



**Meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology
07 December 2017, Bonn, Germany**

Date: 07 December 2017
Venue: UN Campus – Langer Eugen
Meeting Room: LEU1511
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn, Germany
Working languages: English
Working hours: 09:00 – 13:00, 14:00 – 18:00

- DRAFT REPORT -

I. Adoption of the agenda and organization of the work

1. The Chair of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) welcomed participants of the CST Meeting (see annex I) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) secretariat in Bonn. The SPI Co-chair was invited to participate in the discussion of Agenda items III and IV. The Agenda was adopted without any amendments (see annex II).

II. Election of the Rapporteur

2. The CST Bureau elected Ahmet Senyaz from Turkey as the Rapporteur.

III. Consideration of relevant decisions of COP13 that impact the work of the CST as well as of the Science-Policy Interface (SPI)

3. The CST Bureau considered the following decisions taken at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) and their impact on the work of the CST and of the Science-Policy Interface (SPI): decision 1/COP.13, 3/ COP.13, 7/ COP.13, 15/COP.13, 18/ COP.13, 19/ COP.13, 20/ COP.13, 21/ COP.13, 22/ COP.13, 23/ COP.13, 27/ COP.13, 28/COP.13, 29/ COP.13, 30/ COP.13, and 31/ COP.13.¹

4. Based on decision 20/COP.13 'Promoting the analysis, dissemination and accessibility of best practices and the UNCCD Knowledge Hub', the CST Bureau suggested using the Knowledge Hub as a platform to raise awareness and communicate about SPI progress in delivering its work programme.

¹ The report of the Conference of the Parties on its thirteenth session, held in Ordos, China, from 6 to 16 September 2017 is available at: http://www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/2017-11/cop21add1_eng.pdf



5. Based on decision 21/COP.13 'Work programme of the Science-Policy Interface for the biennium 2018–2019', the CST Bureau requested the secretariat to prepare an extended work programme for the SPI which integrates all other COP 13 decisions and guiding documents such as the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework that have an impact on the SPI and circulate it in advance to the first SPI meeting for discussion.

6. Based on decision 19/COP.13 'Cooperation with other intergovernmental scientific panels and bodies', which requests the secretariat to clarify the potential benefits, costs, conditions and procedures for establishing more formal relationships between the SPI and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Intergovernmental Technical Panel on Soils (ITPS) and International Resource Panel (IRP) in order to develop synergies and avoid duplication of efforts, the CST Bureau:

- a) Noted that decision 19/COP.13 as well as decisions taken by the IPBES² offer concrete entry-points for the UNCCD to formalize the partnership with the IPBES. The CST Bureau noted that IPBES is starting to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the other biodiversity related conventions and stated that developing MoUs with scientific panels could be a concrete strategy for formalizing cooperation with such bodies, including with the IPCC for which the existing informal collaboration for the "IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Land" serves as a basis.
- b) Highlighted the possibility for organizing a meeting between the UNCCD/SPI and the IPBES at the margins of the IPBES-6 Plenary, on 17-24 March 2018 in Medellin, Colombia, given the Lead Scientist of the secretariat, SPI co-Chair, and CST Vice-Chair from Colombia will be at the IPBES plenary.
- c) Agreed that a letter from the UNCCD Executive Secretary to such panels can be elaborated to introduce the CST Bureau, the new SPI, its work programme for 2018-2019 and the new Lead Scientist of the secretariat, and to inform them that the SPI will review their work in light of its importance for the implementation of the Convention. Such a letter could also express interest for formalizing respective partnerships. In addition, the CST Bureau considered a follow-up letter from the CST Chair.
- d) Agreed to further discuss this issue as part of an agenda item of the next SPI meeting, 15-16 February, 2018, following the introduction of background and up-to-date

² See:

- i) decision IPBES-3/4, paragraph 7, taken at the 3rd Plenary (January 2015) on 'Communications, stakeholder engagement and strategic partnership' at https://www.ipbes.net/sites/default/files/downloads/Decision_IPBES_3_4_EN_0.pdf; and
- ii) annex II to decision IPBES-5/1, in particular paragraphs 20(b), 27(d) and 30 at https://www.ipbes.net/system/tdf/decision_ipbes_5_1_en.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=16016



information on the activities conducted by the above mentioned intergovernmental scientific panels and bodies in the framework of the coordination activities of the SPI work programme.

