United Nations
Convention to Combat Desertification

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Report of the CRIC Bureau meeting

(hybrid meeting format on 20 June 2025)

I. Welcoming remarks by the CRIC Chair

1. The Chair of the CRIC Bureau, welcomed the participants to the first CRIC Bureau meeting and opened the floor by outlining the agenda items for discussion.

II. Adoption of the agenda

2. The agenda for the meeting had been circulated in advance to all Bureau members. The secretariat remarked that an agenda item would need to be inserted with reference to the nomination of a rapporteur for the Bureau who would be officially appointed at the twenty third session of the CRIC in Panama. With that amendment and no additional items proposed, the agenda was adopted.

III. Nominating the rapporteur of the CRIC Bureau

3. The CRIC Bureau considered the need for the nomination of a rapporteur for the Bureau and requested the secretariat to explain the role and responsibilities of such a rapporteur. During its intervention, the secretariat also emphasized that ideally the rapporteur should be rotating among the various UN regions and that Africa would be next if this rotational principle were to be considered. The CRIC Chair enquired whether the African vice Chair would consider taking up this assignment which was responded to in the affirmative. The CRIC Bureau therefore nominated the vice Chair from Africa, Mr. Charles Lange as rapporteur for the CRIC Bureau (2025 – 2026, COP 17) to be confirmed by all Parties at CRIC 23 in Panama.

IV. Update on the preparations for CRIC 23

4. The secretariat provided a detailed update on the planning and logistical arrangements for CRIC 23. It was stated that a second planning mission would be undertaken in early July to finalize key logistical components in close coordination with the Government of Panama. The secretariat also informed the Bureau that discussions with the Panamanian authorities regarding visa facilitation were ongoing, with the objective of ensuring the timely issuance of visas for all participants. It was stated that while visa fees would not be waived, participants may request reimbursement through the regular administrative channels. The CRIC Bureau considered the report and reiterated the importance of an operational system that will ensure easy and early access to visa issuance from the host government.

5. The CRIC Bureau also requested that it be updated on all conferences and workshops that will be held on the sidelines of CRIC 23, the meeting of the IWG FSF being one of the important meetings the CRIC Bureau wanted to be kept appraised of.

V. The CRIC 23 agenda

6. The secretariat presented an overview of the draft agenda and programme of work for CRIC 23. The draft agenda items were stated as follows:

   a) Organizational matters:

      i) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work;
      ii) Appointment of the rapporteur of the Committee;

   b) Effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional levels:

      i) Update on the implementation of the voluntary land degradation neutrality targets and related implementation efforts;
      ii) Policy frameworks and thematic topics: sand and dust storms, land tenure;
      iii) Development and promotion of activities for targeted capacity-building to further the implementation of the Convention.

   c) Improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties.

   d) Interim report of the intergovernmental working group on the future strategic framework;

   e) Consideration of priorities for science-policy guidance

   f) Special segment: Gender caucus

   g) Adoption of the report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to the Conference of the Parties.

7. An interactive dialogue or several dialogues are planned under the agenda item addressing the national reporting process which is one of the key agenda items where Parties are expected to provide their experience with the national reporting. The secretariat further noted that the other agenda items may feature interactive segments as well, although these are yet to be confirmed at this stage of preparations. Regional consultations will be held in Panama immediately before the official start of the session to support Parties in their preparations for CRIC 23.

8. The secretariat also highlighted that for the first time in the context of a CRIC session, a Gender Caucus will be convened as requested by Parties at COP 16. Additionally, the secretariat recalled that the interim report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on the Future Strategic Framework (IWG FSF) is expected to be presented at CRIC 23. However, given that the IWG FSF is scheduled to convene its first meeting in September 2025, it remains uncertain whether the interim report will be completed in time to meet the 27

October 2025 deadline for the submission of late-slotted documents requiring translation, as set by UNOG.

9. A Bureau member proposed enhancing Party engagement and interaction during the CRIC 23 sessions. The secretariat took note of this suggestion and will explore measures to strengthen engagement, including by expanding opportunities for experience-sharing during interactive segments and allocating additional time for discussion.

