



The Fourth Intersessional Meeting of the Bureau of the 16th Session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST16)

Date : 5 May 2023

Venue : UN Campus, Langer Eugen,
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1, 53113,
Bonn, Germany

Meeting Room: LEU-1425

Working hours: 10:00 - 13:00 | 14:00 - 18:00 (CEST)

Working language: English

- Minutes -

1. The Fourth Intersessional Meeting of the Bureau of the 16th Session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) was held on 5 May 2023 at the UNCCD headquarters in Bonn, Germany.
2. The Chair of the CST, Mr. Jorge Luis Garcia Rodriguez opened and chaired the meeting. All five Bureau members attended the meeting.
3. The UNCCD Deputy Executive Secretary, Ms. Andrea Meza welcomed all participants (see Annex I), thanked the CST Bureau members for their dedication and hard-work in the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) meeting, and encouraged the CST Bureau to further engage their governments on the issue of maximizing Science Technology Correspondents (STCs)' participation in the CST and Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) sessions. She further appreciated the CST Bureau for its successful addressing the gender parity issue of the SPI and emphasized the significant role of the Bureau members as the governmental representatives of the regional group in providing guidance on the pathways for interfacing science and policy in the work of the Convention.
4. The Chair of the CST thanked the Deputy Executive Secretary and presented introductory remarks.

I. Adoption of the agenda

5. The Chair of the CST invited the secretariat to introduce the provisional agenda (see Annex II). The agenda was adopted with 4 subitems under the Agenda Item V Any other business, but subitem (c) was pended by the Bureau for the next meeting, due to time limits.



II. Updates on the possible arrangements for maximizing STCs participation in CRIC and CST sessions.

6. The CST Chair invited the secretariat to provide an update on arrangements for the scheduling of the COP16 session including efforts to maximize the participation of STCs in the work of the CST and CRIC at COP.
7. Two scenarios for the overall COP 16 schedule of work were presented to the COP Bureau.
 - The first scenario considers the organization of the High-Level Segment (HLS) at the start of COP 16. Under such a scenario the COP would be opened at the morning meeting of the first day and before the High-level Round Tables (RTs) and Interactive Dialogues (IDs) would be held in the afternoon. The second day of the COP would be dedicated to the Heads of State Summit (HoS). Under this scenario the number of CST plenary meetings organized during the first week could be between five to seven with the assistance of an additional UNOG interpretation team. Also, the number of CRIC Plenary meetings can be increased up to four during the 1st week of the COP16.
 - The second scenario considers the HLS organization during the second week of COP 16. Within such a scenario, the number of CST plenary meetings organized during the first week could be between four to seven. Furthermore, under such a scenario, the number of CRIC plenary meetings could be increased up to a maximum of three during the first week of COP 16.
8. The secretariat noted that the host country had indicated its preference for organization of the HoS during the first week, immediately following the formal opening of the COP.
9. The secretariat also clarified that from a practical point of view, both scenarios could be implemented while contributing to the maximization of the STCs participation in the work of the CRIC, and enabling, at the same time, the CST to finalize its work during the first week. However, the proposed CST and CRIC plenary meetings need to be confirmed in-session with the UN conference service counterpart to ensure the required interpretation services in all UN languages. Current UNCCD interpretation entitlements for a COP session are for two meetings in parallel in the morning and two meetings in the afternoon. No other official subsidiary bodies' meetings can take place in parallel with a COP meeting. Furthermore, as indicated above under the first scenario, should there be a need, a 3rd UNOG interpretation team separately budgeted may ensure additional interpretation requirements for the first two days of the COP as of 6 p.m.
10. The secretariat also pointed out that the tentative COP 16 schedule of work to be enclosed to the COP 16 provisional annotated agenda will be considered and finally agreed by the President of COP 15, and with respect to the format and duration of the HLS, in consultation with the COP 16 Host country. The English advance copy of the provisional agenda will be made available to Parties in line with the documentation submission deadlines by 9 September 2024.



11. The CST Bureau revisited the decisions 21/COP.15 (para 3) and 11/COP.15 (para 2) towards the aim of maximizing participation of science and technology correspondents (STCs) in regional meetings and the work of the CST and the CRIC within the timeframe in which the STCs are present.

12. The CST Bureau proposed for consideration of the COP Bureau that the agenda for the COP be organized in a way to maximize the engagement of STCs in CRIC decisions with the view of maximizing the ability of Parties to benefit from the knowledge of the STCs as they consider those decisions that require some scientific and technical knowledge.