7. Based on the consideration of all decisions which have an impact on the work of the SPI, the CST Bureau noted that, in the next biennium, the SPI will need expertise in the following thematic areas: Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), land use planning and modelling, sustainable land management (SLM) and its socio-economic and environmental aspects, responsible land governance and tenure, drought, sand and dust storms, soil organic carbon/C sequestration, migration (in connection to land degradation and drought), gender and methodological matters related to reporting on the UNCCD 2018-2030 Strategic Framework. The CST Bureau agreed to consider the need for expertise in these thematic areas for the selection of new SPI members.

8. The CST Bureau also considered the draft conclusions proposed by the UNFCCC Chair of the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) on "Issues relating to agriculture"³ at the occasion of UNFCCC COP 23. As observer, the UNCCD will be requested to provide views on elements to be included in the work which will be conducted by the SBSTA and the Subsidiary Body for Implementation to jointly address issues related to agriculture. The CST Bureau noted that this activity can be pursued as part of the mandate received from the UNCCD COP13 to strengthen synergies with UNFCCC and that the SPI will have to consider what is requested and decide on the scope for engagement. The CST Bureau requested the secretariat to follow up on this issue.

IV. Modalities of work of the SPI

IV.a. SPI Terms of reference and policies

9. The CST Bureau discussed the novel elements of the SPI Terms of Reference (ToR) and policies (i.e. communication strategy, code of conduct and conflict of interest policy) which had been reviewed and cleared by the CST Bureau via email exchange prior to the present Bureau Meeting.

IV.b. Proposal to extend modalities for the review of SPI products

10. The CST Bureau considered the proposal to extend the modality for review of SPI products presented by the SPI Co-chair. In particular the Bureau considered the novel aspects contained in this proposal such as: i) to involve former SPI members in the review process, and ii) to maintain a two weeks review period for each review step (internal scientific review by SPI members, external scientific peer-review and scientific review by former SPI members) with the exception of the COP Bureau review, which could take two additional weeks (in total, four weeks) and could be carried out in parallel to the external scientific peer-review. All participants agreed in considering

³ See document FCCC/SBSTA/2017/L.24/Add.1 at <http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/2017/sbsta/eng/l24a01.pdf>



objective criteria for selecting former SPI members to be involved on a voluntary basis in the SPI activities based on a match with required expertise for reviewing and/or authoring specific reports/ science-policy briefs. Finally, the secretariat was requested to ensure an online presence for both former and new members of the SPI.

V. Renewal of the SPI membership

11. The secretariat recalled that, by decision 19/COP.13, the COP decided to:

- a) continue the SPI and extend its current mandate up to the end of the sixteenth session of the COP (2023);
- b) renew the SPI membership using a rotating system;
- c) exceptionally extend the membership of no more than eight SPI members by two years, for the biennium 2018–2019, so as to benefit from the advantages of a rotating membership renewal system;⁴ and
- d) add two more observer seats to the composition of the SPI.

12. The secretariat also recalled that, based on the revised Terms of Reference of the SPI,⁵ and in accordance with decision 23/COP.11, paragraph 4, and its Corrigendum,⁶ as amended by decision 19/COP.13, paragraphs 2-4, the membership of the SPI shall comprise:

- a) the five members of the Bureau of the CST;
- b) five scientists, one nominated by each region;
- c) ten independent scientists selected by the Bureau of the CST through an open call taking into account regional and disciplinary balance; and
- d) five observers with at least one each from a relevant civil society organization, a relevant international organization and a relevant United Nations organization.

