



Convention to Combat Desertification

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Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

Report of the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention, held in Georgetown from 28 to 30 January 2019

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I. Opening of the session

A. Opening statements

1. On 28 January 2019, the Chair of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), Mr. Samuel Mabilin Contreras (Philippines), opened the seventeenth session of the Committee and made a statement.
2. A statement was also made by the Minister of State of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana, His Excellency Honorable Joseph Harmon, on behalf of the host country of the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.
3. A further statement was made by the Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

B. General statements

4. Statements were made by the representatives of Angola (on behalf of the African Group), Saudi Arabia (on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group), Brazil (on behalf of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean countries), Malta (on behalf of the Regional Implementation Annex for the Northern Mediterranean (Annex IV)) and Belarus (on behalf of the Regional Implementation Annex for Central and Eastern Europe (Annex V)).
5. A statement was also made by the representative of Romania (on behalf of the European Union and its Member States).
6. A statement was made by the representative of the Caribbean Youth Environment Network on behalf of civil society organizations (CSOs).
7. An announcement was made by the representative of India on the hosting of the fourteenth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP).

C. Meetings of the Regional Implementation Annexes

8. Meetings of the Regional Implementation Annexes in preparation for the seventeenth session of the CRIC were held on 27 January 2019.

II. Procedural matters

A. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

9. At its first meeting, on 28 January 2019, the Committee adopted the provisional agenda as contained in document ICCD/CRIC(17)/1. The agenda reads as follows:
 1. Organizational matters:
 - (a) Adoption of the agenda and organization of work;
 - (b) Appointment of the Rapporteur of the Committee;
 2. Assessment of Implementation:

Strategic objectives 1 to 5;

3. The reporting and review process of the UNCCD:
 - Procedures for communication of information, as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties;
4. Adoption of the comprehensive report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to the Conference of the Parties, including conclusions and recommendations.

10. Also at the first meeting, the Committee approved the schedule of work for the session, as contained in the annex to document ICCD/CRIC(17)/1.

B. Appointment of a Rapporteur of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

11. At the first meeting, on 28 January 2019, the Committee appointed Ms. Anna Luise (Italy) as Rapporteur of its seventeenth and eighteenth sessions.

C. Informal consultations

12. Informal consultations took place regularly during the session under the guidance of the Chair and the Rapporteur of the Committee.

D. Attendance

13. The representatives of the following 93 Parties to the UNCCD attended the seventeenth session of the Committee:

Algeria	Cambodia	Gabon
Angola	Cameroon	Gambia
Antigua and Barbuda	Canada	Georgia
Argentina	Côte d'Ivoire	Germany
Armenia	China	Ghana
Barbados	Colombia	Grenada
Belarus	Cook Islands	Guatemala
Belize	Costa Rica	Guinea
Benin	Cuba	Guinea-Bissau
Bhutan	Dominican Republic	Guyana
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ecuador	Haiti
Botswana	El Salvador	Honduras
Brazil	European Union	India
Burkina Faso	Finland	Indonesia

Italy	Nigeria	Senegal
Jamaica	Palau	Seychelles
Japan	Panama	South Africa
Kazakhstan	Papua New Guinea	Sri Lanka
Kenya	Paraguay	Swaziland
Kiribati	Peru	Switzerland
Lesotho	Philippines	Thailand
Madagascar	Republic of Korea	Togo
Malawi	Republic of Moldova	Tuvalu
Malaysia	Romania	Ukraine
Malta	Rwanda	Uruguay
Marshall Islands	Saint Kitts and Nevis	Uzbekistan
Mongolia	Saint Lucia	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)
Montenegro	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Viet Nam
Morocco	Samoa	Zambia
Myanmar	Sao Tome and Príncipe	Zimbabwe
Namibia	Saudi Arabia	
Niger		

14. The session was also attended by observers from one country.¹

15. The following United Nations organizations, offices and specialized agencies were also represented:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Global Environment Facility

United Nations Development Programme

United Nations Environment Programme

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UN Women

World Meteorological Organization

16. The session was also attended by 8 intergovernmental organizations and 20 CSOs, including non-governmental organizations.¹

¹ Please refer to the official list of participants available on the UNCCD website <<https://www.unccd.int/official-documents/cric17-georgetown-guyana-2019>>.

