



**Report of the CRIC Bureau meeting  
Hybrid meeting with in-person attendance at UNCCD HQ, Bonn, Germany,  
25 June 2024**

**I. Welcoming remarks by the CRIC**

1. Ms. Biljana Kilibarda, Chair of the CRIC Bureau, welcomed the participants to the meeting and presented an overview of the matters to be discussed by the Bureau relating to the upcoming 22<sup>nd</sup> sessional session of the CRIC which will be held in conjunction with the 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of Parties in December 2024 at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

**II. Adoption of the agenda and welcoming the new vice-chair from the Latin America and the Caribbean region**

2. Prior to the meeting, the members of the Bureau had received an annotated agenda for their consideration and possible adoption at the meeting.
3. The following agenda items were presented by the CRIC Chair: welcoming the new member of the Bureau from the Latin American and the Caribbean implementation annex Mr. Rodrigo Andrade Ramirez from Chile, seek endorsement on the tentative draft agenda for the twenty second session of the CRIC to be held in conjunction with the COP, consider draft texts for negotiations that the secretariat drafted on the basis of the final report of the twenty-first session of the CRIC held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan and further discuss the outcome of the joint CST/CRIC Bureau meeting, and the outcome of the COP Bureau meeting held in early June.
4. After a warm welcome and a request by the Chair for some introductory remarks, Mr. Rodrigo Andrade Ramirez, the representative from Chile took the floor to introduce himself and address the Bureau members as the new Vice Chair from the Latin American and the Caribbean implementation annex.
5. With regards to the agenda, no additional items were proposed, and the agenda was adopted by the Bureau as annexed to this document (annex 1).

**III. Report by the CRIC Chair on the COP Bureau meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May**

6. The CRIC Chair briefly introduced the outcomes of the 4<sup>th</sup> COP Bureau meeting held 8<sup>th</sup> of May 2024 and highlighted the following issues:
  - The meeting primarily focused on the status of the organization of and the draft agenda for COP 16. The representative of Saudi Arabia informed the COP Bureau that the host country agreement was signed on 31 January 2024 in Riyadh by his Excellency, the Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture, and the Executive Secretary. So far, COP 16 has been promoted in various global and regional events, including UNFCCC COP 28 in Dubai and the World Economic Forum in Davos. A logo was created and the website is now operational. Additionally, thematic meetings are being held regularly between the UNCCD secretariat and the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture.



- With regards to agenda, the COP Bureau members were informed that an additional substantive sub item on Grassland and Rangeland was added under agenda Item 4 of the COP 16 agenda on Policy Frameworks. The additional agenda item was introduced following the request received by the secretariat on 28 February 2024 from the government of Botswana.
- A similar request was made by the United States of America with regard to adding an agenda item relating to the subject of 'Innovation and Technology in Ecologically Sustainable Agrifood Systems' (herein referred to as Agrifood systems).
- All the official documents that the secretariat is duty bound to present as part of the session are listed in the annotations of the COP 16 agenda. The tentative schedule of work of the session, including plenary meetings of the the Committee of the Whole (COW), the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the CRIC were presented with the preliminary information on the proposed timing of the special segment as follows:
  - High-level meetings, including a leaders' summit, are to be organized by the forthcoming presidency on a day to be determined. Tentative dates were identified, but need confirmation (1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> of December).
  - Additional high-level interactive dialogues on various subjects will be organized from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of December.
  - Two ministerial dialogues, one on drought resilience and another on finance will be organized on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> December, respectively.
  - Special events such as the Business4Land event scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> of December, Gender Caucus, Youth forum, and Indigenous peoples and local communities on 7<sup>th</sup> of December will also be facilitated. The latter was especially welcomed as it is the first time such an event would be organized during a COP session.

#### **IV. Report by the secretariat on steps taking to facilitate the sixteenth session of the COP**

7. During the CRIC Bureau meeting, the secretariat provided a brief on the logistical preparations for COP 16 and informed that the tender for the service provider for COP 16 has not yet been formalized, which is crucial to start the work on the conference venue. Detailed information on organizational issues contained in an information note to be published on the UNCCD website is planned to be shared with Parties by mid- July.
8. The Bureau was informed that the COP 16 agenda has now been endorsed by the COP Bureau and that it will be subsequently posted on the website in the coming days. With regards to the proposed additional agenda item on Agrifood systems, the Bureau was informed that this agenda item was forwarded to the CST upon the request of the United States of America. Information on both new and additional agenda items (Rangelands and agrifood systems) will however be inserted into a common dual symbol document for both the COW and CST plenary meetings. This document will be prepared by the secretariat.
9. The Bureau was also informed that the secretariat, in consultation with the host country identified a number of topics that will receive more attention through events and high-level meetings as part of the action agenda for COP. For each theme, task forces were established with members from the secretariat and institutions within the host country respectively, to organize activities revolving around each thematic day. Lead institutions to coordinate the activities were also identified and



discussions with them are ongoing to develop the detailed program for each day. The task forces are meeting regularly to discuss and plan the events accordingly.

