

Report of the Regional Meeting preparatory to the 15th session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention for country Parties of Annex V

16-17 October 2016, Nairobi , Kenya

The Regional Meeting of Annex V preparatory to the 15th session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 15) took place on 16-17 October in Nairobi, Kenya. The agenda and list of participants are annexed to the report.

The meeting was opened by the National Focal Point (NFP) of Armenia, Mr. Vardevanyan, the Regional Chair for Annex V, followed by the CEE Programme Officer, Ms. Annagylyjova. The attention of the group was drawn to the Inter-governmental Group on Future Strategic Framework, Land Degradation Neutrality Target Setting Programme as well as to the reporting modalities.

Few amendments were proposed to the agenda in order to accommodate the invited speakers. The NFP of Belarus, Mr. Kuzmich, was appointed as a rapporteur of the meeting. The representative of Civil Society Organizations' Panel, Ms. Sophiko Akhobadze, was invited to the meeting as a participant.

Initial findings from the Intergovernmental Working Group on Future Strategic Framework

After presentation of the document by the Secretariat and the additional remarks from the IWG members from Annex V, the following discussion and positions points were articulated:

- Strategy should take into account and reflect particular conditions of each region, including Annex V. We believe that Dec8/COP12 addressing particular regional and national conditions should be fully taken into account within the UNCCD processes and implemented by the Parties and convention's bodies , bilateral and multilateral partners;
- Annex V countries expect that the new strategy should encourage and guide Parties to combat DLDD in all ecosystems worldwide to achieve land degradation neutrality target.
- Countries of the Annex V are stressing this point once again because our countries would like to have the Strategy which will be inclusive and which helps to implement the Convention in our region;
- Strategy should emphasize more the LDN target in the key sections of its text. Readiness and willingness of the 102 countries including majority of affected countries of Annex V to establish national voluntary LDN targets should not be neglected in the new strategy.
- Strategy will be used by broad range of stakeholders therefore, we propose to be explicit with the language of Target 15.3
- The SDG 15.3 Target should be spell out in the Introduction of proposed draft. Further, in the text we can refer to the SDG 15.3.
- The Strategy title should be short, time bound and relevant to the conditions of each country.

Annex V countries proposed to take into account comments and proposals to the draft elaborated by the CSO and presented to the IWG:

- Topics of gender aspects, human rights and support of vulnerable groups should be reflected in the document;
- CSOs should be involved as partner to the implementation of Convention provisions, to participation in the LDN process and to funding mechanism for implementation of the Strategy;
- The role of the SDG 15.3 Target as a driving force of Convention implementation should be noted in the Strategy;
- CSOs should be involved in development of transformative projects and admitted to processes of monitoring and reporting of their implementation
- Active involvement into the reporting process was requested by CSOs too;
- The LDN Fund should act based on the principle of social and environmental responsibility.

Financing the implementation of the convention: opportunities for increased financing and options for tracking finance

After the presentation of the Managing Director of the Global Mechanism, Mr. Markus Repnik, and the subsequent discussion, the following common positions were agreed by the group:

- Mobilization of adequate financial and other resources is critical for successful implementation of the convention. We agree that GM should step up its efforts in identifying and tapping into emerging financial opportunities and we strongly propose that GM. The GM needs to develop a methodology for how countries could mobilize resources for LDN from the different sources.
- Request for GM to initiate programme similar to a joint WB/UNDP project “Public climate expenditure and Institutional Review” in order that review of public expenditures would be beneficial for all countries.
- The financial reporting burden of countries should be reduced and simplified.
- Some countries expressed an expectation that the GM global reporting for financing could a step forward for a joint financial reporting for rio-conventions.
- Several countries disagreed with the in-depth country analysis - one of the option for tracking finance. The procedures and objectives of this option were not well understood. It was expressed that the GM should not limit its work with "champion" countries, the selection shall be based on a transparent process and criteria and the preliminary assessment of financial flows of all countries should be done.