E. Documentation

17. The documentation submitted for the consideration of the Committee is listed in the annex to this report and was noted by the Parties.

III. Conclusions and recommendations

A. Strategic objective 1

18. Some Parties at the seventeenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 17) recommended, in relation to multiple strategic objectives (SO 1-4), that the COP:

(a) Request the secretariat to monitor and evaluate the reporting process (administrative, financial, and technical) with the aim of ensuring adequate time allocation for data analysis, quality control and interpretation both by national experts and at the global level when the data for all country Parties is integrated;

(b) Request the secretariat to conduct a quality control audit on the data presented in the reports for all strategic objectives to ensure the results of this audit reflect the national reports accurately;

(c) Request the secretariat to review the text of these reports to ensure the appropriate use of adopted terms with respect to the mandate and scope of the Convention and past decisions taken by the COP;

(d) Request the secretariat to involve the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and the Science-Policy Interface (SPI), as appropriate, in questions related to the development of methodologies for the indicators, and to deepen the preliminary analysis of the data received by the Parties, including the limitations of the current methodology;

(e) Encourage the SPI, in their review of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services thematic assessment on land degradation and restoration, to update the CST on the direct and indirect drivers of land degradation and compare this review with what has been reported by country Parties;

(f) Request the secretariat to pursue the enhancement of the metrics for strategic objectives 1 and 5 and evaluate the appropriateness of the metrics for strategic objectives 2, 3 and 4, keeping with the principle of leveraging existing global standards and working towards the provision of default data for strategic objectives 2, 3 and 4 (e.g. Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) indicators);

(g) Request the secretariat to develop an interactive and geospatial data management platform that runs synergistically with Trends.Earth and the performance review and assessment of implementation system (PRAIS) (including forms, templates, reports, plugins and linkages to data cubes), ensures transparency and interoperability among datasets, improves and sustains data and information flows, and provides the necessary functionality, including:

(i) The management and presentation of metadata;

(ii) The capacity for regular updates between reporting periods;

(iii) The capacity to upload and integrate data from all sources which meet data quality standards for each indicator, including the inputs necessary to generate

the indicators and all the underlying algorithms used by the data providers and the Good Practice Guidance for SDG Indicator 15.3.1;²

- (iv) The capacity to compare and select between national, regional and global default datasets (e.g. through decision trees);
 - (v) The capacity to conduct analyses across all UNCCD indicators;
 - (vi) The capacity to analyse hotspots and brightspots;
 - (vii) The capacity to analyse additional information, including other nationally relevant indicators as well as complementary information such as climate variables, land ownership, land governance, gender equity, women's empowerment and stakeholder engagement;
 - (viii) The capacity to visualize the data prior to reporting as well as the capacity for the public to visualize and interact with officially reported results after the reporting process is completed;
 - (ix) The capacity to automatically generate reports relevant for the UNCCD reporting process and for national use, including text, tables, figures and maps;
 - (x) The capacity to generate information useful to government line agencies and CSOs in support of more effective integrated land-use planning and land degradation neutrality (LDN) implementation;
- (h) Request the secretariat, and other actors in a position to do so, to encourage and support developing countries Parties in the development of national data sets through institutional capacity-building, finance and technology transfer;
- (i) Request the secretariat to expand the scope of analysis beyond individual indicators so that their interactions and correlations can be better understood, for example the link between land degradation, poverty and gender equity;
- (j) Request the secretariat to expand the current categorization used in Party reporting to distinguish between "not reported" and "not required to report";
- (k) Request the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) to ensure that LDN target-setting, implementation and monitoring, at the local, national and global levels, is a continuous process including regular stocktakes of LDN targets and their implementation;
- (l) Request the secretariat and the GM to identify, generate and make available high spatial resolution datasets (and associated scale-specific methodologies) for all indicators intended for use in small countries, particularly small island developing States, arid and semi-arid regions and in terrain of countries that is characterized by high variability (e.g. mountain regions);
- (m) Request the secretariat and the GM to support country efforts, both technically and through capacity-building, to ensure harmonization between data reported to the UNCCD and that which is used by national statistics offices (NSOs);
- (n) Request the secretariat and the GM and encourage Parties to assess and further refine the baseline to be used in future reporting cycles;
- (o) Request the secretariat and the GM to work with partners to promote coherence and joint Rio conventions work on reporting, considering lessons learned by each and the