**V. Draft agenda for the twenty-second session of the CRIC**

10. The secretariat provided an overview of the agenda items and schedule of work for CRIC 22, and an update on the status of preparations to finalize the official documents for COP 16. The secretariat enumerated the agenda items for CRIC 22 including a) the multi work plan and the performance of convention institutions, b) a review of the CRIC 21 report, c) financial flows including the report of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and updates on the Global Support Program as well as the report from the Global Mechanism, d) capacity building initiatives of the secretariat, e) Improving the procedures for national reporting and finally f) the election of officers other than the CRIC Chair. The secretariat presented the tentative schedule, with the dates and times, for each topic for review and eventual endorsement by the Bureau.
11. The Bureau was also informed that the CST and CRIC will have for the first time a joint plenary meeting to discuss methodological aspects relating to the national reporting process. Furthermore, the secretariat informed the Bureau that following past practice the related draft decision will also be dealt with by a joint CST and CRIC contact group. Based on the schedule of work for the CRIC in relation with the other subsidiary bodies and the different organized thematic days for COP 16, such as the Science Day, the secretariat strongly suggests that the deliberation on the draft decisions by the joint contact group be undertaken when all the relevant information will have been presented which would mean that the joint contact group on monitoring and national reporting would be convened ideally during the second week. The secretariat however also stressed that this is a decision by the joint contact group and a decision will be taken at COP.
12. Regarding the agenda item on the report of the Global Mechanism, the secretariat explained that an interactive dialogue is also being planned and will include information on the results of the needs assessment study request to be conducted by the Global Mechanism as part of the COP 15 decisions.
13. One of the Bureau members raised the question of whether there is already an indication of where CRIC 23 will be hosted. The secretariat clarified that so far none of the Parties have expressed their intention of hosting the next CRIC session to be held in 2025, but this can change as the interest of Parties to host a CRIC session may be relayed at any time prior or during the COP. In case no offer will be received, CRIC 23 will be held at the headquarters of the UNCCD in Bonn, Germany as a default location.
14. The CRIC Chair solicited further clarification from the secretariat on the future umbrella project most likely to be facilitated by UNEP for the forthcoming 2026 reporting process, specifically on the activities that could be funded under this project. The secretariat elaborated that based on the planning meeting with UNEP and GEF last February 2024, UNEP or GEF will send a formal letter to all country Parties eligible for GEF funding to elaborate and clearly describe the process on how the process relating to the disbursements of enabling funding for the next reporting round is supposed to work. This will contribute to solving the challenges experienced by Parties during the last reporting process when Parties expressed confusion and lack of transparency on how they could receive the umbrella project funds. The secretariat further clarified that it would inform UNEP and the GEF on the wish expressed to include National Action Plans (NAPs) preparation/updating as part of the enabling funding activities to receive funding.



15. With regards to the adoption of the CRIC 22 agenda, the Bureau expressed its wish to share the document with their respective implementation annexes to get feedback before endorsing the document. Therefore, the deadline for the agenda endorsement was extended for one week after the Bureau meeting (5<sup>th</sup> of June), after which the secretariat will finalize the document and submit it for further processing.

#### VI. Draft texts for negotiations coming out of the final report of the twenty-first session of the CRIC

16. The secretariat shared updates on the progress made to compile draft decisions from the intersessional session of the CRIC and its adopted final report but said that it is too early for the CRIC Bureau to consider them since they have not been finalized yet. In an attempt to make this process as coherent as possible for Parties, substantive elements from the final report of CRIC 21 are still moved in the overall set of draft decisions to be presented to CRIC to make it easier for negotiating Parties to finalize them. However, the secretariat provided a brief on what draft decisions would be expected from the CRIC and suggested that if the draft decisions emerging from the final report of CRIC 21 are ready, they will be shared with the Bureau members.

17. Other draft decision texts that will be drafted on the basis of official documents to be tabled at CRIC 22 are those on a) the collaboration with the GEF and the support that they are providing globally, b) the report of the Global Mechanism promotion, c) capacity building to further the implementation of the convention, d) and the program of work for the next CRIC 23 session. The latter together with the draft decision on the date and venue of CRIC 23 are standard documents produced that hardly ever change.

18. Despite the fact that not all of the draft decisions emerging from the final report of CRIC 21 were ready, the secretariat further elaborated on the elements taken into consideration for the draft decisions on the Improving procedures for the communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties, since it is one of the more advanced texts in the list of documents to be drafted. The main recommendations in the current draft decision will focus on:

- **Enhancing the UNCCD reporting platform (PRAIS)**, ensuring that the default data are accurate, complete, and scientifically documented. It was highlighted that the text will include some elements indicating the intention of providing more than one set of default data to enable Parties to select the most suitable option that represents their national conditions.
- **Options related to the provisionally adopted indicator.** The secretariat recalled that there were divergent views from Parties as some were in favor of fully adopting additional indicators for the next reporting round while others felt that mandatory indicators would only increase the reporting burden of countries and they might divert resources away from action on the ground. The draft decision text suggests in view of the diverging views, to maintain the provisionally adopted indicators as optional for reporting.
- The secretariat highlighted one aspect where opportunities were seized to **synergize with other Rio Conventions**. In a parallel development relating to the draft endorsements in the Kunming- Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, for consideration by UN CBD COP 15, it was reported that SDG indicator 15.3.1 was endorsed as a component indicator to measure Target 2 which is focused on restoration. Additionally, the secretariat described the close collaboration with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Decade on



Restoration to ensure interoperable exchanges on data on voluntary targets and restoration align with the reporting modalities. The draft recommendation text encourages the secretariat to continue enhancing this data exchange and tool interoperability.

