



First Intersessional Meeting of the Bureau of the 16th Session of the Committee on Science and Technology

Date: 04 July 2022

Time: 16:15 – 17:00 (CEST)

Working language: English

Meeting: Virtual meeting

- Minutes -

1. The first inter-sessional meeting of the Bureau of the 16th Session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) was held on Monday 4 July 2022, from 16:15-17:00 (CEST). The Chair of the CST, Mr. Jorge Luis Garcia Rodriguez opened the meeting and invited the Deputy Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, Ms. Andrea Meza to make welcome remarks.

2. The Deputy Executive Secretary of the UNCCD welcomed all participants and thanked the newly elected CST Bureau members for their services and reiterated the importance of their work. She emphasized the need to mobilize more policy support towards the UNCCD agenda and continuing the momentum to address desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD), as the impacts of multi-year droughts observed in every region of the world in the last decade demand immediate action. She underlined the key role that science plays in informing policy makers in taking practical solutions and implementing effective policy measures at international, national, and local levels. Ms. Meza expressed her gratitude to the CST Bureau members for their dedication and wished them a successful meeting. For a list of those who attended the meeting, please see Annex I.

3. The Chair of the CST thanked the Deputy Executive Secretary and made a statement.

4. An overview of matters discussed, and decisions taken by the Bureau are presented below.

I. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

5. Following an introduction of the provisional agenda by the Chair of the CST, the provisional agenda was adopted without amendments (Annex II).

6. The CST Chair facilitated the election of the Rapporteur with consideration of geographical rotation. The CST Vice-Chair, Dr. Ahmed Abdelati from Egypt representing Africa Group, volunteered to serve as Rapporteur and this was supported by all CST Bureau members.

II. Overview of the duties and functions of the CST Bureau

7. On the request of the Chair of the CST, the secretariat provided the background information on the following:

- **Mandate of the CST** as a subsidiary body of the Conference of the Parties (COP) established by the [Article 24 of the Convention](#), and the **Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the CST** detailed in [decision 15/COP.1](#), including advisory functions concerning 1) data and information, 2) research and review, 3) technology, and 4) evaluation.



- **Role and responsibilities of the CST Bureau**, which includes the follow-up of the work of the CST between sessions of the COP including the implementation of the CST work plan and the Science-Policy Interface (SPI) work programme. It also involves the governance of the SPI including updating the [ToRs of the SPI and related governance documents](#) and ensuring adherence to these by members. In addition, the CST Bureau is also responsible for the staged renewal of SPI membership, including the recruitment and selection process, taking into account regional, disciplinary and gender.
- **Role of the Secretariat:** The UNCCD secretariat provides administrative, logistic, and advisory support to the work of the CST, its Bureau, and the SPI. The secretariat responds to direction provided by the CST Bureau and follows guidance that may be provided with respect to matters of governance as well as planning for and responding to decisions of COPs.

III. Snapshots of the CST 16 work programme and the 2022-2024 work programme of the SPI

8. The secretariat presented the Programme of Work for CST 16 ([decision 21/COP.15](#)), as well several procedural actions the CST Bureau will need to take to enable the implementation of the SPI work programme, and further improving the science-policy interfacing.

The Programme of Work for CST 16

- a. The sixteenth session of the CST will focus, inter alia, on a review of the work conducted by the SPI including its overall achievements since the last review completed at the thirteenth session of the conference of the Parties to decide on the future functioning of the SPI.
- b. CST 16 will be organized in such a way as to facilitate a thematic dialogue between the Parties and the SPI regarding the policy implications of the scientific outputs, and to enable the formulation of policy-relevant recommendations.
- c. The secretariat has been requested to arrange future sessions of the CST and the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC) to be organized to maximize participation of the science and technology correspondents (STCs) in the regional meetings and the work of the CST and CRIC within the timeframe in which the STCs are present.
- d. The secretariat has also been requested to circulate a provisional annotated agenda and appropriate documentation, including a set of clear and concise recommendations and a separate document with draft decisions for consideration by parties in all six official languages of the United Nations, at least six weeks prior to CST 16.