² <https://www.unccd.int/sites/default/files/relevant-links/2017-10/Good%20Practice%20Guidance_SDG%20Indicator%2015.3.1_Version%201.0.pdf>.

costs and benefits of action and inaction, focusing on high priority/high opportunity cases (e.g. peatlands due to their carbon potential);

(p) Request the secretariat to use the data available from the existing reporting mechanism to present information on global desertification trends around the world;

(q) Request the secretariat to take measures to sustain global data flows so that improved data can be provided to affected country Parties;

(r) Request the secretariat to further analyse and present global and regional data in interactive and visualized formats;

19. Regarding the national estimates provided by the Secretariat to the Parties and the extension of this provision to SO 2, 3 and 4, it is important to state that national estimates are not sufficient. For them to be relevant and connected to SO 1, they have to refer specifically to affected areas.

20. Some Parties at CRIC 17 further recommended, in relation to multiple strategic objectives (SO 1-4), that the COP:

(a) Request the secretariat to use in the documents language agreed at the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 12) and COP 13 in particular, including the UNCCD 2018–2030 Strategic Framework, such as ‘combat desertification, land degradation and drought’ and ‘voluntary LDN targets’, and references to the scope of the Convention in relation to the SDGs, and to act in accordance with the Convention mandates;

(b) Request the secretariat and invite technical partners to provide clear guidelines on the methodologies used to calculate land productivity dynamics (LPD) and to facilitate the enhancement of Trends.Earth to provide the capacity to directly input key datasets (e.g. Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), precipitation, evapotranspiration and soil moisture);

(c) Request the secretariat and invite technical partners to develop the means to incorporate land ownership information corresponding to land cover classes in order to obtain a clearer picture of adverse land-use conversions and problems related to land-cover changes.

21. Some Parties recommended, in relation to continuing work to support efforts to achieve SO 1, that the COP:

(a) Request the secretariat to enhance, both technically and procedurally, efforts to ensure harmonization of data, including land cover classification systems, so that national trends correspond with regional and global trends;

(b) Request the secretariat to develop and help identify resources for ground-truthing and other forms of data verification at the national level;

(c) Request the secretariat to improve land cover estimates related to land take (land sealing);

(d) Request the secretariat and the GM, encourage Parties and invite technical partners to focus part of the investment in capacity-building on improving national capacity and national networks in the assessment of each indicator. This should include the strengthening of appropriate partnerships, within and beyond the context of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO) LDN Initiative, in order to capitalize on synergies (e.g. FAO soil mapping and the Global Soil Partnership);

(e) Request the secretariat and the GM and encourage Parties to develop a strategy to bolster national mapping networks for all indicators in order to improve data collection and enhance the utility of national datasets;

(f) Request the secretariat to improve the spatial resolution of the inputs used to generate the land cover change indicator and expand the number of classes used to account for subnational variability, with the flexibility to distinguish among major forms of land use in each country;

(g) Request the secretariat and encourage Parties to explore approaches that would facilitate reporting that captures the magnitude of degradation along with land area;

(h) Request the secretariat to review the global and regional data analysis as presented in documents ICCD/CRIC(17)/2 and ICCD/CRIC(17)/6 to reflect the data from the national reports correctly;

(i) Request the secretariat to take into account the importance of increasing restoration and rehabilitation of degraded wetlands, and especially peatlands areas;

(j) Request the secretariat to organize trainings and workshops specifically targeting SO 1 for land cadaster services and NSOs;

(k) Encourage the secretariat, the GM and other bilateral and multilateral partners to continue their efforts in supporting countries in the integration of voluntary LDN targets into national action programmes and other strategic national documents;

(l) Request the secretariat to provide clear guidelines and technical support on methodologies for calculating and reporting on indicators under SO 1, particularly for LPD, and incorporate this into future reporting and capacity-building.