Land Degradation Neutrality Target-Setting Exercise

The presentation made by Mr. Sven Walter, Programme Coordinator for LDN-TSP, the Global Mechanism.

It was reiterated that the support for LDN TSP participating countries is twofold. First package is the services for NFP including provision of global dataset for three LDN indicators (land cover, stock organic

carbon and land productivity) and its validation, support in facilitation of process of stakeholder engagement. Second package is 30 000 USD that will be provided to countries through the payments for workshops organization to specific vendors and reimbursement in-country travel expenses via country travel agencies appointed by UNDP CO . Additional resources should be mobilized by countries for cover other local needs.

Guidelines of operational procedures for delivery money on the country level will be submitted immediately after CRIC. The single procedure for all participating country will be done based on the UN business standards. It's mean that sources will provided based on NFPs requests for each specific event. Requests should be submitted at least 4 weeks before event.

The group shares a strong interest to LDN process. Nine countries are members of LDN-TSP and two countries were part of LDN pilot exercise, making up a majority of affected country Parties of Annex V. It was agreed to present the individual statements during the Interactive dialogue session on LDN-TSP.

Several points were raised during the regional meeting as following:

- LDN should be seen as opportunity to broaden conventions. It is a party driven convention.
- Stronger link of LDN to other processes, otherwise the LDN approach could fail. Attention to soil functions is needed.
- Shared concern that land degradation is not a high priority for the countries of this region therefore LDN should be used as an opportunity to draw attention of policy-makers, but overall it will be a challenging process.
- More flexibility was requested for expenditure of the budget since the project implementation will require services and expertise other than organization of events and field trips;
- Future mobilization of financial resources by the GM for the national un-ground needs is crucial important.
- Consideration of specific country conditions for organization of events and in-country travel. Some expressed a common view that it will be challenging to organize the event by a single vendor. Even more concerns were expressed towards in-country travels which require an accredited travel agency and facilitation by UNDP country Offices.
- Generally, the operational modalities were not fully clear to LDN-TSP countries.

Overall reporting procedures and modalities for reporting by Parties

After the discussion of the document there was a general support to the simplification of the reporting procures and further efforts in its harmonization.

The proposed reporting interval of every four year with subsequent change in the CRIC schedule was intensively discussed within the group. There was a common understanding that the reporting interval should be adjusted to the bio-physical nature of indicators as well as the GEF support for Enabling Activities. Nevertheless, the reporting is considered as an important tool for raising awareness and capacity building at the country level and therefore, the ways should be found how to maintain and not to loose institutional memory and institutional capacity in the period between reporting. To address this concern, the organization of the regional activities and events should be envisaged and supported within the UNCCD process.

At the same time, the financial burden for organization of the regional events should not lay solely on the countries. The organization of the regional project shall be explored with the international partners like GEF which will also facilitate the regular regional meetings.

Experience in the optional reporting exercise and preparation of the interactive dialogue at CRIC 15

At COP 12, Parties decided to make the 2016 reporting process optional. Among Annex V countries only Serbia participated in the 2016 optional reporting with a timely submission. Serbian NFP, Ms. Kuzmanovic, kindly accepted an invitation from the UNCCD Secretariat to present the experience of the national reporting during the Interactive Dialogue session dedicated to the optional reporting.

The questions addressed at the session:

- a) What has been achieved since 2008;
- b) What are the bottlenecks in implementing UNCCD and how to overcome them;
- c) What needs to be done in order to make reporting more useful at national level.

Consideration of best practices in the implementation of the Convention

The group was informed on the latest development of the UNCCD Knowledge Hub, Capacity-building Market Place and WOCAT platform for best practices (BPs) on “SLM technologies including adaptation”. The group was informed that currently the Secretariat is busy migrating the best practices submitted during the reporting cycles of 2010- 2012- 2014 to the new Global Database on SLM supported by WOCAT platform. The few comments were expressed as the following:

- Strong recommendation not to lose any information during migration of submitted BPs to WOCAT database
- Region supports the functions of the UNCCD KM Hub but considers that the use of the platform by the clients will be limited due to English content.

