Minutes of the Regional Implementation Annex IV Meeting,
Sunday 11 October 2015, Meeting Room 13, Start time: 14:40h; End time: 21:20

Participants:
- Chairing: Lucio Do Rosario (Portugal)
- Portugal (Jose Luis)
- Hungary (Peter Molnar)
- Italy (Maurizio Sciortino, Guido Brunatti)
- Israel (Uriel Safriel)
- Turkey (Erdogan Oezevren, and Minister of Environment, Turkey)

Guests:
- Stefan Sommer (JRC/EC)

Appointment of the Chair, Vice Chair and other Regional Matters:

Discussion: The Chair informed to the meeting, that Greece will not be able to assume the chairmanship of the Annex. Consequently, and according to the rules of appointment of officer for Anne IV, the meeting requested that Italy chairs the Annex after COP 12 and until COP 13. Italy informed that they are candidate as Vice-Chair to the COP Bureau.

The meeting was informed by the delegation of Turkey, on the current consultations with the secretariat regarding the host country agreement for the RCU for Annex IV, and with the Annex V with regard the offer made by Turkey, of co-hosting RCU for Annex V. Should the Annex V agree, the Government of Turkey will contribute financially to a second officer of the RCU.

The meeting was also informed about the Ankara Initiative. Comments were made with regard to its geographical coverage. The meeting took note – with thanks – of the Turkish Initiative. The meeting addressed its items:

Item I: The post-2015 development framework: implication for the UNCCD:

(i) Integrating the SDGs and targets into the UNCCD implementation and the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Land Degradation Neutrality (ICCD/COP(12)/4)

Discussion: The discussion centered around the definition of LDN from the IWG and whether it was a real science-based definition.

Action: Annex IV agreed to amend the definition of LDN – removing its brackets – to read:

“Land degradation neutrality [in affected areas] [in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas] is a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.”

(iii) Implementation of the comprehensive communication strategy and the UNDDD (ICCD/COP(12)/2)

Action: Annex IV support the actions proposed with regard to communication.

Item II. Effective implementation of the Convention at national, subregional and regional levels:

(i) Trends in UNCCD implementation, including the report of CRIC 13 on the assessment of implementation against performance indicators and the review of financial flows (ICCD/CRIC(13)/9)

Action: Annex IV takes note with appreciation, the actions taken to translate CRIC 13 recommendations into draft decision for the CRIC and the COP to consider.
ii) Leveraging synergies among the Rio conventions: land-based approach to Climate Change, including advice from the Science Policy Interface (ICCD/COP(12)/17)

**Discussion:** Parties questioned the commonalities of the UNCCD indicators with other Rio Conventions.

**Action:** Annex IV agreed with the draft recommendations.

iii) Formulation, revision and implementation of action programmes in view of the post-2015 sustainable development framework (ICCD/CRIC(14)/4)

**Discussion:** This discussion centered in making LDN a non-binding target in paragraph 7, and amending paragraph 12.

**Action:** Annex IV agreed to add the word ‘preliminary’ for paragraph 7 of this agenda Item, to read that “COP: Requests affected country Parties to include preliminary LDN national targets in their national reports due in the biennium 2016–2017”; Annex IV considered that at this stage, the LDN target is an information to be communicated within the national report, to be then further translated into a formal commitment when all relevant conditions are met. For paragraph 12 the following correction was agreed upon:

The COP requests the Secretariat and the Global Mechanism to:

a) Enhance their assistance to country Parties in terms of technical and financial support for capacity building related to monitoring activities, compiling of indicators and for the implementation of the LDN approach at country level, targeting with priority those countries that have compiled with the obligations set by the COP.

**Item III. The UNCCD reporting and review process in view of the post-2015 development agenda:**

(i) Improving the procedures for communication of information, including progress indicators (ICCD/COP(12)/CST/3-ICCD/CRIC(14)/7, ICCD/CRIC(14)/8 and ICCD/CRIC(14)/9)

**Discussion:** In particular, paragraphs 2a and 2b were discussed.

**Action:** The following amendments (insertions) were agreed upon by Annex IV:

Paragraph 2a):

“Requests the secretariat to identify, in cooperation with relevant specialized institutions, to:

Compile and make available to each affected country Parties its national estimates of the metrics/proxies associated with these indicators from the identified global datasets as default data for validation, in accordance with the procedure established in decision 22/COP.11;

Paragraph 2b):

(b) Subject to the review of expert group or the approval of the CST, to prepare methodological guidelines and provide technical assistance to affected country Parties on the compilation and use of such default data, including for the preparation of national voluntary targets;

(ii) Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist the COP in regularly reviewing the implementation of the Convention (ICCD/CRIC(14)/10)

**Discussion:** No major comments.

**Action:** Parties took note of the secretariat’s proposal regarding the CRIC’s biannual sessions versus the 4-yearly sessions to report on. Parties also agreed on including a sentence on paragraph 2:

“2. Encourages affected country Parties to include in their reports national targets of land degradation neutrality as indicated in documents ICCD/COP(12)/4 and ICCD/CRIC(14)/4.... And any other country who may wish to implement LDN approaches ”;

**Item V: Other regional matters**

(As aforementioned)
Conclusions for inclusion on the Open Statement of Annex IV for Monday 12 Oct 2015

Mr. Chairman, I take the floor on behalf of Annex IV affected country Parties and I would like to thank the Secretariat and the Government of Turkey for their hospitality in hosting this session; also a word of appreciation to the Secretariat for preparing this meeting and all the hard work for providing the necessary documentation.

While all Annex IV parties are affected by DLDD, this is a group which includes Parties at different stages of development and with different capacities to implement the Convention, its Strategy and the respective National Action Programmes.

I would like to highlight the Agenda Items that best illustrate the proposals of our group in seeing ways forward for our Convention.

With regard to The post-2015 development framework: implication for the UNCCD and Integrating the SDGs and targets into the UNCCD implementation, and the report of the Intergovernmental Working Group on Land Degradation Neutrality, Annex IV agreed to the definition of LDN should read:

“Land degradation neutrality is a state whereby the amount and quality of land resources necessary to support ecosystem functions and services and enhance food security remain stable or increase within specified temporal and spatial scales and ecosystems.” With no limitation to affected areas or to arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas.

With regard to the Formulation, revision and implementation of action programmes in view of the post-2015 sustainable development framework, Annex IV deems that the word ‘preliminary’ instead of ‘voluntary’ is needed to define LDN national targets.

Annex IV also agree with the need to include preliminary LDN national targets in the national reports of affected country Parties, due in the biennium 2016–2017;

Finally, Annex IV considered that at this stage, the LDN target is an information to be communicated within the national report, to be further translated into a formal commitment when all relevant conditions for LDN implementation are met, including capacity for monitoring and resources for implementation.

With regard to The UNCCD reporting and review process in view of the post-2015 development agenda, and Improving the procedures for communication of information, including progress indicators Annex IV believes that relevant specialized institutions would need to be identified, to compile and make available to each affected country Parties its national default data for the selected indicators/metrics from the identified global datasets, for review and validation, in accordance with the procedure established in decision 22/COP.11;

Annex IV also believes that the drafting of methodological guidelines and provide technical assistance to affected country Parties on the compilation and use of such default data, including for the preparation of national voluntary targets, should be review by an expert group or the CST.

Finally, Mr. Chair, Annex IV looks very much forward the establishment of an RCU for the Annex, to be based in Istanbul and supported by the Government of Turkey to whom we would like to reiterate our gratitude.

Chair, to conclude, let me express the willingness and full commitment of Annex IV Parties to work with you and all the Parties in the best interest of the UNCCD.