

Decision 3/COP.5

Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the in-depth review and
analysis of reports submitted at the third and fourth
sessions of the Conference of the Parties

The Conference of the Parties,

Recalling article 22, paragraph 2(a) of the Convention,

Recalling also its decision 6/COP.3 which, *inter alia*, established an Ad Hoc Working Group (AHWG) to review and analyse in depth the reports submitted at its third and fourth sessions, in order to draw conclusions and propose concrete recommendations on further steps in the implementation of the Convention,

Further recalling its decision 1/COP.4 on procedures to review reports submitted at the third and fourth sessions of the Conference of the Parties, and decision 3/COP.4 on procedures for the review of the implementation of the Convention,

Recalling furthermore decision 2/COP.4 on the interim report of the Ad Hoc Working Group for the in-depth review and analysis of reports submitted at the third and fourth sessions of the Conference of the Parties,

Recognizing the necessity to foster partnership building for the implementation of action programmes within affected countries,

1. *Takes note* with appreciation of the comprehensive report of the AHWG as contained in document ICCD/COP(4)/AHWG/6;

2. *Also takes note* of the conclusions and recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group annexed to this decision;

3. *Invites* Parties to accelerate, and interested international and non-governmental organizations to take the necessary steps, in the light of the conclusions and recommendations of the AHWG, to facilitate the completion of national action programmes and the implementation of such programmes, in particular at the local level;

4. *Urges* all Parties to negotiate and conclude partnership agreements based on national, subregional and regional action programmes, as appropriate.

*11th plenary meeting
12 October 2001*

Annex

**CONCLUSIONS AND CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS ON FURTHER STEPS
IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION**

A. Strategies and policy frameworks

1. Parties welcomed the holding of the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development (Rio+10) and considered it an excellent opportunity to mobilize more political will and financial resources to promote UNCCD.
2. Parties recognize that the challenge of mainstreaming or integrating the NAP into broader strategic frameworks or consultative processes for sustainable development is a complex matter that should be dealt with through an appropriate consultation mechanism at country level.
3. Country Parties, sitting as members of the governing boards of multilateral organizations, technical agencies and development banks, should facilitate the coherence of these respective policy and strategy frameworks with the discharging of their obligations under UNCCD. The forthcoming COP may wish to invite such Parties to encourage a more direct response on the part of these organizations to the needs of the people in the drylands through the UNCCD implementation process. In this respect the emerging cooperation between the European Community and the affected Asian, Caribbean and Pacific countries is encouraged.
4. A global assessment and regular update of the status of desertification worldwide remains a necessity. Recent relevant multilateral initiatives must be more closely related to UNCCD. For instance, managers of the MEA, the Dry Lands Degradation Assessment (LADA) and of the Integrated Land and Water Management Initiative for Africa should more actively seek cooperation with and involvement of the UNCCD national focal points in relevant countries. Likewise, managers of the Capacity Development Initiative should be invited to consider including support to the UNCCD regional thematic networks in their programme.
5. Ongoing economic policy debates in multilateral forums such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) must better take into account the implications of trade, pricing and subsidies for the sustainable use of natural resources in the drylands. The COP may wish to invite the Committee on Trade and Environment of the WTO to include UNCCD-related matters in its deliberations from the point of view of a more open access of drylands products to international markets.
6. The potential for private sector investment in the drylands is recognized in such sectors as the mining and extraction industry, ecotourism and the production of medicinal plants and genetic material for the pharmaceutical industry or hydroponic agricultural production. Nevertheless incentives must be provided to encourage a sustainable use of land resources by corporate interests. The promulgation of environment-friendly guidelines for the relevant sectors of the economy in the drylands should be encouraged so as to ensure benefits at the local level. In this respect, the UNCCD secretariat is invited to pursue its cooperation with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN).

7. To promote the policy coherence needed within the United Nations system, the COP should invite the Secretary-General to recommend to the heads of the relevant agencies a decisive effort, so as better to orient the interventions of their respective organizations towards support of the Convention for the ultimate benefit of lower-income groups in the drylands.

B. Institutional aspects including the implementation review process

8. Coordination at country level is seen as of utmost priority. Affected country Parties are urged to facilitate a closer coordination between the UNCCD NFPs and relevant government bodies involved in the allocation of development aid, such as ministries of finance, planning commissions or departments of foreign affairs in charge of the coordination of aid. NFPs are invited to raise the priority of combating desertification in multilateral and bilateral negotiations.

9. Developed country Parties and the European Community are expected more explicitly to mobilize the local representatives of their aid agency or embassy to liaise more directly with the NFP in order to support the NAP formulation, to mainstream the environmental dimension of UNCCD in their development programmes and to incorporate drylands environmental and social cost analysis in the identification and planning of their projects.