13. The CST Bureau identified two interrelated means:

- First, it is recommended to minimize the number and duration of Plenaries dedicated to CST, CRIC and CST/CRIC decisions, including those assigned by COP, in order to maximize the time available for joint negotiations; and
- Second, that the draft decisions be introduced as joint CST-CRIC decisions in the COP so that they are not introduced duplicative in the CST and CRIC, but rather are introduced in the COP and then assigned to a joint CRIC-CST contact group.

14. Furthermore, recognizing the value of STCs' contributions to informing decisions that will be made in the second week of COP, the CST Bureau recommended that STCs participate in both weeks and that those STCs whose participation are supported during the first week also be supported with daily subsistence allowance (DSA) the second week, at COP 16 and all future COPs.

15. The secretariat responded that funding for the participation of STCs for the whole period of COP16 has been included in the Host Country Agreement for COP16. The Secretariat will continue to include in the Host Country Agreements for future COPs as well as to include the costing with other donors while mobilizing the resources. The confirmation of the participation of STCs for the whole period of future COPs depends on the availability of the funding.

15. The CST Bureau requested the secretariat to update the list of STCs to enable them to consult their representing regions in the intersessional period.

III. Status and progress made for the development of the SPI gender policy and implementation plan.

16. The CST Chair invited the secretariat to update the progress on consultant recruitment regarding the SPI gender policy and its implementation plan.

17. One CST Bureau member questioned the necessity to develop this policy and implementation plan when the renewed SPI has fully addressed the gender parity issues.



18. Another Bureau member pointed out the need for guiding principles for the further selection of the SPI members and for mainstreaming gender into SPI scientific assessments and coordination activities, with the aim of ensuring the establishment of gender-responsive research approaches and appropriate data disaggregation, noting that such guidance has not yet been incorporated into SPI governance documents.

19. The Bureau agreed to develop this policy and implementation plan as a guideline and expressed their expectations to conclude consultant recruitment.

IV. The implementation of the SPI work programme 2022-2024

20. The CST Chair shared his notes with respect to this agenda item as a basis of discussion. Two items were discussed:

a. Science communication for policy making through pathways of official documents and public media.

21. With the aim of limiting negotiations to text resulting from the work of the SPI to that which is likely to be used and have an impact, the CST Bureau recommends that the draft negotiations text generated by the SPI be limited to any issues where a recommendation could be made by the SPI that would significantly affect either the communications and outreach of the secretariat/Global Mechanism or the relative allocation of resources by the GEF (Global Environment Facility) or other bodies, and subject to those recommendations being supported by the SPI.

b. The SPI work mode / transition for GLO quality assurance and scientific validation

22. On request of the CST Bureau, the secretariat introduced the original text of the decision 18/COP.15 Annex, Table 2 on SPI coordination activities, especially coordination activity one regarding Global Land Outlook as follows:

- *Activity:* As the most important objective, assume a primary role in the quality assurance of a possible third edition of the Global Land Outlook (GLO3) and review and, as appropriate, contribute to the development of other evidence-based communications.
- *Sub-Activity:* The Science-Policy Interface (SPI) will be a member of the Global Land Outlook (GLO) steering committee, contribute to and undertake a scientific review of a possible GLO3 and all related documents, approve the final versions prior to publication, and be invited to review and, as appropriate, contribute to the development of other United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) evidence-based communications.

23. With respect to decision 18/COP.15 Annex, Table 2 on SPI coordination activities, the CST Bureau would like to ensure that the standard scientific review process is followed. Specifically, that the SPI through the STI will provide review comments on the GLO3 and the GLO related regional and thematic reports. The author(s) will modify the reviewed drafts



appropriately and respond with an explanation of how/why each comment or suggestion was or was not followed. The managing editor will then certify these responses and return them together with the draft final version to the SPI at which time the SPI will consider approval. The authors are welcome to contact the SPI with specific questions at any time in the product's development.

V. Any other business

24. In adopting the agenda, the CST Bureau included four subitems under this agenda item, a) CST Bureau inputs to Intergovernmental Working Group (IWG) Mid-term Evaluation Team on the UNCCD 10-year Strategic Framework 2018-2030, b) Considering the possibility to bring back the Scientific Conference to raise the profile of the UNCCD science, c) Inviting the STCs engaging in Desertification Drought Day (DDD) Observance, and d) Roster of Experts of the Convention, d) These items were discussed as follows:

a. CST Bureau inputs to midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework.

