



- MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COP 13 BUREAU (11 APRIL 2018)-

The meeting of the COP Bureau took place in Bonn, Germany, on 11 April 2018. Openings remarks were provided by the President, Dr. Wu Zhimin, Director General, Department of International Cooperation, National Forestry and Grassland Administration, China and UNCCD Executive Secretary Ms. Monique Barbut.

Ms. Barbut briefly outlined the biennial programme of work ahead, as per COP13 decisions. An overview of the matters discussed and the decisions taken by the Bureau are presented below.

I. Adoption of the Agenda

The agenda was adopted without modifications.

II. Presentation of the final report and the outcome of the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP13)

Further to the presentation of the final report and outcome of COP13 by the secretariat, discussions followed.

One member requested to have an overview of the timeline to submit the voluntary report on SDG 15 at the 2018 High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF). Details of the submission process were shared and the draft UNCCD contribution will be sent to COP Bureau member for comments, by 25 April 2018 at the latest, in order to meet the respective deadlines. Another member asked for clarification regarding the national process of reports, submission to ECOSOC. The Secretariat confirmed that countries, themselves, submit voluntary national reviews. It was further agreed to follow the same process and deadline, regarding the study on the causes of migration, which terms of reference will also be circulated to COP Bureau. In addition, the ES encouraged all Parties to reflect the importance of the UNCCD and its work to address DLDD during their national statements as a means to keep the UNCCD and its work visible, especially in the context of Goal 15.



The COP Bureau was reminded of decision 13/COP.13, by which the Conference of the Parties, through its Bureau, was requested to prepare appropriate modalities, criteria and terms of reference for a midterm evaluation of the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework with a view to their adoption at the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties. The Bureau requested the Secretariat to provide for its consideration a draft of such modalities, criteria and terms of reference, with the aim to prepare the requested information in time for submission to COP 14 as part of the official documentation.

III. Work plan of the Secretariat, the Global Mechanism and the subsidiary bodies of the Convention

While presenting the work plan and UNCCD results framework for 2018-2021 the Secretariat recalled that it aimed at improving its performance and effectiveness to implement the UNCCD activities. The COP Bureau members praised the clarity of the UNCCD results framework which will enable the development of a relevant work programme to implement COP decisions and ensuing activities.

One member asked for clarifications on how the Global Mechanism (GM) will support work to be done at national level. The Executive Secretary recalled that discussions took place at COP13 to support the implementation of LDN target setting by helping countries to design sound transformative project proposals to be funded by several funding sources / donors. The Managing Director of the GM emphasized that the GM will facilitate the Parties' transition from the target setting exercise to writing funding proposals and developing relevant partnerships to reinforce countries' capacities. The GM will not implement projects on the ground but will play its role of fund raising body. One member welcomed the role of the GM in supporting countries to translate targets into practice and helping capacity building reinforcement to access financing resources.

IV. Activities of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST)

The Secretariat presented the activities of the CST Bureau as well as the new SPI and its work programme. In addition, the Secretariat informed that SPI members participated to the IPBES plenary and that collaboration with IPCC is ongoing.

One member emphasized that it would be good to have a MoU between UNCCD and IPBES, and queried whether development of a MoU was in progress – the Secretariat confirmed that this is the case. The participation of the Secretariat at the IPBES plenary



was very useful and helped raise attention to land degradation issues and the land degradation assessment report; however, it was noted that higher level Secretariat participation would have brought even more attention for the UNCCD. Another member noted however that the summary for decision makers didn't address comprehensively Land Degradation Neutrality. Key messages will be refined in that way. A lesson learned is the need to reinforce direct synergies between UNCCD parties and IPBES members at country level. Finally, the Secretariat provided details information on the criteria used to select SPI members and the duration of their respective mandates.

V. Activities of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC)

The CRIC Chair informed that UNCCD reporting tools were online and all regional implementation annexes would have been trained by early May. The deadline for the national reports' submission is tentatively set for the end of July 2018, allowing sufficient time for their review and the elaboration of the ensuing official CRIC17 documentation.