13. Finally, the secretariat recalled that, in line with the recommendations contained in the external assessment of the SPI,⁷ at its meeting on 5 September 2017, the former CST Bureau had agreed to exceptionally extend the membership of Mariam Akhtar-Schuster, Jean-Luc Chotte, Annette Cowie, German Kust, Graciela Metternicht and the three observers for the 2018-2019 transitional period, in case the COP decided to extend the mandate of the SPI.⁸

⁴ See the "Assessment of the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface" available at:

http://www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2017-05/FinalReportof%20the_SPI_Assessment.pdf

⁵ See the 'Terms of Reference of the Science-Policy Interface' available at:

http://knowledge.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/SPI%20Terms%20of%20Reference_FINAL_07112017.pdf

⁶ See http://www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/ICCD_COP11_23_Add.1/23add1eng.pdf and http://www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/sessions/documents/ICCD_COP11_23_Add.1_Corr.1/23add1corr1eng.pdf respectively.

⁷ See the "Assessment of the UNCCD Science-Policy Interface" available at:

http://www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2017-05/FinalReportof%20the_SPI_Assessment.pdf

⁸ See the report of the CST Bureau meeting held on 5 September 2017, available at:

http://www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2017-11/CST_BM_Report_Sept2017_Ordos_final.pdf



14. Based on the above and considering that German Kust had been elected as Vice-Chair of the CST, the CST Bureau agreed to proceed with the selection of 6 new independent scientists, and 2 new observers. These new members/observers, together with 5 new scientists to be nominated by the regions, would complete the composition of the SPI which already included 5 CST Bureau members, 4 former SPI members and 3 former observers.

15. Based on decision 19/COP.12, the CST Bureau also confirmed that the sole avenue for past members to continue serving on the SPI in the biennium 2018-2019 was through exceptional extension for two years. For this reason, applications received from past SPI members for a new four-year term of service were not considered. However, noting the strong interest from a number of former SPI, the CST Bureau also discussed how past members might continue to contribute to the SPI in the future, for instance by reviewing and/or authoring specific reports or science-policy briefs.

V.a. Status of nomination of scientists by the regions

16. The CST Bureau provided a brief update, informing that the regions were working on finalizing the list of the regional nominations by 18 December, 2017, as per deadline of the Regional Call for Membership in the SPI and taking account the criteria for selection for regional scientists (see annex III).

V.b. Selection of independent scientists

17. The secretariat recalled that a global public call inviting experts to apply to become members of the SPI was open from 7 November to 4 December 2017. A total of 122 applications were received and organized according to the published requirements and criteria for selection (see annex III) by the secretariat.

18. Based on the requirements and criteria for selection listed in the call for independent scientists (see annex III) and keeping into consideration the need for regional and disciplinary balance, as specified in the TOR for the SPI, the CST Bureau selected Ermias Betemariam, Rattan Lal, Andre Francisco Pilon, Mark Svoboda, Peter Verburg and Ana Vukovic as independent scientists.

19. The CST Bureau requested the secretariat to forward to each region relevant applications to the global call for independent scientists to facilitate the nomination of the regional scientist, as considered appropriate by each region.

V.c. Selection of observers

20. The secretariat recalled that, in line with decision 19.COP.13, the mandate of the United Nations Environment, the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the representative



of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as observers to the SPI was exceptionally extended for the biennium 2018-2019.

21. The secretariat informed the CST Bureau that – at its meeting on 26 October, 2017, the CSO panel recommended that Marioldy Sanchez Santivañez, alternate CSO representative to the SPI for the period 2014-2017 – becomes the official CSO representative to the SPI for the biennium 2018-2019, to ensure continuity of the observers to the SPI in line with decision 19/COP.13.

22. The secretariat recalled that a public call inviting international organizations and United Nations organizations to express an interest to become observers to the SPI was open from 7 November to 4 December 2017. A total of 12 applications were received and shortlisted by the secretariat.

23. Based on the requirements and criteria for selection listed in the call for international organizations and United Nations organizations to be an observer to the SPI (see annex IV), the CST Bureau selected the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Meteorological Organization as new observer organizations.

VI. Other Matters

24. The CST Bureau suggested considering the following agenda item in one of its next meetings: participation in scientific conferences as opportunities for scientific exchanges, where the subject matter of the conference is of direct relevance to SPI activities.