10. Developed country Parties are invited to use the review process to strengthen further the coherence of their ongoing bilateral and multilateral aid efforts with those of the developing country Parties implementing the Convention. Developed country Parties are encouraged actively to incorporate the findings of the process into their programming of future assistance measures.

11. Relevant international organizations are requested to contribute more actively to the forthcoming review process through a presentation of measures they are taking in support of the launching of the operational phase of the implementation process.

12. Parties recognize the need to adjust their national reporting to the evolving needs of the implementation process, notably with respect to the activities related to the CST and the involvement of civil society, and therefore request the secretariat to modify the Help Guide accordingly in order to assist in the preparation of the second generation of national reports.

13. All Parties agree on the necessity for a continued exchange of information and for an analytical assessment in order to monitor the implementation of the Convention and to enable the COP to take appropriate measures in the evolving context of its constraints and progress. Affected developing countries call for the establishment of a standing subsidiary body of the COP to review implementation as a decisive step towards adequately discharging this critical task.

C. Participatory process and outreach at the local level

14. The Convention was found to be largely successful in raising awareness of the need for sustainable management of natural resources at grassroots level, but the interest raised must be sustained by appropriate action. Provisions for support must be earmarked within the UNCCD NAP for further awareness-raising activities and to sustain the participatory implementation of the Convention. More specifically, it is recommended that local area programmes be developed, identifying opportunities

for synergistic initiatives to be taken on a territorial basis, at the grassroots level.

15. It was also deemed necessary to inform public opinion in developed country Parties on the relevance of the Convention, notably in the context of broad concerns such as reducing rural poverty or forced emigration from the drylands.

16. Added resources deriving from climate adaptation funding sources should thus permit such programmes under the UNCCD NAPs by initiating capacity-building measures, in order to equip local communities to deliver obligations under UNCCD, CBD and UNFCCC. Such training would include guidelines on planning an integrated set of measures that restore degraded environments, protect the biodiversity and maintain carbon sinks while responding to the socio-economic needs of the local population. Lessons learned during the UNCCD process must be made available at local level.

D. Consultative mechanism for partnership arrangements

17. Parties that have completed their NAPs now face the immediate need to establish a predictable consultative mechanism for the conclusion of partnership arrangements. The COP may consider how the respective NFPs can receive the earliest support in this respect.

18. The positive role of the resident coordinators of the United Nations system in support of the NAP process was commended, and the field offices of UNDP should facilitate more systematically the convening of UNCCD-related consultative meetings.

19. Similarly, the NFP in all regions and bilateral donors might wish to identify bilateral *chefs de file* in their respective countries to join in the common launching of this necessary consultative process. Developed country Parties are invited to consult among themselves under an appropriate Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) framework in order to agree on a common policy with respect to country-driven consultative mechanisms for partnership arrangements under UNCCD and to report to the forthcoming COP on progress made on this matter.

20. It is recommended that COP 5 agree on a proposal for a schedule of consultative meetings for countries that have adopted their NAPs, in conformity with the pertinent provisions of the regional implementation annexes of the Convention.

E. Measures taken within the NAP framework

21. Lack of funding was quoted as the most common reason given for delays in preparing the NAPs to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought. The co-Chairmen can only reiterate in this respect the appeal they made in their interim report on the first session of the AHWG. In the context of the Declaration on Commitment adopted at COP 4 it is indeed appropriate for bilateral and multilateral donors to provide catalytic funds to enable the completion of the NAPs. They are invited to review ways and means of doing so before COP 5.

22. Improved national coordination requires, to start with, enhancing the information exchange between ministries and relevant organizations and/or agencies. The scientific and research communities must also be included. It is important

further to improve information exchange at the national level, particularly taking into consideration the fact that bilateral assistance negotiators should be associated at an early stage with the NAP process, as well as ministries of planning and finance. A greater coherence of information flows at national level will enhance the likelihood of receiving financial assistance for desertification projects. Various sources of assistance, including private sector funding, should be sought to equip national focal points and key stakeholders with the appropriate information technology.

23. Centralizing the NAP with a multitude of other instruments addressing problems associated with desertification and drought is a considerable challenge that the NFP must confront with adequate support from multilateral and bilateral partners in terms of coordination, exchange of timely information and, as appropriate, technical assistance. To ensure effective monitoring of UNCCD, links with relevant instruments must be created while preserving the integrity of the NAP formulation and adoption process.

F. Subregional and regional cooperation

24. The problems created by human factors and the interactions between ecosystems often call for common solutions in countries sharing the same ecosystems. It also calls for the effective communication and exploitation of best practices and of lessons learned, particularly with respect to GIS systems, meteorology or knowledge-based agro-ecology. In this respect the role of subregional and regional organizations was commended, and the call for strengthening their capacities to back up NAP development in member countries was reiterated.

