

Decision 15/COP.6

Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling decision 17/COP.5 on Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST),

Recalling also decision 1/COP.5 on Additional procedures or institutional mechanisms to assist in the review of the implementation of the Convention, and in particular paragraph 16 of its annex,

Noting the special role of non-governmental organizations and other major groups in programmes to combat desertification and mitigate drought,

Further recalling decision 7/COP.5 on the Promotion and strengthening of relationships with other relevant conventions and relevant international organizations, institutions and agencies, and in particular paragraph 5,

Noting with appreciation the work undertaken by the Group of Experts in completing the tasks assigned to it within its work programme, as contained in document ICCD/COP(6)/CST/INF.2,

Bearing in mind the work accomplished by the Group of Experts in carrying forward the activities as set out in the work programme,

1. *Requests* the Group of Experts to prioritize the work plan as contained in the annexed framework, in the light of the comments, observations and recommendations made by the CST at its sixth session, and in particular on the basis of feasibility and relevance to implementation of the Convention;
2. *Requests* the Group of Experts to carry out the priority work plan for the next two years based on sound financial planning;
3. *Requests* the Group of Experts to improve its efficiency by using the Internet as the primary means of communication and by using primarily, whenever possible, one working language (English);
4. *Further requests* the Group of Experts to focus on issues emerging from the review of the national, subregional and regional programmes and other relevant reports, and advise the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), through the CST of the efficacy and adequacy of those programmes for implementing the Convention;
5. *Requests* the Group of Experts to elaborate a road map for developing synergies with other conventions, organizations and intergovernmental treaties;

6. *Requests* the Group of Experts to make their results available, by appropriate means, as they become available;
7. *Requests* the Group of Experts to report on their activities at the seventh session of the Conference of the Parties;
8. *Further requests* the secretariat to facilitate the publication and dissemination of the report;
9. *Encourages* the Parties, international organizations and other public and private entities to support the ongoing work of the Group of Experts.

*9th plenary meeting
3 September 2003*

Annex

Framework of the two-year work plan for the Group of Experts

1. Communication:
 - 1.1 Develop a clear communication strategy between the activities of the Group of Experts, the end users and the research community at large;
 - 1.2 Develop a web-based glossary of terms (through a UNCCD-hosted server);
 - 1.3 Develop a mechanism for an interactive and thematic data/metadata network.
2. Develop synergies with other related conventions, organizations and inter-governmental treaties (such as IPCC, UNFCCC, FAO, UNESCO, UNEP, UNDP, CBD and WMO) in order to avoid duplication of effort and establish mechanisms for interaction.
3. Identify and assess existing and ongoing case studies on conservation and rehabilitation for users in implementing the Convention.
4. Develop an integrative assessment methodology for poverty and land degradation.
5. Summarize issues emerging from the review of the national action programmes (NAPs) and regional action programmes (RAPs) and report to the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) on issues which constrain programme implementation.
6. Prepare, taking into account the perceived gaps between biophysical, socio-economic, and cultural knowledge and activities to combat desertification, a report identifying these gaps (and their causes) and recommend possible ways of eliminating them.
7. Propose effective methodologies for the assessment of desertification at the global, regional, national and local levels, so that the Convention can be implemented in consultation and interaction with other related ongoing efforts (for example, the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) and Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA)).
8. Evaluate the state of the art of common benchmark and indicator systems for the monitoring and assessment of desertification.
9. Evaluate and recommend guidelines for both short-term and long-term early warning systems.
10. Evaluate guidelines to update the world atlas in consultation and interaction with other related ongoing efforts (for example, MA and LADA).