The following points made by CRIC Bureau during its meeting of 10th April were underlined:

1. A request for a possible extension for the national report submission of 4 to 5 weeks,
2. A request for regional preparatory meeting back to back the CRIC session,
3. Emphasize the importance of the process relating to the HLPF and welcome the initiative of the Friends of DLDD.
4. Session of CRIC17 should be as interactive as possible,
5. Importance of the work done by the SPI as it relates to monitoring and reporting and reinforcing the synergies between the CRIC and CST/SPI.

The Executive Secretary recommended not to take a decision on the extension of the deadline at this early stage but proposed instead to review the situation case by case with the CRIC Bureau at an appropriate time, for a final decision on the matter exercising the required flexibility, when and if needed.

The Executive Secretary emphasized also that there is no need to hold regional preparatory meetings before the CRIC as the GSP regional workshops to prepare reporting already include components in their agenda dealing with regional issues. A one-day



regional consultation back to back with the CRIC could however be envisioned, pending to the availability of funding, which still needs to be secured. The CRIC chair will report back to CRIC Bureau on the proposals made by the Executive Secretary. One member highlighted the need to stick to the deadline and the importance to reinforce capacity building to report in the future. Another member recalled the request made by his region to postpone the deadline and to hold regional preparatory meetings before the CRIC. The Executive Secretary stressed the effective work done by the Secretariat to assist countries in reporting, by developing and providing reporting tools that are designed in such a way that they provide high level support to all Parties and ensures that credible information on land based indicators can be provided.

VI. Presentation of the audit report on the revised International Standard of Auditing (ISA) 260 by the UN Board of Auditors (Board of Auditors)

The UN Board of Auditors indicated that they found no errors in the financial statements for the period of review, and that most of the recommendations they made were already being addressed, and highlighted a few matters that they believed merited attention to address some remaining weaknesses:

- The numbers of consultants, hired by the Secretariat to implement LDN TSP, and the need to put in place clear guidance on the way to recruit / manage consultants,
- The delegations of authority within the secretariat,
- The development of an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Strategy.

The Secretariat stressed that, the delegation of authority is being reviewed and updated in coordination with UN Secretariat in New York. It further noted that a draft of UNCCD ICT Strategy was ready and will be submitted to the Board of Auditors.

As a matter of clarification, the ES recalled the objective constraints faced by the Secretariat confronted with the need to recruit more than 100 national consultants to implement the LDN target setting programme in 2016 and 2017 and informed that the same scheme will be used to implement the drought initiative this year, as no other viable option was available. The ES agreed on the need to better define procedural guidance to recruit consultants. The ES also proposed to invite the Board of Auditors to present their final report to the COP Bureau. The President of the COP Bureau agreed with this proposal. The report will be finalized and circulated by July 2018.



VII. Financial requirements for facilitating the participation of eligible country representatives, CSOs and science and technology correspondents at CRIC 17, CST 14 and COP 14

One member asked for the presentation of the roadmap to mobilize funds for participation of eligible countries at CRIC17. The Secretariat indicated that the financial requirements noted at COP13 were transmitted to all Parties through the notification of contributions for 2018 at the end of last year. The Secretariat had since sent an additional fund raising requests in order to match resources required. The COP Bureau is confident that the Executive Secretary will convince Parties to contribute to the special voluntary fund in that respect. COP Bureau members will also advocate the question in their region.

VIII. Convention budget: status of assessed contributions

According to the financial rules of the COP, contributions must be received before 1 January for the period for which they relate. The President underlines the need to convince country Parties to provide voluntary contributions whenever possible. The Secretariat recalled that notifications of contributions are sent at the end of each year, along with a status of payments, which are posted on the UNCCD website on a monthly basis. The President emphasized the need for country Parties to pay their contributions, with minimum delay as the capital reserve amounts only to 12%. He also underlined the need to remind countries to pay outstanding contributions. Nevertheless, it has been noted that the financial situation was improved comparing to previous years and that some countries had recently resolved their outstanding contributions.

IX. Other business

No other business has been addressed.

X. Next meeting

As per the established practice, the ES proposed to China to host the next COP Bureau meeting. Given the schedule of CRIC 17, it was proposed that such meeting be held in February 2019. The President will confirm, in due time, time and venue in close consultation with the UNCCD Secretariat.