



**Conference of the Parties
Committee on Science and Technology**

Tenth session

Changwon, Republic of Korea, 11–13 October 2011

Item 5 (b) of the provisional agenda

Reshaping the operation of the Committee on Science and Technology in line with the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018)

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

**Assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific
Conference: final report**

Note by the secretariat

1. The UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference, held at the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9) in Buenos Aires from 22 to 24 September 2009, addressed the theme: “Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation, to support decision-making in land and water management”.
2. By its decision 16/COP.9, the COP requested the secretariat to organize an in-depth assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference in consultation with regional groups.
3. The final report of the assessment, which was conducted by two independent evaluators, is contained in the annex to this document. It is reproduced as received from the independent evaluators. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations.
4. A summary of the results of the assessment conducted by the two independent evaluators is contained in document ICCD/CST(S-2)/2.

Annex

**ASSESSMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF THE
UNCCD 1ST SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE
HELD IN BUENOS AIRES
ON 22–24 SEPTEMBER 2009**

FINAL REPORT

ASSESSMENT CONDUCTED BY

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2010

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Executive summary

1. Given the ongoing need for strong scientific input into the work of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 13/COP.8, decided that each future ordinary session of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) shall be organized “in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format by the CST Bureau in consultation with [a] lead institution/consortium”. By its decision 18/COP.8, the COP decided that the priority theme to be addressed by the CST in line with decision 13/COP.8 would be “Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation to support decision-making in land and water management”. The CST Bureau at its meeting on 25 June 2008 selected by consensus the Drylands Science for Development (DSD) as the consortium to co-organize the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference within the ninth session of the CST. DSD is a consortium of five research institutions and networks: the European DesertNet, the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas, the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics, the European Commission Joint Research Centre – Institute for Environment and Sustainability, and the United Nations University International Network on Water, Environment and Health.

2. The UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference was held in conjunction with the ninth session of the COP (COP 9) in Buenos Aires on 22–24 September 2009. During the conference presentations were made on the outcomes and recommendations of three white papers, an overall synthesis was discussed and draft recommendations were proposed. DSD raised funds for preparing, organizing and delivering the conference and the UNCCD secretariat, working with the CST Bureau and DSD, sought monetary contributions from country Parties and organizations to ensure the participation of 50 scientists from developing countries and of 10 keynote speakers.

3. DSD organized a group of scientists from various regions of the world into working groups to address the subthemes of the conference. Each of the three working groups prepared a white paper that reflected the prevailing scientific consensus on the working group topic. Using an e-dialogue format, the white papers were made available for worldwide review for one month; a second draft, integrating comments and input, was then made available on the Internet.

4. The objectives of this report are to assess the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference, identify lessons learned and make recommendations for future conferences. The assessment was conducted by two independent evaluators as an in-depth independent evaluation using a participatory approach through which the UNCCD secretariat, key representatives of DSD, scientists contributing to the conference, regional groups and country Parties were consulted. The methodology used was a three-pronged approach consisting of a desk review of appropriate documents, surveys of the stakeholders and interviews with stakeholders to arrive at conclusions and recommendations that reflect the views and opinions of all the stakeholders.

5. The assessment by the independent evaluators and the responses received from stakeholders indicate that the major problems and issues that the organizers faced in preparing for and organizing the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference related to fund-raising, the time frame, timing and regional representation. The fund-raising was problematic because of the short time frame for organizing the conference and because the terms of reference of DSD were not clear. The UNCCD secretariat and the CST faced issues relating to the process and time frame for the selection of the lead institution/consortium.

6. Based on the assessment by the independent evaluators, and the survey and interviews, and to facilitate the preparation and organization of future conferences, the evaluators have made recommendations on: conference organization; conference implementation; participation and funding; conference content; and communication with the press. A scientific conference is a good mechanism for addressing scientific issues, but not a mechanism designed to address long-term issues and provide continuity. An independent mechanism is needed to allow for continuity within the UNCCD and for broader participation by the scientific community. Such a mechanism would promote a “science culture” within the Convention and sustain a scientific approach to resolving the problems of land degradation and desertification in the long term.

7. A conference participant’s comment reflects the importance of the conference:

“Cette conférence scientifique fournit des informations importantes sur les mécanismes, les impacts et les axes de stratégies pour une lutte conséquente contre la désertification. Cela est nécessaire vu l’ampleur des questions soulevées par la désertification et la dégradation des terres.”

I. Introduction and background

A. Introduction

8. The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) 1st Scientific Conference, held in conjunction with the ninth session of the Conference of the Parties (COP 9), took place in Buenos Aires on 22–24 September 2009. During the conference, keynote addresses and presentations were made on the outcomes and recommendations of three white papers, an overall synthesis was discussed and draft recommendations were proposed. Information about the conference is available on the website of the Dryland Science for Development (DSD) consortium.¹ DSD raised funds for preparing, organizing and delivering the conference and the UNCCD secretariat, working with the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) and DSD, sought monetary contributions from country Parties and organizations to ensure the participation of 50 scientists from developing countries and of 10 keynote speakers. A total of 222 scientists and decision makers from 88 countries and 10 international organizations registered for and attended the conference. In addition, some of the delegates accredited to the COP participated in the ninth session of the CST, including the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference. The conference programme is attached as appendix I to this report.

