



Convention to Combat Desertification

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Measures to enable the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought: assessment of how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to support the Convention process

Report on the assessment of how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to support the Convention process

Note by the secretariat

Summary

The Conference of the Parties (COP) at its ninth session considered measures to enable the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought. In its decision 18/COP.9, the COP requested the Committee on Science and Technology to conduct an assessment at its next two sessions of how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice, taking into account the need to ensure transparency and geographical balance, and to consider options for determining agreed channels for consideration of the advice in the Convention process.

This is a report on the assessment as of mid-August 2011. It contains an overview of the provision of scientific advice under the Convention, of the assessment process and of four options that have been identified on how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice.

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I. Introduction

1. By its decision 3/COP.8, the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018), hereinafter referred to as The Strategy, to guide the work of the Convention. The mission of The Strategy is to provide a global framework to support the development and implementation of national and regional policies, programmes and measures to prevent, control and reverse desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought through scientific and technological excellence, raising public awareness, standard setting, advocacy and resource mobilization, thereby contributing to poverty reduction.

2. The Strategy defines operational objectives guiding the actions of all United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) stakeholders and partners. Operational objective 3, on science, technology and knowledge, is for the Convention “to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought.” The Committee on Science and Technology (CST) is given primary responsibility for fulfilling this objective. For this purpose, The Strategy envisages that the CST shall be strengthened to assess, advise and support implementation, on a comprehensive, objective, open and transparent basis of scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the causes and impacts of desertification/ land degradation. The CST shall also inform COP decisions.

3. The COP at its ninth session considered measures to enable the Convention to become a global authority on scientific and technical knowledge pertaining to desertification/land degradation and mitigation of the effects of drought. By its decision 18/COP.9, the COP requested the CST to conduct an assessment at its next two sessions of how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice, taking into account the need to ensure transparency and geographical balance, and to consider options for determining agreed channels for consideration of the advice in the Convention process. By the same decision, the COP invited the Parties, the scientific community and relevant stakeholders to provide input to the assessment process, and requested the CST to submit recommendations for consideration by the COP at its tenth session.

4. The CST at its second special session (CST S-2) discussed the progress made, as presented in document ICCD/CST(S-2)/4. It was recommended that the secretariat, under the guidance of the CST Bureau, organize a global electronic assessment to discuss and further identify possible options and assessment criteria, and ensure participation in the assessment through involving the regions. It was also discussed that the scope of the assessment should not be limited, but rather that work should be undertaken on different options for strengthening the provision of scientific advice to the Convention and related processes.

II. Provision of scientific advice under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification

A. The Committee on Science and Technology and its Bureau

5. The CST was established under Article 24 of the Convention as a subsidiary body of the COP to provide it with information and advice on scientific and technological matters relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. The terms of reference of the CST were defined and adopted during the first session of the COP (decision 15/COP.1). Inter alia, they state that the CST is to ensure that COP decisions are based on the most up-to-date scientific knowledge. The CST is open to the participation of all Parties

and composed of government representatives competent in the fields of expertise relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought.

6. Paragraph 9 of the terms of reference of the CST, as contained in decision 15/COP.1, states that the Bureau of the CST shall be responsible for the follow-up of the work of the Committee between sessions and may benefit from the assistance of ad hoc panels established by the COP.

7. Under The Strategy, the operation of the CST is to be reshaped, with changes to institutional arrangements and to its programme of work. The CST is tasked, inter alia, to produce sound scientific outputs and policy-oriented recommendations based on the analysis and compilation of peer-reviewed and published literature that inform policy formulation and dialogue at the COP; to mobilize science and technology experts, networks and institutions with excellence in desertification/land degradation issues under its auspices to bolster the scientific and technical basis of the Convention; to create and steer knowledge-management systems, in cooperation with relevant institutions, aiming to improve the brokering of scientific and technical information from and to institutions, Parties and end users; and to strengthen links with thematic programme networks and other relevant regional implementation activities whose mandates are improved to provide regional input to the work of the CST. Under The Strategy, CST multi-year (four-year) workplans and costed two-year work programmes are prepared.