25. The CST Bureau recognized the need for enhancing the role of science in the UNCCD process and implementation as well as the opportunity the midterm evaluation (MTE) provides to explore potential improvements in a broad context. They commented that also the SPI review provides a process for collecting and analyzing detailed information of how the current science-policy approach works, and what the challenges are. Bearing in mind that the CST Bureau and its members are among the key stakeholder groups contributing to both processes, they requested a meeting between the CST Bureau with the independent evaluation team working on MTE.

26. In response to the request of the Bureau, the secretariat provided updates on the status and progress made regarding the MTE and the SPI review and confirmed to develop an indicative plan for the CST Bureau involvement in both processes, to be provided right after the meeting for the CST Bureau to response.

b. Considering the possibility of bringing back the Scientific Conference to raise the profile of the UNCCD science.

27. The CST Bureau agreed to continue to explore new ways to raise the profile of the UNCCD Science including consultation with SPI co-chair to explore ways the UNCCD could benefit from science related events such as thematic science conferences or regional conferences/ workshops relevant to desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD).

c. Roster of the Experts of the Convention

28. The CST Bureau agreed to consider options for the Roster of Experts in the next CST Bureau meeting.

d. Inviting the STCs to engage in DDD Observance.



29. The CST Bureau discussed the need to make deliberate efforts aimed at encouraging the Parties (NFPs, STCs, Civil Society, etc.) as well as current and the former SPI members to observe Desertification and Drought Day (DDD) in their capacity and as appropriate within the strategy for the DDD. The CST Bureau also encouraged the secretariat to ensure the STCs participation is programmatic.

VI. Next meeting

30. The CST Bureau agreed to meet in its 5th intersessional meeting on 15 September 2023 back-to-back with the 18th SPI meeting scheduled for 12-14 September 2023.

31. The CST Bureau requested to include in the forthcoming 5th intersessional CST Bureau meeting an agenda item on formal inputs to the IWG mid-term evaluation on the organization of the science within the UNCCD, from the CST Bureau in collective.

32. The CST Bureau meeting also agreed to tentatively schedule its 6th Bureau meeting on 23 February 2024 back-to-back with the 19th SPI Meeting scheduled for 20-22 February 2024.

Closing of the meeting

33. The CST Chair invited Mr. Johns Muleso Kharika, Chief of the Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Unit to give closing remarks.

34. The Chief of the STI thanked the Bureau members for the intensive and in-depth discussion of this meeting.

35. The Chair of the CST thanked the Chief of the STI unit and the secretariat for their support to the Bureau and closed the meeting.



Annex I. List of Participants

CST BUREAU MEMBERS	UN GEOGRAPHICAL REGIONAL GROUPS ¹
Jorge Luis Garcia Rodriguez, CST Chair	Latin America and Caribbean Group
Abdul Hamid, CST Vice-Chair	Asia-Pacific Group
Ahmed Abdelati, CST Vice-Chair	Africa Group
Hamid Čustović, CST Vice-Chair	Eastern Europe Group
Jeffrey E. Herrick, CST Vice-Chair	Western Europe and Others Group
UNCCD Secretariat	
Andrea Meza Murillo	Executive Direction and Management Unit
Johns Muleso Kharika	
Barron Joseph Orr	
JIA, Xiaoxia	
Anja Thust	Science, Technology, and Innovation Unit
Olga Andreeva	
Lawrencia Eposi	
Satu Ravola	Executive Direction and Management Unit
Carmen-Alina Margina	Conference Affairs, Governing Bodies and Legal Affairs Unit
Xenya Scanlon	Communication, External Relations, and Partnerships Unit
Somarajan Pillai	Administrative Services Unit
Miriam Medel	Global Policy, Advocacy and Regional Cooperation Unit

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





Annex II. Provisional Agenda

Item I

The Second Intersessional Meeting of the Bureau of the 16th session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST16)

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– PROVISIONAL AGENDA –

- I. Adoption of the agenda**
- II. Updates on the possible arrangements for maximizing STCs participation in CRIC and CST sessions.**
- III. Status and progress made for the development of the SPI gender policy and implementation plan.**
- IV. The Implementation of the SPI work programme 2022-2024.**
- V. Any other business**
 - a.** CST Bureau inputs to IWG Mid-term evaluation on the UNCCD 10-year Strategic Framework 2018-2030.
 - b.** Considering the possibility of bringing back the Scientific Conference to raise the profile of the UNCCD science.
 - c.** Roster of the Experts of the Convention (pending for the next meeting)
 - d.** Inviting the STCs to engage in DDD Observance.
- VI. Next meeting**