B. Strategic objective 2

22. All interventions in the plenary directly related to SO 2 have been incorporated into the section above on interventions relevant to multiple SOs (1-4).

C. Strategic objective 3

23. Some Parties recommended, in relation to continuing work to support efforts to achieve SO 3, that the COP:

(a) Request the secretariat and the GM and encourage Parties to leverage efforts on the Drought Initiative (including national drought planning elements of early warning systems, mitigation, adaptation, and monitoring) in support of enhanced drought monitoring at the country level;

(b) Request the secretariat and the GM to collaborate with appropriate technical partners (e.g. the Integrated Drought Management Programme, Global Water Partnership, World Meteorological Organization and FAO) on the development of a globally relevant drought indicator and the harmonization of drought monitoring approaches and systems, including national drought planning elements of early warning systems, mitigation, adaptation, and monitoring);

(c) Request the secretariat to take measures to scale up the Drought Initiative in order to support more country Parties.

D. Strategic objective 4

24. Some Parties recommended, in relation to continuing work to support efforts to achieve SO 4, that the COP:

(a) Request the secretariat to re-evaluate the current biodiversity metric for strategic objective 2 (The Red List), exploring ways to enhance its utility to the UNCCD with consideration of alternative metrics that might be more appropriate, such as absolute numbers of species which are extinct or endangered. This shall be pursued in collaboration with its custodian (the International Union for Conservation of Nature) as well as the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity;

(b) Request the secretariat to correct the mismatch in the reporting template for SO 4 and the subsequent analysis of drivers under The Red List metric.

E. Land degradation neutrality

25. Some Parties emphasized the role that LDN plays in maintaining and restoring the land-based natural capital by tackling climate change, securing biodiversity and maintaining critical ecosystem services while ensuring shared prosperity and well-being of populations.

26. Some Parties acknowledged that the LDN target-setting processes provided an opportunity for countries to promote synergies and policy coherence across sectors and at all levels, particularly as an accelerator within the national SDG agenda, the Rio conventions and other relevant international commitments.

27. Some Parties welcomed with appreciation the achievements of the LDN Target Setting Programme in support of the strong political momentum created by country Parties to achieve LDN, which is reflected by the high number of participating countries. Some Parties emphasized the importance of maintaining this momentum by supporting LDN implementation. Some Parties stressed that LDN target-setting should lead to an iterative process with regular review of targets and strategies at national level and regular stocktaking at global level.

28. Some Parties welcomed the involvement of multiple stakeholders at all levels supporting the LDN target-setting process. They acknowledged with appreciation the role of the GM and the secretariat in forging partnerships at global level and noted with appreciation the involvement of international technical and financial partners. Some Parties highlighted the importance of involving all relevant national stakeholders, including all ministries concerned, local communities, civil society organizations and the private sector, and promoting gender inclusivity to further strengthen LDN implementation and ensure long-term success.

29. In order to promote an enabling environment for LDN implementation (i) some Parties emphasized the importance to further strengthen the integration of the LDN concept and targets into relevant national policies and planning frameworks, including those related to land governance and responsible land tenure systems as well as sustainable development; (ii) some Parties also stressed the importance of establishing sustainable monitoring systems at national level to ensure the regular and systematic review of the progress made towards achieving LDN targets; and (iii) some Parties suggested establishing a joint monitoring platform integrating relevant tools to monitor land degradation at subnational, national, regional and global levels.

30. Some Parties emphasized the need to increase capacity-building efforts in the areas of LDN data management, LDN monitoring, and the development of LDN transformative projects and programmes (TPPs), and requested the secretariat, the GM and other development partners to provide the necessary financial and technical support for this purpose.

31. Some Parties invited financing partners, including the Global Environment Facility and the GM, to further support countries' activities towards the achievement of LDN targets,

including by developing TPPs and facilitating the mobilization of adequate financial resources from various sources.

32. Some Parties recommended, in relation to continuing work to support efforts to achieve LDN, that the COP:

- (a) Request the secretariat to obtain from the LDN Fund detailed information regarding the selection of projects and the definition of priorities by the LDN Fund;
- (b) Note that the TPP Checklist is a voluntary tool and should not be used a mandatory prerequisite for the approval of projects;
- (c) Remind Parties and all stakeholders that all our efforts are focused on the scope of the Convention to combat desertification and land degradation, and mitigate the impacts of drought.