B. Organization of sessions of the Committee on Science and Technology in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format

8. By its decision 13/COP.8, the COP decided that each future ordinary session of the CST shall be organized in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format by the CST Bureau in consultation with a lead institution/consortium. This decision was taken in recognition that the work of the CST would benefit from the involvement of institutions, consortia (including non-governmental organizations) and individuals with the greatest expertise in combating desertification/land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought. By the same decision, the COP decided that each ordinary session should focus on one specific thematic topic relevant to the implementation of The Strategy, to be determined in advance by the COP. The organization of CST sessions in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format is part of the reshaping of the operation of the CST referred to above.

9. By its decision 18/COP.8, the COP decided that the priority theme to be addressed by the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference, which was held in 2009 during the ninth session of the CST, would be 'Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water management'. An assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference is presented in document ICCD/COP(10)/CST/INF.3.

10. Document ICCD/COP(9)/CST/INF.3 contains the synthesis and recommendations from the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference; recommendation 9 states that the coordination and dissemination of new knowledge and methodologies for integrated approaches to DLDD/SLM require the establishment of an independent, international, interdisciplinary scientific advisory mechanism with clear channels for consideration of the advice in the Convention process.

11. This report from the scientific community notes that advice provided should be policy-relevant but not policy-prescriptive, and that it should allow decision makers to be objectively informed about the likely consequences of different policy and implementation choices they might make. The report further noted that a scientific advisory mechanism

should not conduct research itself, but should draw on existing scientific knowledge and research findings, and should link this knowledge to capacity building efforts. It was further proposed that the mechanism could interact closely with national and regional science mechanisms relevant to the Convention process.

12. By its decision 16/COP.9, the COP decided that the specific thematic topic to be considered by the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, which will be held during CST S-3 in 2012, would be “Economic assessment of desertification, sustainable land management and resilience of arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas”. A progress report on the organization of the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, and a report on the organization of CST sessions in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format, are presented in document ICCD/COP(10)/CST/5.

13. Also by its decision 16/COP.9, the COP decided that, after the UNCCD 2nd Scientific Conference, the CST Bureau, in consultation with regional groups, would conduct an assessment of whether to hold the CST scientific conference during intersessional or ordinary sessions of the CST and report to the next CST session.

C. Roster of experts

14. Article 24, paragraph 2, of the Convention states that the COP shall establish and maintain a roster of independent experts with expertise and experience in relevant fields. The roster is based on nominations received from Parties, taking into account the need for a multidisciplinary approach and broad geographical representation. Decision 18/COP.1 states that the purpose of the roster is to provide the COP with an up-to-date list of independent experts in the various fields of specialization relating to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought, from which members of ad hoc panels may be selected.

15. By its decision 21/COP.9, the COP requested the secretariat to examine and analyse the current procedures and criteria for the nomination of experts to the roster of independent experts, and to make recommendations for improvements at the tenth session of the COP. Document ICCD/COP(10)/22 reports on progress made on the maintenance of the roster, and on proposals to improve it.

D. Ad hoc panels

16. Article 24, paragraph 3, of the Convention provides for the COP to appoint ad hoc panels to provide it, through the CST, with information and advice on specific issues regarding the state of the art in fields of science and technology relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. Ad hoc panels are composed of experts whose names are on the roster of experts. Ad hoc panels were established to deal with early warning systems, benchmarks and indicators, and traditional knowledge.

E. Group of experts

17. By its decision 17/COP.5, the COP decided to establish a group of experts, drawn from the roster of experts. The selection would be made by the CST Bureau in consultation with the regional groups and the secretariat. The group was established on a temporary basis and no longer exists. It worked on substantial as well as institutional questions, including benchmarks and indicators for monitoring and assessment of desertification, guidelines for early warning systems, development of synergy with other related conventions, and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST. The final report of the group of experts is contained in document ICCD/COP(8)/CST/2 and its nine addenda.

F. Science and technology correspondents

18. By its decision 15/COP.7, the COP encouraged Parties to select a science and technology correspondent to the CST under the coordination of the national focal point. A report on the role and responsibilities of science and technology correspondents is contained in document ICCD/COP(10)/CST/7.