Intersessional work for the CST 16 Bureau

- a. The CST Bureau, at its next meeting, will finalize the staged renewal of the SPI membership to enable its implementation of the SPI work programme in the triennium of 2022-2024, with the aim of covering the needed disciplinary expertise and ensuring regional and gender balance. The CST Bureau also will assess current and potential new observer organizations so that expertise among them serving on the SPI is relevant to the priorities identified in the SPI work programme.
- b. Following decision 19/COP.15, the CST Bureau, with support of the secretariat, will develop an SPI gender policy and implementation plan and will revise the SPI ToRs accordingly.

9. During the triennium, the CST Bureau will also consider ways to maximize the participation of STCs in future



sessions and regional meetings of the CST and the CRIC. The Bureau will also facilitate development of a gender policy and implementation plan for the SPI and revise the SPI ToRs if and as needed. The CST Bureau plans to discuss the preparation of the Bureau's intersessional workplan at its next meeting.

The work programme of the SPI for 2022-2024

10. The secretariat introduced [the work programme of the SPI for the triennium 2022–2024](#), presenting the two thematic objective scientific assessments and coordination activities:

- a. *Objective 1:* Provision of science-based evidence on sustainable land use systems and their potential to address desertification/land degradation and drought while also contributing to the achievement of multiple United Nations goals and targets, taking into account environmental, economic, and sociocultural conditions.
Deliverable: A technical report, based on a review of existing synthesis reports and the primary literature, which provides (a) a typology of sustainable land use systems, including their capacity to enhance ecosystem goods and services, to be less vulnerable to system volatility and shocks while addressing social inequities; (b) an analysis of the potential of sustainable land use systems to reconcile different United Nations goals and targets that compete for land resources; and (c) an assessment of the contextual applicability of these land use options across the globe, including barriers and opportunities as well as the possibility for broader diffusion.
- b. *Objective 2:* Provision of science-based evidence on the historical regional and global aridity trends and future projections that may contribute to expanding drylands and affected populations and the adaptation approaches that reduce risks to environmental, social, and economic systems.
Deliverable: A technical report, based on a review of existing synthesis reports and the primary literature, which provides (a) science-based evidence on the existing approaches for the quantification and assessment of hydroclimate aridity; (b) the determination of its regional and global changes and future projections; (c) the resulting historical changes and future projections in impact risk, including from extreme heat events, drought and dust storms as well as higher risk of desertification, water scarcity, soil erosion, vegetation loss, wildfire damage and food supply disruptions; and (d) an evaluation of adaptation approaches that can reduce associated risk.
- c. *Coordination activities:* This includes seven activities, the first one to be the SPI's main coordination activity focus, which is assuming a primary role in quality assurance for the Global Land Outlook (GLO3) and review, and as appropriate, contribute to the development of other evidence-based communications. The other six involve cooperation with the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Services (IPBES), the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS), the International Resources Panel of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP-IRP), the Global Land Indicators Initiative (GLII) and the Integrated Drought Management Programme (IDMP). The SPI coordination activities enable leverage of the knowledge products (assessment and synthesis) of other intergovernmental bodies to support and inform of the UNCCD policy process. They also offer the opportunity to help ensure the scientific knowledge requirements of the UNCCD so that its policy priorities may be reflected in relevant scientific assessments and science-based communications through the provision of scientific peer-review by the SPI.

11. Further discussion on the background and scope of SPI Objective 1 on sustainable land use systems led to a comment by one CST Bureau member for the SPI to consider replacing the words "social inequity" by "social issues" which incorporates inequities as well as other matters. The secretary explained that the language in question (i.e., social inequity) is drawn from COP decision. How the SPI will address this in its scientific assessment will be discussed by the SPI.

12. The discussion on the background and scope of SPI Objective 2 on regional and global trend aridity led to an important question by another CST Bureau member, who asked if the aridity trends and projections will be



analysed as straightforward predictions of the IPCC related to climate or if the interactions (and related impacts) between climate change and land degradation would also be analysed. Furthermore, whether this analysis would consider the interactions in multiple directions (e.g., climate change may increase drought frequency and accelerate climate change, but the combination of climate change and land degradation may also increase the drought occurrence). The secretariat explained that their understanding of the intent of the SPI is in line with what was proposed, but ultimately the scoping of the working group activities will be in the hands of the SPI.