F. Implementation of the Gender Action Plan

33. Some Parties at CRIC 17:

- (a) Reiterated that the Gender Action Plan is a good starting point for actions to mainstream gender, and proposed that:
 - (i) In order to empower women, especially with regard to land and land-based resources, the principle of “one out all out” must be applied to the four priority areas of the GAP: (i) participation; (ii) land rights and access to resources; (iii) access to knowledge and technologies; and (iv) economic empowerment. Failure to achieve any of the four priority areas would mean that LDN implementation is not gender responsive;
 - (ii) It include specific activities with a clear road map to give it impetus;
 - (iii) It include the decoupling of the actions relating to women and youth;
- (b) Stressed the need to enhance advocacy in order to strengthen gender mainstreaming and the implementation of the GAP through, inter alia: raising awareness; promoting collaboration between desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) specialists and gender equality experts; engaging national gender equality mechanisms; improving capacities; and securing necessary political support to ensure systematic gender mainstreaming in DLDD;
- (c) Emphasized the need to create enabling environments at the national level to make the implementation of the Convention gender-responsive and transformative, including by:
 - (i) Implementing policies and legal reforms that remove structural barriers, such as inheritance or land tenure rights, discriminatory norms and gendered roles and stereotypes;
 - (ii) Facilitating the organization, collective voice and representation of women in leadership and decision-making;
 - (iii) Promoting consultative processes that engage women from the local to national levels in order to promote country ownership of the plans and programmes;
 - (iv) Coordinating and integrating gender needs within other plans and in project design from their inception;
 - (v) Working on land governance and providing secure land rights for women;

- (d) Stressed the need for capacity-building in order to realize the full potential of LDN and ensure it is gender-responsive by:
 - (i) Providing dedicated staff and the capacity to manage results;
 - (ii) Developing practical guidance, tools and policy guidance;
 - (iii) Developing guidance and guidelines on reflecting gender considerations in the LDN target-setting process and capacity-building exercises to help countries to better understand the gender dimensions of drought response and management;
 - (iv) Providing ongoing technical support for the integration of gender issues into LDN TPPs;
- (e) Emphasized the need to strengthen gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation in the implementation of the GAP, building on existing good practices and guidelines, by:
 - (i) Improving statistics on gender, including the development of a gender development index for LDN projects;
 - (ii) Gathering gender disaggregated data, eliminating fragmentation in its collection and presenting the data in user-friendly formats;
 - (iii) Reviewing the reporting templates, including the PRAIS, integrating the GAP indicators into UNCCD reporting and allowing for more structured submissions with clear guidelines and standards, including gender indicators for various thematic sectors;
 - (iv) Including specific requirements for Parties to report on progress related to the integration and impact of the GAP in the reporting tools and the PRAIS.

G. Identifying emerging innovative financing opportunities to combat land degradation

34. Some Parties at CRIC 17, during the interactive dialogue session on Innovative Finance:

- (a) Emphasized the need to mobilize all sources of financing in support of the Convention and asked the secretariat and the GM to continue supporting such effort;
- (b) Welcomed the continuous support for UNCCD implementation provided through (i) the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (and noted the increase in the allocation for Land degradation Focal area during the GEF-7 Replenishment); and (ii) bilateral donors;
- (c) Requested the Global Mechanism to strengthen its links with the GEF for facilitating (i) the process of countries accessing GEF-7 resources for UNCCD implementation; and (ii) the allocation of resources related to the enabling activities under the GEF to support countries' obligations to the Convention;
- (d) Requested the GM to broaden its outreach to non-traditional funding sources (e.g. private and blended finance) to find ways to support countries to achieve their LDN targets;
- (e) Noted that innovative finance approaches should take into account integrated landscape approaches and local conditions;
- (f) Appreciated the role of the Green Climate Fund (GCF) in supporting country Parties on land issues given the important role that land plays in climate change. Parties

invited GCF to provide capacity-building to national stakeholders, including UNCCD National Focal Points, on the financing instruments provided by GCF;