G. Regional initiatives

19. Regional thematic programme networks (TPNs) are networks of institutions and agencies linked together via an institutional focal point. The TPNs have been established through regional endorsement directly or indirectly relating to a regional action programme. Regional, subregional and national focal institutions were expected to involve key actors at regional, subregional and national level in the respective affected countries. Cooperation with other networks working on related issues is sought. However, it should be noted that whereas a number of TPNs are already in place, these networks have generally failed to meet their objectives. An evaluation of the status of the TPNs is presented in document ICCD/COP(10)/21.

20. A Drought Management Centre for South-Eastern Europe (DMCSEE) has been established in the context of the UNCCD. More information on this matter can be found in document ICCD/COP(9)/10/Add.1. The DMCSEE is developing a subregional drought management strategy, implementing effective drought monitoring and early warning systems, providing reliable and timely information to national decision makers, and sharing any information gathered and lessons learned.

H. Regional Coordination Units

21. The Regional Coordination Units (RCUs) of the UNCCD secretariat actively support the CST in facilitating networking with scientists and institutions, together with the institutional national focal points. Further, the RCUs would ensure that relevant information on activities under the UNCCD at the regional, subregional and national levels, such as outcomes of sessions of the COP and subsidiary bodies, is distributed to the concerned country Parties, including academics, institutions and networks, and reflected in their work through science and technology correspondents.

III. Organization of the assessment process

22. During its meetings in March and June 2010, the CST Bureau discussed how to structure and implement the assessment of how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the Convention process. The Bureau further conferred on how to consider options for determining agreed channels for consideration of the advice in the Convention process, and how to involve Parties, the scientific community and relevant stakeholders in the assessment process, as requested by decision 18/COP.9. The Bureau agreed that a white paper should be prepared by an independent expert as a basis for the following assessment by Parties, the scientific community and other relevant stakeholders.

23. The secretariat, following a request by the CST Bureau, prepared the terms of reference and, with the agreement of the CST Bureau, recruited an independent expert to prepare the white paper, the outline of which was presented to the CST Bureau and discussed during its meeting in November 2010.

24. During CST S-2 in February 2011, Parties discussed the scope of the assessment and possible options on how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice. It was mentioned, inter alia, that the scope of the assessment should not be limited, but rather that work should be undertaken on different options for strengthening the provision of scientific advice to the Convention and related processes.

25. Following CST S-2 and based on the draft white paper, the CST Bureau discussed next steps in the organization of the assessment process. Four options to be integrated in an electronic survey (e-survey) were identified, as follows:

- (a) Use of existing scientific networks;
- (b) Establishment of a new scientific network focused on specific topics;
- (c) Use of existing intergovernmental scientific advisory mechanisms; and
- (d) Establishment of a new intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil.

26. The Bureau also gave detailed feedback on a section of a draft e-survey prepared. It was noted that the discussion of these options should allow the choice either of one option or of an approach combining several options.

27. It was further agreed to have the draft white paper peer reviewed. Five experts have subsequently reviewed the draft white paper, taking into account relevant background material, and have provided their reflections on the possible options and further recommendations covered in the assessment. The Bureau further agreed to send an official letter to national focal points to ask for their contribution to the assessment process, based on the outline of the e-survey, which was done in mid-July 2011.

28. The e-survey was prepared by the secretariat in line with feedback of the CST Bureau and with its agreement, based on the content of the above-mentioned documentation. It was divided into three parts: the first part asked for information about the respondent; the second part asked about expectations concerning the organization of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice; and the third part dealt with the four options that have been identified, while giving participants the opportunity to describe and assess another option for discussion by the Parties. The e-survey was launched in English, French and Spanish, in mid-July 2011 for one month. The deadline for contributions was later extended up to the end of August, due to holiday season, to achieve a higher level of participation.

