

Decision 19/COP.12

Improving the efficiency of the Committee on Science and Technology

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling its decisions 13/COP.8 and 21/COP.11,

Acknowledging the work conducted by the SPI to assess the effectiveness of the outcomes of the UNCCD 1st, 2nd and 3rd Scientific Conferences in supporting the UNCCD decision-making process,

Recognizing that investments in the UNCCD Scientific Conferences have had direct and indirect influences on UNCCD policymaking and that this positive trend has the potential to be enhanced,

Also recognizing that issues associated with the structure and funding of the UNCCD Scientific Conferences impacted the benefits derived from these conferences, as they influenced the quality of the recommendations and their timely availability,

Further recognizing that cost-efficient institutional arrangements are required to improve the scientific input to the UNCCD process,

Having considered documents ICCD/COP(12)/CST/4 and ICCD/COP(12)/CST/INF.2,

1. *Decides* that future scientific meetings on DLDD should be decoupled from official sessions of the CST; these scientific meetings can take the form of UNCCD-related scientific conferences, stand-alone expert meetings or expert meetings held in conjunction with existing international scientific conferences;
2. *Also decides* that the SPI mandate, as contained in decision 23/COP.11, paragraph 3, should be extended to enable the SPI, under the leadership of the Bureau of the CST, to: (i) provide the CST with clear and well-defined thematic guidance on scientific knowledge requirements (e.g. thematic assessments, scientific studies and/or user guides) for implementing the UNCCD; (ii) identify the most optimal way forward (e.g. commissioning an individual or group of experts, organizing expert meetings, encouraging the organization of regional meetings by regional scientific institutions or networks) to address these knowledge requirements; (iii) draft terms of reference for the scientific work to be commissioned to external experts or institutes and ensure the quality of content according to the contract administered by the secretariat; and (iv) select experts, including from scientific societies, science and knowledge organizations, and CSOs, and networks known for their expertise in DLDD;
3. *Further decides* that any scientific output prepared under the supervision of the SPI should undergo an international, independent review process; and that any output published under the name of the UNCCD should be reviewed by the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties prior to publication;
4. *Decides* that future sessions of the CST should be organized in such a way to facilitate a dialogue between the Parties and the SPI regarding the policy implications of the scientific outputs and to enable the formulation of policy-relevant recommendations;

5. *Also decides* that the CST, with the support of the SPI, should regularly monitor the short, medium and long-term impacts of the scientific work carried out for the UNCCD.

4th plenary meeting
16 October 2015