(g) Noted the operationalization of and progress made so far by the LDN Fund. Parties invited Mirova, as the manager of this Fund, to provide regular updates on its operations and, along with the Global Mechanism, to provide support and capacity-building for accessing the LDN Fund. Noting the non-grant nature of the LDN Fund, Parties requested the GM to explore options to facilitate the access to grants and other concessional mechanisms in support of the implementation of the Convention;

(h) Invited developed country Parties (DCPs) to provide financial and non-financial resources (e.g. technology transfer and scientific and technical assistance) to affected country Parties to support their efforts for achieving LDN. DCPs were also invited to report adequately against the strategic objective 5 so that an accurate estimate of financial flows be measured and analysed as well as to comply with the financing obligations set forth in Article 20, paragraph 2, of the Convention;

(i) Welcomed with appreciation the efforts made by the GEF and GCF for the inclusion of gender aspects in projects and programmes related to DLDD. Parties emphasized the need for capacity-building in this context, particularly for the development of gender indicators and monitoring frameworks for gender mainstreaming, to be integrated into land-related national policies and plans;

(j) Expressed satisfaction regarding the support and assistance provided by the Global Mechanism for developing LDN TPPs at national level to achieve LDN. Parties requested the Global Mechanism to further support country-level activities towards the implementation of LDN targets, including through supporting the design of LDN TPPs and facilitating the mobilization of adequate financial resources from various sources.

H. Strategic objective 5

35. Some Parties at CRIC 17 recommended, in relation to SO 5, that the COP,

(a) Request the GM to explore options to strengthen coordination with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development to (i) provide meaningful and quantitative information from reporting on SO 5; and (ii) continue developing a more integrated financial monitoring framework for tracking and better monitoring the resources for interventions under the Convention;

(b) Request the GM to consider options to make the reporting template more meaningful by including additional quantitative data for SO 5 reporting.

I. Improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties

36. Some Parties at CRIC 17 recommended, in relation to the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the COP, that the COP:

(a) Request the secretariat, in collaboration with Conservation International, to work to ensure that Trends.Earth can function autonomously, and that reporting functions be expanded to aid in the generation of reports that would serve national policy and management needs;

(b) Request the secretariat to commission a study with the aim of improving the methodology to obtain the aggregate indicator for SDG 15.3.1, mainly in the interpretation of the “one out, all out” method of aggregation, to also allow the interpretation of the indicator according to the magnitude of degradation;

(c) Request the secretariat to improve the reporting mechanisms and the PRAIS platform and template, updating the functionality of the template and improving its usability. Suggested improvements should address:

(i) The readability of the template form by all common versions of PDF software;

(ii) The text display capability (e.g. the text box for the Implementation Framework), ensuring clarity when it is necessary to consult the information filled in the text windows, including the full display of contents in all columns of the template both on screen and when printed in report form;

(iii) Data import and export functionality;

(iv) The capacity to accommodate spatial data;

(v) The capacity to incorporate maps and other graphics;

(vi) The capacity to have a printable and readable format of the report in order to ensure outputs are useful for decision makers;

(d) Request the secretariat to evaluate the usefulness of all sections of the PRAIS template, removing descriptive sections which did not figure into the analysis conducted by the secretariat (e.g. “Enhancing resource mobilization” and “Drought risk management and early warning systems”);

(e) Request the secretariat to evaluate the PRAIS platform with the aim of making necessary adjustments to correct existing errors including, but not limited to, the functionality that is designed to permit the attachment of necessary annexes that complement the information presented in the template;

(f) Request the secretariat to improve the PRAIS portal so that information can be readily updated, providing countries with the capability of amending already submitted national reports, if necessary;

(g) Request the secretariat to initiate the development of a more efficient reporting cycle which ensures all information (datasets, reporting tools, templates, guidelines, etc.) is available on time, taking into full consideration not only the time necessary for data collection, processing, analysis, and report compilation, but also the time necessary for the technical and methodological adjustments to the reporting process that may be requested by the Parties;

(h) Request the secretariat and invite all relevant technical and financial partners to ensure that the financial resources for the continuation of financial support by the GEF’s Global Support Programme, and in particular the next umbrella programme, will reach countries in a timely manner;