ANNEX 1. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	Country	Delegate	Email Contacts
1	Armenia	Ashot Vardevanyan (NFP)	ashot_v@mail.ru
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15	Ukraine	Yuriy Kolmaz (NFP)	kolmaz@ukr.net

ANNEX 2. AGENDA

16 October 2016

Time	Session
09:00-09:30	Registration
9:30 – 9:40	Opening Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening statement of the Regional Chair • Welcoming remarks from the UNCCD Secretariat
9:40-10:00	Organizational matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adoption of the agenda and organization of work; • Appointment of the rapporteur
10:00 -11:00	Future Implementation of the Convention Initial findings from the Intergovernmental Working Group on Future Strategic Framework -
11:00 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 12:00	Financing the implementation of the convention: opportunities for increased financing and options for tracking finance
12:00-13:00	Overall reporting procedures and modalities for reporting by Parties
13:00 – 14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 17:00	Implementation experience

	Land degradation neutrality target-setting exercise Experiences from LDN-TSP countries from the region (cont. including break)
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17 October, 2016

Time	Session
09.00 - 11:00	Optional reporting Experience in the optional reporting exercise and preparation of the interactive dialogue at CRIC 15 Consideration of best practices in the implementation of the Convention: Accessibility of information on best practices through the Scientific and Knowledge Brokering Portal and the Capacity Building Marketplace
11:00 – 11:30	Break
11:30 – 13:00	Regional issues - Work of the Steering Committee - Financing regional activities
13:00-14:30	Lunch
14:30 – 15:00	Group Chair' Summary
15:00 – 15:30	Visit of the Executive Secretary
15:30 – 15:40	Closing remark from the UNCCD representative/Closure of the meeting

ANNEX 3. Discussion with Mr. Ulrich Apel of GEF LD Team and Mr. Adamou Bouhari of UNEP-GEF

WHAT:

1. The UNEP Umbrella Project uses resources of the Enabling Activity under Land Degradation Focal Area and is a set aside which does not touch a country allocation. The Umbrella project aims to support eligible countries to support the UNCCD reporting process at the national level, but also conduct some activities to develop NAP implementation including mainstreaming NAP in the national development framework including SDGs
2. Earmarked country allocation is 70.000usd which include UNEP fee for the umbrella project cycle management. Each country will end with around 63.000 usd after deduction of implementing agency fee (UNEP).
3. Two main components to be covered in the project: (i) enabling national reporting; (ii) supporting NAP implementation and remaining alignment.
4. Agreed that resources are used in line with the main components of the project, the country will have certain flexibility to plan appropriate measures at the country level.

5. The countries which have not participated in LDN-TSP will rely on Umbrella project for the verification of default data on progress indicators. Those countries which have participated in LDN-TSP may wish to allocate resources for those activities which were not sufficiently covered during LDN-TSP.

HOW:

1. Document will be formulated and submitted by UNEP as a Medium-Sized project covering a regional group of countries. This will allow for an easier submission process which is planned to be completed by end of 2016.
2. Eligible countries can apply for the project by submitting the Endorsement Letter signed by GEF Political FP. Template of Endorsement letter will be sent by end of October to the UNCCD NFP.
3. Two operational modalities are possible: direct with UNEP Nairobi or other regional implementing agency (e.g. via UNEP Vienne Office). For both modalities if the countries wishing to operate through a specific local executing agency they shall mention it the endorsement letter. Agency fee (9.5 %) is withholding only once regardless the modality chosen.

Feedback need from countries:

4. Question 1: For this umbrella project, do your countries want to deal directly with UNEP to execute the project (agreement to be signed with UNEP, UNEP will transfer the funds on regular basis, the country report to UNEP on financial expenditure and technical progress). Yes
No.....
5. Question 2: If your answer for question 1 is No. Please nominate Maximum 2 institutions in your region which you prefer to get the support for accessing the funds from UNEP and which will sign agreement with UNEP and the institution will sign in turn agreement with your country. The funds will come from UNEP to the institution and then from the institution to your country. The responsibility of financial and technical report to UNEP is on the institution you choose. The institutions of choice are:
6. 1st :? Any reason for your choice?
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ANNEX 4. OPENING REMARKS OF THE REGIONAL CHAIR

Opening Remarks of the Chair at the regional meeting Annex V, CRIC 15

Dear friends, Good morning!