10. The inclusion of resource mobilization in the CRIC 23 agenda was also raised by a Bureau member. The secretariat clarified that updates on financial matters are traditionally provided by the Global Mechanism (GM) during CRIC sessions held in conjunction with the COP. Nonetheless, recognizing the importance of resource mobilization to many Parties, the secretariat undertook the suggestion to explore appropriate means of addressing this issue within CRIC 23. Options under consideration include integrating the topic into the agenda item on the IWG-FSF, expanding the GM's document on Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) to include financing components, or incorporating relevant information into the Secretariat's report on national reporting. The Bureau requested that the secretariat coordinate closely with the GM to determine the most suitable approach. Bureau members highlighted that this topic may also be relevant in the context of the expected update on the ninth replenishment of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), which is envisioned to be included in one of the session.

VI. Preparations for the 2026 National Reporting process

11. On national reporting, the secretariat confirmed that updates to the PRAIS platform, including the provision of default data, is expected to be finalized by the end of July 2025. Therefore, the 2026 national reporting process is tentatively scheduled to be launched by end of July for Parties to start their national reporting activities. Following this launch, a series of regional training workshops would be conducted beginning in the fourth quarter of 2025. Currently, the secretariat is engaging in bilateral discussions with Parties that are interested to host the regional capacity building workshops. It is anticipated that the workshops will take place from the fourth quarter of 2025 through the first or second quarter of 2026. In view of CRIC 23 being held in Panama, the secretariat is also exploring the feasibility of convening the regional workshop for Parties from Annex III in Panama during the week preceding the session.

12. Decision 2/COP.16 requests the secretariat to enhance collaboration with regional institutions, initiatives and organizations to provide data and technical support to Parties, especially developing countries, small island developing States and least developed countries during the 2026 reporting process of the UNCCD. In this regard, the secretariat briefed the Bureau that several technical institutions are planned to be engaged as Regional Centres for reporting. These institutions will support Parties by providing technical backstopping to ensure the quality of submitted national reports.

VII. Nominations for CSO and independent experts for the IWG FSF

13. The secretariat briefed the Bureau on the status of selection of members from a civil society organization and independent scientists. Shortlists of independent scientists and representatives of civil society organizations had been compiled and were made accessible to both the CRIC and CST Bureaux. A joint meeting of the CRIC and CST Bureaux was scheduled for the following Monday 23 June 2025 to finalize nominations that then would be forwarded to the COP Bureau for endorsement.

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Annex I- Agenda of the meeting

i. Welcoming remarks
ii. Nominating the rapporteur of the CRIC Bureau
iii. Update on the preparations for CRIC 23
iv. Agenda of CRIC 23
v. Update on national reporting
vi. Update on the process of identifying members to the IWG FSF
vii. Any other matter

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Annex III – List of participants

CRIC 22/23 BUREAU MEMBERS

REGION	COUNTRY/ REPRESENTATIVE	CONTACT DETAILS
Western European and Others Group (WEOG)	**France** **Chair**	Ms. Philippine Dutailly Desertification and land degradation officer UNCCD, G20 Global Land Initiative, Great Green Wall Accelerator Environment and Climate Department Global Affairs Directorate Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs 27, rue de la Convention CS 91533 - 75015 Paris Cedex 15 France Tel.: +33 (0)1 43 17 73 80 Mobile: +33 (0)7 62 09 83 70 Email: philippine.dutailly@diplomatie.gouv.fr;
Annex I: Africa	**Kenya** **Vice-Chair**	Mr. Charles Lange Deputy Director, Environmental Research and Planning Coordination, National Environment Management Authority Nairobi, Kenya Tel: +254 722 841 927 Email: clange@nema.go.ke; nzavi2001@yahoo.com;
Annex II: Asia	**China** **Vice-Chair**	Ms. Jia Xiaoxia Deputy Director General Department of Combating Desertification National Forestry and Grassland Administration Beijing, China Tel: +86 8423 8306 Mobile: +86 1391 1624 203 Email: cciccd@126.com; xiaoxia_jia@outlook.com;
Annex III: Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)	**Argentina** **Vice-Chair**	Mr. Pablo Hernan Viegas Aurelio Punto Focal Técnico Subsecretaría de Ambiente San Martin 451 (1004) Buenos Aires, Argentina Tel: +5411 5457 2295 Email: pviegas@ambiente.gob.ar; phviegas@yahoo.com.ar;