(i) Request the secretariat and the GM to provide information on the possible development of progress indicators for SO 5 regarding technology transfer, to be applied in future reporting processes;

(j) Request the secretariat and invite technical and financial partners to take into consideration that, in the same way that that has been done for Parties upon committing to set voluntary national LDN targets, it is necessary to invest in ensuring the reporting process and its outputs are equally relevant at global and national levels, and it is necessary to invest in LDN implementation in terms of financing, technology transfer and capacity-building;

(k) Request the secretariat and invite technical and financial partners to work to ensure that global data flows can be sustained and improved (in terms of higher resolution of images, etc.), that the provision of default data from global sources be guaranteed up until 2030, and that enhancements in data and methods be provided to affected country Parties;

(l) Request the secretariat to continue to provide default data to countries which can then be verified or replaced by national data for strategic objective 1 while extending this approach to strategic objectives 2, 3 and 4, under which the provision of default data should be provided through existing indicators and databases should be used as far as possible, ideally pre-filled in the reporting template;

(m) Request the secretariat and the GM and invite financial and technical partners to take actions to support the countries in the preparation of their own national data, including the development of national monitoring systems and the improvement of national indicators;

(n) Request the secretariat and invite technical partners and intergovernmental initiatives such as the GEO LDN Initiative to explore modalities, including verification studies, to improve the spatial resolution of data provided in default datasets, being aware of its provisional nature and its importance, especially for small island States, arid and semi-arid areas and in regions of high spatial variability such as mountainous areas;

(o) Request the secretariat and invite technical partners and intergovernmental initiatives such as the GEO LDN Initiative to pursue efforts to improve the quality of the default data provided for strategic objective 1 indicators as well as refinements in the common methodology for their calculation, in order to ensure coherence with national available data, with the aim of finding solutions to the problem of harmonizing divergent data even if common underlying methodologies are used, thereby supporting country aspirations to use their own data, when possible, to achieve better levels of accuracy;

(p) Request the secretariat and the GM to assess and support Parties in their efforts to respond to the need to include indicators that reflect global and national perspectives but also should serve as management tools and reflect the actions carried out to combat DLDD, both for the Convention and for the countries;

(q) Request the secretariat and the GM and invite technical and financial partners, through closer cooperation with relevant organizations, to ensure that existing tools, methods and databases are better used (e.g. World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) and its WOCAT/UNCCD SLM best practice reporting database; Colorado State University and its Carbon Benefits Project; Conservation International and its Trends.Earth, and FAO and its Collect Earth);

(r) Request the secretariat and the GM and invite technical partners including Conservation International and other relevant intergovernmental initiatives, including the GEO LDN Initiative, to organize targeted training at regional or subregional levels, taking into account the need to do this in conjunction with NSOs;

(s) Request the secretariat to evaluate the UNCCD quality assurance process;

(t) Request the secretariat and the GM to use the reporting quality assurance exercise as a part of national capacity-building processes, making in-depth technical reviews of the reports of selected countries per region with broad stakeholder engagement;

(u) Request the secretariat, with regard to the presentation of reporting results in official reports, to distinguish more clearly between the different reporting obligations of Parties;

(v) Request the secretariat to align the reporting process for strategic objectives 1–5 with the gender-responsive indicators and guidelines being developed under the activities

of the GAP with the aim of ensuring that the gender dimensions of land degradation are fully captured;

(w) Request the secretariat to align across all United Nations language versions of ICCD/CRIC(17)/8 the timeline according to the provisions of decision 13/COP.13, namely by adjusting all language versions to reflect that CRIC 19 will be held in 2020;

(x) Request the secretariat to take into full consideration the importance of having sufficient time allocated for the CRIC (both regional consultations and the CRIC session), providing sufficient time to discuss CRIC documents, particularly those related to the analysis of what has been reported by Parties for all strategic objectives;

(y) Request the secretariat and the GM and invite technical partners to support national efforts to put in place strategies for effective and efficient information-sharing systems at the national level to promote increased action to address land degradation at the national and local levels;

(z) Request the secretariat to further develop reporting templates, taking into account the feedback from country Parties submitted during the reporting process.