9. On the first day of the conference presentations were made on the role of science and technology in combating land degradation and desertification. Scientists presented information on the assessment and monitoring of land degradation and desertification. On days 2 and 3, half days were reserved for presentations from three working groups.

B. Background

10. Given the ongoing need for strong scientific input into the work of UNCCD, the COP, by its decision 13/COP.8, agreed 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, which is qualified in and has expertise in the relevant thematic topic selected by the Conference of the Parties (COP)”.

11. By its decision 18/COP.8, the COP decided that the priority theme to be addressed by the CST in line with decision 13/COP.8 would be “Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation to support decision-making in land and water management”.

12. The CST Bureau at its meeting in Bonn, Germany, on 19 February 2008 decided to call for proposals from interested lead institutions/consortia under the following terms of reference: “The CST conference is expected to produce sound scientific outputs and policy-oriented recommendations based on analysis and the compilation of peer reviewed and published literature that informs policy formulation and dialogue at the Conference of the Parties. This would also provide a clear picture of available options and possible solutions to the questions of decision makers on monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation”.²

¹ <<http://dsd-consortium.jrc.ec.europa.eu/php/index.php?action=view&id=150>>.

² <ICCD/CST(S-1)/3, Annex, paragraph 9.>

13. Two consortia (DSD and Centro de Estudios de Zonas Andes, CEZA) and four individual organizations responded. DSD was selected by the CST Bureau at a meeting held in Bonn, Germany, on 25 June 2008. DSD is a consortium composed of the European DesertNet, the International Centre for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the European Commission Joint Research Centre – Institute for Environment and Sustainability (JRC–IES) and the United Nations University International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH).

14. In its preparatory work for the conference, DSD organized a group of scientists from various regions into working groups to address the subthemes of the conference. DSD proposed that three working groups be formed to address the three identified facets of the topic:

(a) Facet 1. Integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation processes and drivers;

(b) Facet 2. Monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management;

(c) Facet 3. Monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation: knowledge management, and economic and social drivers.

15. Each of the three working groups prepared a white paper that reflected the prevailing scientific consensus on the topic of the working group. Using an e-dialogue format, the white papers were made available for worldwide review for one month (May to June 2009) and a second draft integrating comments and input was then made available on the Internet from mid-August to October 2009. The white papers are available on the DSD website.³

16. Further details on the organization of and the preparation process for the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference are contained in two UNCCD pre-conference documents: document ICCD/CST(S-1)/3 outlines the call for expressions of interest, the selection of the consortium and the development of the terms of reference; document ICCD/COP(9)/CST/2/Add.2 reports on the organization of the conference.

17. The conference was held from 22 to 24 September 2009 during COP 9 in Buenos Aires. The discussions at the conference gave rise to 11 key scientific recommendations, which are outlined in documents ICCD/COP(9)/CST/INF.2 and ICCD/COP(9)/CST/INF.3. The conference was made possible by funding from various sources, including the UNCCD secretariat. The work of DSD was made possible by contributions from consortium members and other national and international donors (the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the United Nations Environment Programme/Global Environment Facility (UNEP/GEF) and the Convention Project to Combat Desertification (a UNCCD project) of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH acting on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).

18. The two independent evaluators were given the task of assessing the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference, identifying lessons learned and making recommendations on the organization of future conferences.

³ <dsd-consortium.jrc.ec.europa.eu/php/index.php?action=view&id=79>.

II. Scope, objectives and methodology of the consultancy

A. Scope and objectives of the consultancy

19. The objectives of this consultancy were:
 - (a) To assess the preparation process of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference;
 - (b) To evaluate the format and the outcomes of the conference; and
 - (c) To make recommendations on the preparation of future conferences.
20. The assessment focused on eight major areas:
 - (a) Selection of the consortium. Were the steps in the process to select the consortium adequate for achieving the objectives of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference? Topics addressed in the assessment included:
 - The terms of reference of the consortium
 - The criteria for the selection of the lead institution/consortium
 - The mechanisms for advertising and calling for candidates
 - The selection procedure
 - The time frame for the selection procedure
 - Communication of the outcome of the selection process
 - (b) Format of conference and the preparation process. Were the format adopted and the preparation process adequate for achieving the objectives of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference? Topics addressed in the assessment included:
 - The roles of and collaboration by the CST Bureau, the UNCCD secretariat and DSD in the preparation of the conference
 - Fund-raising mechanisms and achievements
 - Pre-conference preparations (working groups, white papers, e-consultations, etc.)
 - Regional balance and mechanisms to secure the attendance of scientists in working groups, especially those from affected country Parties; the preparation of white papers and participation in the conference
 - The conference set-up, including chairs, moderators, keynote speakers, posters and pre-conference recommendations
 - The feasibility of holding future conferences as part of ordinary sessions of the CST, including timing and duration
 - (c) Results of the conference. To what extent was the conference able to bring the necessary scientific expertise on board, and produce sound scientific outputs to inform decision-making? Topics addressed in the assessment included:
 - The extent to which the conference results in the formation of sound scientific outputs and discussion
 - The ability of the conference to produce policy-oriented dialogue and recommendations