29. In line with recommendations made at CST S-2 and guidance received from the CST Bureau, the RCUs of the secretariat supported the assessment by facilitating the process of dissemination of the e-survey in their regions. In addition, regional reference centres were invited to circulate the e-survey among their constituencies. Several reminders were sent, including through networks and institutions, to further increase the level of participation. The outcome of the e-survey, and its analysis, will be presented in document ICCD/COP(10)/CST/MISC.1.¹

¹ To be issued in-session.

IV. Options on how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice

A. Background

30. This chapter presents the four options on how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice, which the Bureau agreed to have assessed. The four options are:

(a) Use of existing scientific networks: Official UNCCD bodies, governmental representatives and other stakeholders would use the outputs of existing scientific networks as a basis for international, interdisciplinary scientific advice;

(b) Establishment of a new scientific network focused on specific topics: A new network could be created to provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD, taking into account the existing networks, but focusing on specific topics relating to DLDD not effectively covered by existing networks;

(c) Use of existing intergovernmental scientific advisory mechanisms: Existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms are formal processes that serve as a science-policy interface. Their findings could add to support international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD as they are related to DLDD; and

(d) Establishment of a new intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil: A new intergovernmental panel on land and soil could be established to cover the full range of interdisciplinary activities needed to provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD, taking into account the particularity of the UNCCD with its regional annexes.

31. In its decision 18/COP.9, the COP describes the advice being sought, thus implicitly providing four assessment criteria, which have been taken into account in the preparation of the e-survey. The COP nominates that the advice should be:

- (a) Scientific, taking into account transparency;
- (b) Interdisciplinary;
- (c) International, taking into account regional balance; and
- (d) Used in the Convention process.

32. Advice should be provided at global level on global matters while taking into account regional specificities. One of the key points in the assessment of how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to UNCCD is the specific regional approach followed by the Convention through its regional implementation annexes. In addition, subregional and regional action programmes are intended to harmonize, complement and increase the efficiency of national programmes based on substantive scientific advice. International, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD should take into account this participatory, regional approach of the Convention.

33. The expectations concerning the organization of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice might differ between different groups of stakeholders. Among other things, the e-survey requested participants to share their understanding of the term 'scientific' in the context of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice, enquiring whether the term excludes or includes non-academic knowledge, such as traditional knowledge. The analysis of the understanding of the term by stakeholders will help in further defining options on how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice.

34. How to ensure transparency and how to ensure effective and credible scientific advice is a point of interrogation. Through the views of stakeholders on these questions and on the objectives of the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice, it might be possible to assess to what extent their needs are being fulfilled. In addition, such general questions are expected to help making informed decisions on the matter. It will be equally important to find out whether a mechanism currently exists that could provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice meeting the expectations of all stakeholders.

B. Options on how to organize international, interdisciplinary scientific advice

35. It is expected that, based on the outcome of the assessment of the four options, scenarios would be developed, identifying relationships of communication between the UNCCD process and the scientific network or intergovernmental scientific panel/platform. Such a development of scenarios could include, for example, the time frame of implementing one or several options, meaning the time needed until the availability of the advice, and a systematic approach to the estimation of costs and benefits. Moreover, the generic scenarios proposed could then be discussed in relation to critical activities or outputs, as defined through the e-survey.

36. In addition to the development of scenarios, possible links between the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD process and the development of a scientific knowledge-brokering system could be developed. In line with this approach, links between the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD process and capacity building activities could be further explored.

37. In general, the Convention process requires the scientific advisory process to foster an effective science-policy dialogue, and to raise the profile of desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) issues globally. The CST may wish to discuss how far the four options addressed in the e-survey or other options put forward through the e-survey could foster or build such a science-policy dialogue and raise the profile of DLDD issues. This matter is linked to the definition of a constituency for which the advice would be provided, which could include Parties, or non governmental organizations, as well as representatives of the CST and the COP Bureau.

38. It should be noted that there is an opportunity for the UNCCD to learn from existing modalities for the provision of scientific advice to multilateral environmental conventions, including the use of networks and panels/platforms. The necessary learning could be obtained from the documentation provided by such networks and panels/platforms as well as through consultation with key individuals involved. Such an analysis and consultation could aim at identifying a complementary approach to be adopted, avoiding overlap between the work of existing networks and panels/platform and possible new modalities for the provision of scientific advice to the UNCCD process. The process of learning from previous initiatives is anticipated to streamline and facilitate the development of the UNCCD scientific advisory mechanism.