J. Positions presented by civil society representatives

37. Parties take note of the positions presented by the civil society representatives at CRIC 17 on the following:

(a) With regard to strategic objectives 1–5: CSOs expressed the importance of the participation of civil society and especially women’s groups that support community-led initiatives throughout the decision-making processes related to LDN targets and national drought plans;

(b) With regard to LDN: CSOs expressed the important role that policy makers play in creating an enabling environment for upscaling and replicating sustainable land management and restoration by communities in general and women specifically, and therefore kindly ask the Parties to consider the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure of Land as a UNCCD COP 14 decision;

(c) With regard to gender, CSOs highlighted the relevance of the GAP and called for its prompt, effective and participatory implementation throughout the procedures of the UNCCD;

(d) With regards to innovative finance, CSOs expressed the importance of ensuring access to appropriate sources of finance for CSOs that support transformative community-based initiatives to achieve LDN targets;

(e) With regards to procedures for communication of information, CSOs recommended that reporting reflect gender disaggregated data, especially land tenure rights of women, and that national reports reflect the achievements of civil society regarding sustainable land management, restoration and LDN.

IV. Conclusion of the session

A. Adoption of the comprehensive report of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention to the Conference of the Parties, including conclusions and recommendations

38. At its fifth meeting on 30 January 2019, the Committee considered the draft report on its seventeenth session.

39. Statements were made by the representatives of Cook Islands, Brazil, Ukraine and the European Union.

40. The Committee then approved the draft report as a whole, as orally revised, and entrusted the Rapporteur to finalize it in consultation with the CRIC Bureau and the secretariat.

B. Closure of the session

41. Also, at the fifth meeting, statements were made by the representative of Romania (on behalf of the European Union and its Member States), Cuba (on behalf of the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean), Malta (on behalf of the Regional Implementation Annex for the Northern Mediterranean (Annex IV)), Belarus (on behalf of the Regional Implementation Annex for Central and Eastern Europe (Annex V)), Cook Islands (on behalf of the Asia-Pacific Group) and Angola (on behalf of the African Group).

42. A statement was also made by a representative of the non-governmental organization China Green Foundation (on behalf of civil society organizations).

43. Closing remarks were made by the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD.

44. The CRIC Chair made concluding remarks and declared closed CRIC 17.

Annex

Documents before the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention at its seventeenth session

<i>Document symbol</i>	<i>Title</i>
ICCD/CRIC(17)/1	Provisional agenda and annotations. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(17)/2	Preliminary analysis – strategic objective 1: To improve the condition of affected ecosystems, combat desertification/land degradation, promote sustainable land management and contribute to land degradation neutrality. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(17)/3	Progress made in setting voluntary national targets in support of land degradation neutrality implementation. Report by the Global Mechanism
ICCD/CRIC(17)/4	Preliminary analysis – strategic objective 2: To improve the living conditions of affected populations. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(17)/5	Preliminary analysis – strategic objective 3: To mitigate, adapt to, and manage the effects of drought in order to enhance the resilience of vulnerable populations and ecosystems. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(17)/6	Preliminary analysis – strategic objective 4: To generate global environmental benefits through effective implementation of the UNCCD. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(17)/7	Preliminary analysis – strategic objective 5: To mobilize substantial and additional financial and non-financial resources to support the implementation of the Convention by building effective partnerships at global and national level. Report by the Global Mechanism
ICCD/CRIC(17)/8	Improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(17)/8/Corr.1	Improving the procedures for communication of information as well as the quality and formats of reports to be submitted to the Conference of the Parties. Note by the secretariat. Corrigendum
ICCD/CRIC(17)/INF.1	Information for participants
ICCD/CRIC(17)/INF.2	Status report on the 2018–2019 reporting and review process. Note by the secretariat
ICCD/CRIC(17)/INF.3	Global analysis on financial data. Report by the Global Mechanism.
ICCD/CRIC(17)/INF.4	List of participants
ICCD/CRIC(17)/CRP.1	The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Gender Action Plan as a mechanism for improving the living conditions of affected populations: first experiences and the way forward