- Beyond the national reporting process, some recommendations consider the **Secretary General of the United Nation’s vision for a modern UN** (also called UN 2.0). Considerations to initialize the discussions to design a commensurate initiative to modernize and digitalize the services to Parties are suggested to be explored which that could be ready for launching at COP17.
- The final and more important point was on paragraphs related to the **post-2030 monitoring framework**. As the Convention is nearing the end of its current strategic framework, it is likely there will be discussions to initiate the process to put in place a new strategy, but this needs to happen ideally in conjunction with the new monitoring framework. The draft decision highlights some of the recommendations emerging from the final report of the CRIC 21 that are very similar to those coming out of the intergovernmental working group (IWG) on the midterm evaluation. One specific recommendation which relates to the monitoring process suggests an analysis of the current indicators to ensure that they are responsive to the need and the strategic objective of the convention. The secretariat stressed the need for Parties to be aware of this situation and stressed coherence between the two decisions on this particular issue would need to be sought at COP between Parties.

19. The UNCCD highlighted the importance of avoiding duplication and contradictions in decision-making processes during COP16, particularly in relation to the outcomes of the work done by the IWG and the CST, and urged the facilitators of the contact groups to be in good communication with each other to ensure that there is no overlap or conflicting instructions.

## VII. Discussion on the outcome of the joint CST/CRIC Bureau meeting

20. Recalling the outcomes of the first joint CST/CRIC bureau meeting held virtually last 5 April 2024, the Bureau decided to suggest another joint meeting with the CST in order to advance discussions on how to engage in necessary work relating to monitoring and reporting. This also includes potential work to be undertaken on an assessment of indicators of the current 2018 – 2030 UNCCD strategic framework as requested by CRIC 21. The CRIC Chair suggested to strive to having this joint online meeting with the CST possibly in July.

\*\*\*\*\*



### **Annex I- Agenda of the meeting**

- I. Welcoming remarks by the CRIC Chair
- II. Adoption of the agenda and welcoming the new vice-chair from the Latin America and the Caribbean region
- III. Report by the CRIC Chair on the COP Bureau meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> of May
- IV. Report by the secretariat on steps taking to facilitate the sixteenth session of the COP
- V. Draft agenda for the twenty-second session of the CRIC
- VI. Draft texts for negotiations coming out of the final report of the twenty-first session of the CRIC
- VII. Discussion on the outcome of the joint CST/CRIC Bureau meeting
- VIII. Any other business



## Annex II – List of participants

### CRIC 21/22 BUREAU MEMBERS attending the meeting:

| REGION                                        | COUNTRY/<br>REPRESENTATIVE                                           | CONTACT DETAILS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Annex V:<br>Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)  | <b>Montenegro</b><br><b>Ms. Biljana KILIBARDA</b><br>Chair           | Adviser<br>Institute of Hydrometeorology and Seismology<br>Tel: +382 20 446 238<br>Email: biljana.kilibarda@meteo.co.me                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Annex I:<br>Africa                            | <b>Cameroon</b><br><b>Mr. David PAYANG</b><br>Vice-Chair             | Sous-directeur de la Promotion et de la<br>Restauration de la Nature<br>Ministère de l'Environnement, de la Protection de<br>la Nature et du Développement Durable<br>Immeuble ministériel n° 2, porte 833<br>BP 320 Yaounde<br>Tel: + 237 22226921<br>Fax: + 237 222236051<br>Email: pavidch@yahoo.fr                                                                            |
| Annex III:<br>Latin America and the Caribbean | <b>Chile</b><br><b>Mr. Rodrigo Andrade<br/>RAMÍREZ</b><br>Vice-Chair | Technical Focal Point of Chile to the UNCCD<br>Advisor to the Minister's Cabinet<br>Ministry of Agriculture of Chile<br>Teatinos 40, Santiago<br>Tel: +562 2393 5103<br>Email: rodrigo.andrade@minagri.gob.cl                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Western European and Others<br>Group (WEOG)   | <b>France</b><br><b>Ms. Philippine DUTAILLY</b><br>Vice-Chair        | Rédactrice – Désertification et dégradation des<br>sols<br>Sous-direction de l'environnement et du climat<br>Direction du développement durable<br>Ministère de l'Europe et des affaires étrangères<br>27, rue de la Convention<br>CS 91533 – 75015 Paris Cedex 15<br>Portable: + 33 (0)7 62 09 83 70<br>Fax: + 33 01 43 1773 80<br>Email: philippine.dutailly@diplomatie.gouv.fr |