Option 1: Use of existing scientific networks

Official UNCCD bodies, governmental representatives and other stakeholders would use the outputs of existing scientific networks as a basis for international, interdisciplinary scientific advice

39. Existing scientific networks have mandates and respond to their own perception of the needs of the Convention or other stakeholders. In some cases, these correspond to formal

calls for action by the international scientific community issued by the COP. Networks also produce their own published outputs, which are distributed through their institutional websites and scientific journals, and are not necessarily forwarded to the attention of the members of the CST or the COP. The CST may wish to discuss how existing scientific networks with existing programmes of work could play a role in providing scientific advice to the UNCCD process.

40. The analysis of the geographical distribution and accessibility of existing scientific networks, their coverage of relevant issues, and the potential for use of their outputs, as perceived by participating UNCCD stakeholders will provide a basis for further discussions on the use of existing scientific networks. Under this option, the assessment seeks to gather information on existing scientific networks relating to DLDD, both at regional and at global level, because this information would be needed to use the outputs of such networks in the future. It is important to find out what prevents stakeholders from getting involved in these networks, gathering the views of stakeholders on the exclusiveness of membership, transparency of the process, time constraints, and their interest in the topics covered. The information on the range of existing networks at regional and global level collected will be crucial in assessing whether the advice from such networks could be international, taking into account regional input.

41. The extent to which existing networks could effectively cover issues relating to the Convention and important topics relevant to the Convention that are missing from existing scientific networks need to be taken into account, thus assessing whether existing networks are able to provide advice relevant to the UNCCD process. It might be needed that the CST undertake a specific gap analysis with regard to existing networks. On the basis of the assessment, such a gap analysis could provide information on the effectiveness of existing networks in terms of their ability to cover scientific issues relating to the Convention. The analysis of perceived gaps in the coverage of issues, once verified with the existing networks concerned, could also provide a basis to improve the effectiveness of such networks in terms of their ability to address issues relating to the UNCCD process.

42. The CST could discuss how far networks covering only some regions could be expanded to become global networks, taking into consideration that those networks are not officially linked to the UNCCD process. In addition, the CST could also discuss how far existing global networks are representative of all regions, and how geographically balanced representation could be enhanced. In analysing the outcome of the e-survey, the CST may further wish to develop criteria to assess existing networks with regard to the objectives of The Strategy. Such questions are considered to be important and should be addressed, regardless of whether this option 1 on the use of existing scientific networks is finally chosen in the assessment process.

Option 2: Establishment of a new scientific network focused on specific topics

A new network could be created to provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD, taking into account the existing networks, but focusing on specific topics relating to DLDD not effectively covered by existing networks

43. It is important to know what topics are currently not being covered by existing networks, in order to discuss the topics, either regional or global, that could be addressed by a new network. The UNCCD scientific conferences are organized on specific topics, there might be a need to discuss whether the current series of UNCCD scientific conferences could be used to build a new scientific network. This question is a reaction to a suggestion made at CST S-2 that UNCCD scientific conferences could be further strengthened to provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the Convention process.

44. The CST may further wish to discuss the ability of a scientific network to catalyse and stimulate a global research community.

45. The CST may wish to discuss to what extent a new network could systematically ensure scientific quality assurance of the advisory outputs. It could also discuss how a network of networks approach – being global or regional – could structure and enable the engagement of scientists who normally work within separate disciplinary and/or thematic networks, thus ensuring the provision of interdisciplinary scientific advice.

Option 3: Use of existing intergovernmental scientific advisory mechanisms

Existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms are formal processes that serve as a science-policy interface. Their findings could add to support international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD as they are related to DLDD

46. Existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms have existing mandates and are primarily oriented to the needs of others, not to the needs of the UNCCD process. The CST may wish to discuss how existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms with existing programmes of work could play a role in providing scientific advice to the UNCCD process.