Welcome to Nairobi! I would like to express our gratitude to the Kenyan Government for hosting our meeting in the city which is home to the UN Headquarters in Africa!

We have 2 days of our regional consultation and we have to discuss the documents of CRIC 15 and it is important that we discuss our views and express regional positions during CRIC plenary and in a contact group. CRIC does not take decisions, but it prepares the recommendations which will be a basis for COP decisions.

Therefore, I need your active participation.

From my point of view, we have 3 important issues to focus on.

First, is the draft of Future Strategy prepared by IWG. We have to jointly look at draft and to think if this Strategy would be helpful for effective implementation of convention, for our countries and for our region.

Secondly, Land Degradation Neutrality target setting process. We have now 102 countries which joined the programme. In our region, it is 10 countries. We will hear presentation of the Global mechanism and this will be the time to express our opinions, good experience and also concerns.

Third issue is a future reporting modality. Will we report only once in 4 years, do we want to change mandate and functions of CRIC? I hope, we will have a good discussion about it.

I hope you all read documents posted on UNCCD website.

On the second day, Ms. Monique Barbut, Executive Secretary, will attend our meeting and we will have an opportunity to ask her questions directly.

Finally, I would like to congratulate new Focal Points for Azerbaijan and Moldova. This is first time they join UNCCD official meetings.

Please, introduce yourself.

Welcome and we are glad to help you.

I wish us all productive two days!

Thank you!

INRUSSIAN

Вступительное слово Председателя Регионального совещания Приложения V, КРОК 15

Дорогие друзья, доброе утро!

Добро пожаловать в Найроби -- прежде всего позвольте поблагодарить правительство Кении за возможность провести нашу встречу в этом замечательном городе, где расположена региональная штаб-квартира ООН в Африке.

Нам предстоят два дня региональных консультаций, в ходе которых необходимо обсудить документы КРОК 15. Мы должны обсудить нашу точку зрения и выразить позицию региона как на пленарных заседаниях, так

и в контактной группе. Хотя задачей КРОК не является принятие решений, в ходе него будут подготовлены рекомендации, которые послужат основой для решений будущего КС.

Для этого потребуется ваше активное участие.

На мой взгляд, есть три важных вопроса, на которые необходимо обратить внимание:

Во-первых, это проект будущей стратегии, подготовленный МРГ. Мы должны совместно рассмотреть этот проект и определить, будет ли предложенная стратегия полезна для эффективного осуществления Конвенции, для наших стран и для нашего региона.

Во-вторых, Программа по установлению целевых показателей НДЗ. На сегодняшний день к этой программе присоединились 102 страны, десять из них из нашего региона. Нам предстоит прослушать доклад Глобального механизма и представится возможность выразить наше мнение и поделиться как удачным опытом, так и существующими проблемами.

Третий вопрос касается будущего формата отчетности. Будем ли мы предоставлять отчеты раз в четыре года, хотим ли мы изменить мандат и функции КРОК? Надеюсь, предстоит плодотворная дискуссия по этим вопросам.

Я надеюсь, что у всех участников была возможность ознакомиться с документами, размещенными перед встречами на сайте КБО ООН.

На второй день Исполнительный Секретарь КБО ООН г-жа Моник Барбю будет присутствовать на нашей встрече, и у вас будет возможность задать ей вопросы лично.

В заключение хочу поздравить новых координаторов Азербайджана и Молдовы – они впервые принимают участие в официальной встрече КБО ООН.

Пожалуйста, представьтесь.

Добро пожаловать – мы всегда рады Вам помочь.

Желаю всем собравшимся плодотворно провести два дня.

Спасибо!