Annex I – List of participants

List of participants to the CST Bureau meeting 07 December 2017, Bonn, Germany		
Bureau member	Region	Contact details
Omer Muhammad Raja CST- Chair	Asia Group	Deputy Inspector General (Forest) Ministry of Climate Change, Government of Pakistan LG & RD Building, G-5/2 Islamabad - Pakistan Email: omerraja07@gmail.com; omerraja07@live.com
Carl Kojo Fiati CST Vice-Chair	Africa Group	Director, Natural Resources Environmental Protection Agency Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) Accra- Ghana Email : carl.fiati@epa.gov.gh; cfiati@hotmail.com
German Kust CST Vice-Chair	Central and Eastern Europe Group	Principle Researcher Institute of Geography Russian Academy of Sciences 119017, Staromonetnyy pereulok 29 Moscow - Russia Email: gkust@yandex.com, gskust@gmail.com
Maria Angélica Fernandez Garcia CST Vice-Chair	Group of Latin America and the Caribbean	Contratista de la Dirección de Bosques, Biodiversidad y Servicios Ecosistémicos Ministerio de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sostenible Bogotá D.C - Colombia Email: mafernandez@minambiente.gov.co; fernandez.mariaangelica@gmail.com
Ahmet Senyaz CST Vice-Chair and Rapporteur	Western Europe and Other Groups	Advisor Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs Söğütözü. 14/E KAT:12 A Blok Bestepe Ankara - Turkey Email: asenyaz@ormansu.gov.tr



Annex II – Agenda

Meeting of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology 07 December 2017, Bonn, Germany

Date: 07 December 2017
Venue: UN Campus – Langer Eugen
Meeting Room: LEU1511
Platz der Vereinten Nationen 1
53113 Bonn, Germany
Working languages: English
Working hours: 09:00 – 13:00, 14:00 – 18:00

- DRAFT REPORT -

- I. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
- II. Election of the Rapporteur
- III. Consideration of relevant decisions of COP13 that impact the work of the CST and of the SPI
- IV. Consideration of the modalities of work of the SPI:
 - a. Terms of reference and policies
 - b. Proposal to extend modalities for review of SPI products
- V. Renewal of the SPI membership:
 - a. Status of nomination of scientists by the regions
 - b. Selection of independent scientists
 - c. Selection of observers
- VI. Other matters



Annex III - Call for independent scientists to join the Science-Policy Interface⁹

"[...] D. Requirements / Criteria for selection – Scientists applying to become members of the SPI shall:

- Have an advanced degree and widely recognized academic knowledge in discipline(s) relevant to the UNCCD process;
- Have at least five years applied and acknowledged interdisciplinary scientific work experience and/or interdisciplinary practical/project experience with DLDD issues;
- Have substantive evidence of significant, peer-reviewed publications in international journals in the last ten years;
- Have experience in providing scientific advice to policymakers, civil society organizations, land users and/or other UNCCD stakeholders at national and/or regional level in thematic areas relevant to the UNCCD;
- Have experience in communicating, promoting and incorporating science into policy development processes and in synthesizing information for non-specialists;
- Be willing to work in a multicultural and multidisciplinary team and be accepting of other views and comments from different perspectives in order to reach consensus;
- Be fluent in English (the working language of the SPI is English only);
- Be willing to commit the time and effort necessary to contribute to the work of the SPI; and
- Have full access to email and web-based information and communication systems in order to ensure participation in SPI activities conducted electronically."

⁹ Available at: http://www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/SPI%20Call%20for%20Independent%20Scientists_FINAL_07112017.pdf



Annex IV - Call for International Organizations and United Nations Organizations to be an Observer to the Science-Policy Interface¹⁰

"[...] D. Requirements / Criteria for selection Organizations applying to become observers to the SPI shall:

- Be qualified in matters relevant to the UNCCD;
- Have at least one on-going project, programme or initiative related to DLDD issues;
- Have a research-based work programme;
- Have experience in providing advice to countries in devising policies, supporting planning and creating national strategies for sustainable development;
- Have experience in communicating, promoting and incorporating science into policy development processes and in synthesizing information for non-specialists;
- Have any on-going or previous cooperation with the UNCCD;
- Be willing to commit the time and effort of one staff member necessary to contribute to the work of the SPI."

¹⁰ Available at: http://www2.unccd.int/sites/default/files/inline-files/SPI%20Call%20for%20Observers_FINAL_07112017.pdf