bureau meeting will be determined in due course, in line with evolving requirements and the progression of the CST's work.

24. Following this discussion, The CST Chair closed the meeting.-----



Annex I. List of participants

CST Bureau Members	UN Geographical Regional Groups¹
Nicholas Webb, CST Chair	Western Europe and Others Group
Jean Didier Leho, CST Vice-Chair	Africa Group
Chay Asdak, CST Vice-Chair	Asia Group
Michelle Alvarez, CST Vice-Chair	GRULAC
UNCCD Secretariat	
Johns Muleso Kharika	Science, Technology, and Innovation Unit
Barron Joseph Orr	
Olga Andreeva	
Yufu Guo	
Lawrencia Eposi	
Elizabeth Huber-Sannwald	SPI
Nicole Barger	SPI

¹ <https://www.un.org/dgacm/en/content/regional-groups>

Annex II. Agenda of the meeting

Fourth Intersessional Meeting of the Bureau of the 17th session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST17)

Date: Saturday, 29 November 2025

Time: 11h00 – 13h00 (EST time, UTC - 5)

Working language: English

In person meeting: Panama Convention Center, Panama City, Panama

Meeting Room **CARIBE 1**

Calle General Juan D. Perón, Amador, Panama City, Panama

- Provisional Agenda –

- I. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**
- II. Outcomes of the GLO 3 Lead Authors Working Meeting**
Report on the outcomes of the meeting held from 20 to 22 October in Bonn and the status of the preparation of the Global Land Outlook, Third Edition (GLO3).
The SPI co-leads' perspectives and observations.
- III. Discussion on the Science Agenda during CRIC 23.**
Preparation for the CRIC Agenda Item 5. Consideration of priorities for science–policy guidance. Interactive Dialogue.
- IV. Intergovernmental Working Group on Future Strategic Framework of the UNCCD.**
Update by the CST Vice-Chair on the progress of the IWG FSF and related activities.
- V. Road to COP17, Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar, 17-28 August 2026.**
Discussion on preparatory activities and milestones leading to COP17
- VI. Any other business**
- VII. Next meeting**