

NOTE ON THE MEETING OF THE LIAISON GROUP BETWEEN THE RIO CONVENTIONS

Washington DC 6 December 2001

Rationale

Decisions of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification have called for collaboration among the Rio Conventions. The COPs of the other two Conventions have also done the same. These decisions have been taken with the full realization that there are commonalities among these sustainable development related Conventions. The rationale of avoiding overlaps and taking advantage of the synergy and complementarity that could be developed among these conventions is also an important consideration that the COPs have pointed out.

The meeting of the Liaison Group should therefore be an important starting point for the secretariats of the three Conventions to begin to explore the areas of common concern, that is those issue areas that are at the interface of the three Conventions, and which would be of tangible benefit to their Parties.

On Agenda Item 1

- The UNFCCC SBSTA called for the formation of the Liaison Group, and requested for the invitation of the UNCCD to join the LG;
- From the point of view of the UNCCD, the COP decisions represent enough mandate for the secretariat to join the other two Rio Conventions in collaborative ventures;

On Agenda Item 2

The recent developments include the outcome of UNCCD COP5, and the following are noteworthy:

- Decision 7/COP.5 on relationships with the other conventions. This decision also called on the CST to enhance cooperation with the Subsidiary Bodies of CBD and UNFCCC; Both Chairs of the CST and CRIC may participate in later meetings of the Liaison Group once the road map is clear for the three secretariats;
- Decision 17/COP.5 on effectiveness of the CST also calls for the engagement the Subsidiary Bodies of the other multilateral environmental agreements as one of the ways to provide information to the CST;
- Decision 1/COP.5 on establishment of the CRIC;

On Agenda Item 3

- Information on the schedules of the synergy workshops that are scheduled by the UNCCD in the countries and regions will be shared with the CBD and UNFCCC; More importantly the secretariats will be invited to participate in these workshops;
- A consolidated calendar of events that the three secretariats envisage can be prepared and shared; The main events from the UNCCD side include the meetings of the CRIC, the Experts Group on the CST, the CST meetings which normally take place during the COP sessions;

On Agenda Item 4

- The Joint Work Programme between the CBD and UNCCD that targets the Biological Diversity of Dry and Sub-humid Lands is one example that represents collaboration between the two Conventions;

On Agenda Item 5

At this point in time, the secretariats should agree on the modalities for collaboration on the basis of what the Liaison Group is expected to do, and explore what it is that can be achieved. The proposed joint workshop by the Liaison Group should be an important opportunity for the three secretariats to firm up on the key areas and modalities for collaboration.

Examples of possible areas can be presented, but most importantly, future joint work should aim to focus at the appropriate time on country level coordination.

The synergy workshops is a good starting point. Country Parties have already demonstrated during the few synergy workshops that coordination can be pursued with positive results.

The GEF supported Country Capacity Self Assessments is an essential vehicle for the Rio Conventions and others to join hands at the country level for the common agenda of capacity building, which is a cross-cutting theme and need among several sectors.

UNITAR can be called upon to assist in the area of training once this is agreed by the three secretariats.

