

Decision 17/COP.5

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

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling article 24 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, on the Committee on Science and Technology (CST),

Recalling also decisions 15/COP.1 and 17/COP.4,

Taking note of the submissions made by Parties, and the synthesis of the submissions prepared by the secretariat, on ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, as contained in ICCD/COP(5)/3/Add.2,

Taking note also of the interventions made by Parties on the need for concrete linkages between the CST and the scientific and technical subsidiary bodies of other multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Subsidiary Body on Scientific, Technical and Technological Advice of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and on the need to strive for better synergies between the Conference of the Parties and the CST with the aim of advancing the implementation of the Convention, and also on the need to find better mechanisms for feeding scientific and technological information into the CST,

Considering the results of the extensive consultations between the regional groups, as contained in annex 1 of the aforementioned document,

Decides to adopt ways and means to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the functioning of the CST, including the establishing of a group of experts, as defined in the attached annex.

*11th plenary meeting
12 October 2001*

Annex

**IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF
THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

1. There is a need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST in accordance with the spirit and the letter of the Convention;
2. The reform of the CST should be considered within its existing mandate;
3. The duration of the meeting of the CST should remain unchanged;
4. The CST should play a role in the review of national reports, using the synthesis and summaries of the reports prepared by the secretariat;
5. There is a need to better integrate the activities of the CST into national and regional activities;
6. CST representatives need to play a more active liaison role between the CST's activities and those of the regional groups, as well as during the review of national reports;
7. Under the authority of the CST, a group of experts in the area of combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought should be established;
8. The programme of work of the group of experts, as well as its mandate, should be pluri-annual in nature, for a maximum of four years, during which time the group of experts should report to the CST at its sessions;
9. The composition of the group of experts should not exceed 25 members, with the exact number to be determined by the programme of work, as defined by the CST;
10. The composition of the group of experts should be based on the need to ensure an equitable geographical distribution;
11. The experts, in order to be selected, should have their names on the roster of independent experts; they will be selected by the CST Bureau on a one-time basis, in consultation with the regional groups and the secretariat. The Bureau of the Conference of the Parties (COP) will finalize the first selection of experts as soon as possible after COP 5. Subsequent selections of experts shall be based on a new programme of work, and shall be recommended by the CST for approval by the COP. The competence of the experts presented by each regional group will be determined on the basis of a curriculum vitae, which should include a paper on a specific issue contained in the programme of work;
12. The programme of work of the group of experts and the terms of reference should be defined by the CST based on the themes, activities and issues of relevance to the Convention, and focusing, as appropriate, on the state of knowledge, the scale of impact, opportunities for mitigation, and implications for policy makers;
13. The group of experts should use existing means of communication, such as through electronic means, face-to-face meetings, etc.;
14. The group of experts should meet once per year for a maximum of one week, unless determined otherwise by the Bureau of the COP, in consultation with the Parties;
15. The CST, after four years, should review the work of the group of experts to determine its future role and continued relevance;

16. The CST recommends that the financial implications of the activities of the group of experts should come from the regular budget; in order to maintain the independent nature of the group of experts, the participation costs of all the members should be covered, regardless of whether the member comes from a developed or developing country; and noting that a decision will only be made when all financial considerations have been taken into account.