IV. Towards the staged renewal of the SPI

13. The secretariat informed of the CST Bureau on the process of staged renewal of the SPI membership and the approach taken in previous renewals. Among other factors, the secretariat highlighted to Bureau members the importance to take into account required expertise to deliver the SPI work programme 2022-2024.

14. During the discussion that followed, the CST 16 Bureau took into consideration feedback and advice concerning the staged renewal it had received from the outgoing CST 15 Bureau that was also communicated to them by the CST 15 Chair.

15. The CST Bureau agreed on the extension of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) as an SPI observer organization through the triennium. In this regard, the CST Bureau requested that the secretariat contact the WMO to (a) confirm their interest in continuing to service on the SPI to support the work on aridity trends and projections as well as the IDMP coordination activity, and (b) nominate a representative with the appropriate knowledge and understanding aridity and drought. The secretariat was further requested to explore other qualifying organizations in the event WMO is unable to extend its support to the SPI.

16. The CST Bureau agreed on the extension of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) as an SPI observer organization through the triennium. In this regard, the CST Bureau requested that the Secretariat contact the FAO to ensure that they would (a) be able to actively participate, and (b) would nominate a representative with extensive knowledge and understanding of land use planning, and the FAO knowledge base of land use planning tools, including landscape planning. The secretariat was further requested to explore other qualifying organizations in the event FAO is unable to extend its support to the SPI.

17. The CST Bureau agreed on the extension of the current SPI co-chair Dr. Nichole Barger as an independent scientist to continue to her service as the SPI co-Chair through the triennium. In this regard, the CST Bureau requested the secretariat to support the SPI recruitment process in a way that would (a) increase overall SPI gender balance and (b) increase the probability that one or more newly selected members would have the leadership skills and experience to transition more readily into the role of co-Chair following COP 16. The secretariat was further requested to contact Dr. Barger to confirm her interest and availability to extend her service on the SPI.

18. The secretariat informed the Bureau about the process for the SPI renewal through an open call. It was explained that an open call for application is planned to be issued on the second week of July 2022 to be closed 30 days later.

19. While the CST Bureau is responsible for the review and selection of SPI members and observers, the secretariat will provide logistical support facilitating the analysis of candidates so that the match between expertise requirements and work programme priorities as well as geographical and gender balance can be fully taken into consideration by Bureau members during this process.

20. The review and final selection of new SPI members and observers will take place in a physical meeting of the CST Bureau, which has been scheduled for 13-14 September 2022.



21. The first in-person meeting with the renewed SPI is tentatively scheduled for the week beginning the 14 November 2022.

V. Any other business

22. A CST Bureau member highlighted the importance of having full participation of STCs at CST and CRIC sessions and the regional meetings immediately prior to COP. The CST Bureau members further reflected on this issue and requested to discuss the matter at their next meeting with consideration of introducing this at a joint CST-CRIC Breaux meeting.

23. The CST Chair thanked all participants and closed the meeting.



Annex I. List of Participants

COUNTRY	REGION
Jorge Luis García Rodríguez (CST Chair)	Latin America and the Caribbean Group
Ahmed Abdelati (CST Vice-Chair)	Africa Group
Abdul Hamid (CST Vice-Chair)	Asia Group
Hamid Čustović (CST Vice-Chair)	Central and Eastern Europe Group
Jeffrey Herrick (CST Vice-Chair)	Western Europe and Other Groups

UNCCD Secretariat
Andrea Meza Murillo
Johns Muleso Kharika
Barron Joseph Orr
Xiaoxia Jia
Furkan Dosdogru
Lawrencia Eposi
Vittoria Semplici



Annex II. Provisional Agenda

Item 1

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

Date: 04 July 2022

Time: 16:15 – 17:00 (CEST)

Working language: English

Virtual Platform: Zoom

- Provisional Agenda -

- I. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work**
- II. Overview of the duties and functions of the CST Bureau**
- III. Snapshots of the CST16 work programme and the 2022-2024 work programme of the SPI**
- IV. Towards the staged renewal of the SPI**
- V. Any other business**