47. Information on existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms relating to DLDD, both at regional and at global level, is needed to use the outputs of such panels/platforms in the future. It is important to find out what prevents stakeholders from getting involved in these panels/platforms, gathering the views of participants on the exclusiveness of membership, transparency of the process, time constraints, and their interest in the topics covered. Having information on the range of existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms at regional and global level will be important in assessing in how far they could also service the UNCCD process.

48. Again, on the basis of the assessment, a gap analysis of perceived gaps in the coverage of issues, once verified with the existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms concerned, could provide information on the effectiveness of existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms in terms of their ability to cover scientific issues relating to the UNCCD. It could also provide a basis to improve the effectiveness of such scientific panels/platforms in this context.

Option 4: Establishment of a new intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil

An intergovernmental panel on land and soil could be established to cover the full range of interdisciplinary activities needed to provide international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD, taking into account the particularity of the UNCCD with its regional annexes

49. If existing networks of panels/platforms do not or could not provide scientific advice at both regional and global level to UNCCD stakeholders, the CST may wish to consider how a new panel/platform could meet the requirements of the UNCCD and the international scientific community, and could provide specific scientific advice on land and soil.

50. An intergovernmental scientific panel on land and soil could be organized, ensuring that the panel would be global but taking into account the regional approach of the UNCCD process. In this context, it is possible that a new intergovernmental scientific panel/platform could be:

- Global containing interregional working groups on cross-cutting issues with or without taking into account regional concerns
- A global umbrella organization of existing regional networks, targeting global concerns but supported by regional contributions

- Global containing regional sub-panels dealing with region-specific topics *or*
- Organized in another fashion, to be specified by participants

51. In addition, the question of the linkage of such a new intergovernmental panel to UNCCD needs to be thoroughly explored, discussing whether a new intergovernmental scientific panel should be independent of the UNCCD, linked to the UNCCD or under the UNCCD.

52. Among other issues, the CST could also discuss to what extent the regional annexes of the Convention could be considered in the creation of a global panel on land and soil, and the extent to which a panel could be employed to systematize traditional and local knowledge. The CST may further wish to discuss to what extent a scientific peer review processes supporting the work of the CST in scientific analyses could be connected to the scientific review of national reports to the UNCCD. This could ensure that the advice was empirical and evidence based.

Other options and recommendations

53. The analysis of the e-survey will provided an indication of how stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of the possible options in providing the UNCCD with regular global assessments, in developing regional scenarios on future trends of land degradation, in developing global targets and scenarios, in scientifically reviewing national reports regarding criteria of evidence-based reporting, in providing policy-oriented recommendations, in providing scientific advice on emerging issues, or in providing other output, to be specified by stakeholders.

54. Finally, any other options for the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice that were provided should be considered.

V. Recommendations

55. Hence, the CST at its tenth session may wish to recommend, inter alia:

(a) How to cooperate with existing scientific networks at regional and/or global levels, based on the outcome of the e-survey;

(b) That the secretariat, under the guidance of the CST Bureau, and through its ongoing work in support of scientific issues – e.g. concerning impact indicators, best practices and other topics – make an assessment of gaps in the coverage of scientific issues relating to DLDD, as provided by existing scientific networks identified in the e-survey;

(c) How to cooperate with existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms, based on the outcome of the e-survey;

(d) That the secretariat, under the guidance of the CST Bureau, and through its ongoing work in support of scientific issues, make an assessment of gaps in the coverage of scientific issues relating to DLDD, as provided by existing intergovernmental scientific panels/platforms identified in the e-survey;

(e) That the COP set up an ad hoc working group to further discuss what would be the best options for the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD process, taking into account the regional approach of UNCCD.

(f) That the ad hoc working group, supported by the secretariat, be tasked to develop scenarios, identifying relationships of communication between the UNCCD process and the scientific network or intergovernmental scientific panel/platform, as

well as possible links between the provision of international, interdisciplinary scientific advice to the UNCCD process and the development of a scientific knowledge-brokering system.