25. Regional thematic networks need to be further strengthened. They play a cost-effective role in support of CST-driven initiatives such as those on benchmarks and indicators, the promotion and protection of traditional knowledge and building on best practices. Initiatives need to focus on success stories already available. Replication of best practices could serve as a useful tool for passing on existing knowledge.

26. In the light of the above, the need for partnership agreements at subregional and regional level was emphasized by many Parties, notably in the light of the fact that specialized subregional and regional institutions are in a position to bring a welcome substantive contribution to the review of the implementation process.

27. It is recommended that further exchanges of information, advisory services and experience between the regional implementation annexes of the Convention be promoted, making full use of existing subregional and regional institutions for South-South cooperation.

G. Financing of the Convention

28. The Parties agreed that the allocation of provisions to agriculture, rural development and/or the combat against desertification within the national budget of an affected country Party is an important indication of the political will of that country to discharge its obligations under UNCCD. Consistent with the Declaration on the Commitments to Enhance the Implementation of the Convention adopted at COP 4, they reiterated the necessity for provision of substantial financial assistance to developing countries.

29. The Parties expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Global Mechanism in discharging its mandate and the positive role it plays in further mobilizing donors. Nevertheless, the Parties acknowledged that, five years after the entry into force of the Convention, the Convention could not avail itself of a predictable mechanism for financing, in a timely and adequate manner, the Convention's enabling activities such as the preparation of national reports or the preparation and adoption of programming instruments at national, subregional or regional levels, let alone finance for operational activities under the NAPs.

30. In this context, on the supply side of the provision of required finance, a significant number of Parties recommend the Council of the GEF to include, during the forthcoming replenishment exercise, a financing window for combating desertification to access GEF resources in order to secure and facilitate the Convention's implementation including enabling activities.

31. In the meantime, on the demand side of the provision of required finance, the UNDP field offices in affected countries should be provided with the necessary additional resources to facilitate, together with a bilateral *chef de file*, the convening of the consultative meetings to bring about the partnership arrangements necessary to finance the proposed operations under the NAPs, in cooperation with the Global Mechanism and the secretariat.

32. The Global Mechanism, in cooperation with the members of its Facilitation Committee, should target an early matching of demand and supply through the facilitation of funding for the NAP's operations, and should be entrusted with monitoring the follow-up activities of this consultative process in order to facilitate the timely disbursement of pledged assistance. Its role should also be strengthened in support of the subregional and regional action programmes.

H. Issues related to the Committee on Science and Technology, including benchmarks and indicators

33. Environment management initiatives must be reinforced through added capacity-building measures, notably at the local level. More specifically, capacity training for focal points is needed for a systematic training in the development and application of indicators related to desertification, as well as in the use of Geographical Information System and Environmental Information System.

34. Information and awareness raising should also reach the academic and scientific community, and should cover, as part of a national monitoring system specific to desertification, those issues related to the development and application of benchmarks and indicators, so that representatives from the National Coordinating Body (NCB) can start utilizing and testing the implementation indicators elaborated by the CST with the necessary institutional backing of the scientific communities in their own countries. Impact indicators have not yet been agreed upon by the CST.

35. Financial assistance is needed so as to ensure that pilot activity areas can be established in which to test the indicators as part of a monitoring and assessment process, in accordance with CST recommendations.

36. Financial assistance is also required for conducting national inventories of traditional knowledge and practices used to combat desertification. The UNCCD regional thematic networks represent a decentralized capacity for expanding the coverage of these activities and should be enabled to do so.

37. Finally it was recommended that in reviewing the Help Guide for the preparation of NAPs as stipulated in decision 10/COP.4, the secretariat should reflect the needs of affected developed country Parties. The secretariat should also include the following guidelines that reflect the concerns, activities and recommendations of the CST, and which should be used, as appropriate, by Parties:

- the development and utilization of benchmarks and indicators that go beyond the physical and biological indicators so as to touch on institutional, including legislative as well as socio-economic, issues such as qualitative and quantitative evaluation of civil society participation;
- the utilization of, or need for, early warning systems tools for the management of drought;
- the presentation of key ongoing and/or planned activities, projects and programmes that either tackle the root causes or correct the visible effects of desertification in order to draw lessons learned and share scientific and technical approaches utilized;
- the illustration of South-South and North-South collaborative efforts that highlight the benefits of the exchange and transfer of information, technologies and technical know-how;
- the presentation of strategies and approaches used to collect, share and communicate information for the purposes of advocacy and sensitization, as well as the utilization and improvement of traditional knowledge for combating desertification;
- the presentation of ongoing and/or planned synergistic or collaborative approaches and activities with other Multilateral Environmental Agreements, particularly the CBD and the UNFCCC.