

**Decision 8/COP.6**Follow-up to the regional meetings held in preparation for the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties

*The Conference of the Parties,*

*Recalling* the Cotonou Declaration adopted by the African Ministerial Conference preparatory to the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 6) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), held in Cotonou, Benin, from 3 to 4 July 2003,

*Recalling* the Abu Dhabi Ministerial Declaration adopted by the second Asian Ministerial Conference on UNCCD Implementation in preparation for COP 6, held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 10 to 11 June 2003, and the recommendations of the sixth Regional Meeting of Asian Focal Points held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 7 to 9 June 2003,

*Recalling also* the outcome of the ninth Regional Meeting of Latin American and Caribbean country Parties to the UNCCD held in Bogotá, Colombia, from 17 to 20 June 2003,

*Recalling further* the outcome of the second Regional Meeting of Northern Mediterranean, Central and Eastern European and other affected country Parties held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 10 to 11 July 2003,

*Recalling also* the joint ACP/EC statement signed by the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the member States of the European Union and the European Community at the sixth session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNCCD in Havana, Cuba, on 2 September 2003,

1. *Welcomes* the Abu Dhabi Initiative for Implementation of the Priority Activities for the Regional Action Programme in 2003-2008 as a practical means for accelerating the implementation of the regional action programme in the region and the recommendations of the sixth Regional Meeting of Asian Focal Points;
2. *Welcomes* efforts undertaken in Africa to mainstream the UNCCD processes on subregional action programmes and the regional action programme within the recently adopted Action Plan of the Environment Initiative of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD);
3. *Acknowledges* the efforts undertaken in all the affected regions towards developing working cooperation with bilateral and multilateral partners in the context of the implementation of the Convention;
4. *Encourages* affected country Parties that have not yet finalized their national action programmes to take all the necessary measures to expedite the elaboration process with the support of the secretariat and the Global Mechanism, so as to finalize them by the end of 2005 as recommended in decision 8/COP.4;

5. *Invites* Parties, and other interested entities, both public and private, and multilateral agencies to continue contributing on a voluntary basis, or as appropriate according to their mandates, to the activities relating to the development and implementation of action programmes to combat desertification in all affected regions;
6. *Encourages* Parties to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the regional meetings and *Requests* the secretariat to facilitate the follow-up of their implementation as instructed by the Conference of the Parties;
7. *Invites* the Global Environment Facility to develop simplified and specific guidelines that address the special needs of different regional and other groups, in particular Africa and Small Island Developing States, to facilitate their easy and timely access to financial resources.

*11<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting  
5 September 2003*