- The extent to which the recommendations and terms of reference set for the consortium at COP 8 were met
 - Regional representation in the relevant fields of expertise, and regional needs
- (d) Special aspects: the consultants also assessed the following factors:
- Attainment of objectives: the evaluation assessed the extent to which the major relevant objectives were effectively and efficiently achieved and their relevance
 - Effectiveness: to what extent were the objectives met?
 - Efficiency: were the preparation procedure and the format cost-effective?
 - Relevance: in retrospect, were the conference outcomes consistent with the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy)?
- (e) Achievement of outputs and activities: delivered outputs
- Assessment of the success and impact of producing sound scientific outputs and policy-orientated recommendations, in both quantity and quality, as well as their usefulness at different scales for affected country Parties
 - Evaluation of the effectiveness of the working group, synthesis and wrap-up sessions at the conference
 - Identifying the extent to which the conference contributed to the establishment of an international, interdisciplinary scientific mechanism to advise the UNCCD
 - Identifying the regional and global benefits of the conference
 - Identifying the extent to which the conference contributed to local, sub-regional, regional and global networking
 - Was the dissemination of the outcomes of the conference (reports, papers, etc.) effective?
- (f) Ownership
- Regional balance: were there effective mechanisms to secure regional balance and the attendance of scientists, especially those from affected country Parties, in working groups and during the conference?
 - Gender balance: were there effective mechanisms to secure gender balance?
 - Were civil society organizations (CSOs) given appropriate opportunities to participate during the preparatory phase and during the conference?
- (g) Financial planning
- Assessment of actual project costs compared to the budget
 - Identification of the sources of financing as well as in-kind contributions
- (h) Time frame
- Was the time frame for the preparation of the papers and conference outputs realistic?
 - Evaluation of the duration and timing of the conference, including the time frame for presentations, synthesis, wrap-up and any other sessions

B. Methodology

21. The assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference was conducted as an in-depth independent evaluation using a participatory approach. The UNCCD secretariat, key representatives of DSD, scientists contributing to the conference, regional groups and country Parties were consulted during the evaluation.

22. The methodology used was a three-pronged approach consisting of a desk review of appropriate documents, surveys of the stakeholders and interviews with a number of select stakeholders in order to arrive at conclusions and recommendations that reflected the views and opinions of all the stakeholders. The different components of the methodology are outlined below.

1. Desk review of documents, including, but not limited to:

- (a) COP decisions and reports of the 2008 and 2009 sessions of the CST;
- (b) Documents relating to the preparation procedure;
- (c) The list of participants and scientists involved;
- (d) White papers and the book of abstracts as well as the poster session;
- (e) The synthesis and recommendations produced by the conference;
- (f) The conference proceedings;
- (g) Comments made by participants to DSD and the UNCCD secretariat before and after the conference;
- (h) Peer reviewed papers (if any).

23. The documents listed above were reviewed and summarized by the two independent evaluators in April and May 2010.

2. Surveys of stakeholders

24. Three surveys were prepared. They were made available online in three languages (English, French and Spanish) from 10 to 28 May 2010. They were developed by the two independent evaluators and reviewed by the Knowledge Management, Science and Technology (KMST) Unit of the UNCCD secretariat, and then publicized by the KMST Unit in a mass mailing. The surveys were designed to obtain the opinions of the various stakeholders on the preparation and the outcomes of the conference.

25. The first survey targeted the secretariat, DSD, the members of the three working groups and the members of CST Bureau. It asked questions on their roles in the preparation of the conference and their opinion of the outcome of the conference. The second survey targeted the scientists involved in the three working groups and in the preparation of white papers, the conference keynote speakers, the conference session chairs and moderators, and the scientists who attended the conference. The third survey targeted members of the regional groups, the country Parties and the science and technology correspondents to gauge their opinions on the selection of the consortium, the format of the conference and the preparation process.

26. All the stakeholders were contacted; because the surveys were available online, it was not necessary to use a subset from each group. The appropriate scientific analysis was used to summarize the results of the three surveys.

3. Stakeholder interviews

27. The team also conducted interviews, either in person or by telephone, with selected members of DSD, the CST Bureau and the secretariat. The face-to-face interviews took place in Bonn, Germany, on 21 and 22 April 2010. The telephone interviews took place at the end of April and in early May. The results of these interviews are embedded in the various sections of this document.

III. Conference performance and impact

28. The assessment of the organization of the conference performance and impact covered a wide range of topics, including

- (a) Review of the documents generated by the CST, the working groups, COP 8 and the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference;
- (b) The selection process for the lead institution/consortium;
- (c) The format of the conference and the preparation process;
- (d) The results of the conference;
- (e) Special aspects of the conference;
- (f) The achievement of outputs and activities;
- (g) Regional and gender balance and CSO involvement;
- (h) Fund raising and the budget.

29. The approach used to address the issues listed above involved two pathways: a review of what took place using documentation provided by the secretariat and DSD; and an evaluation of the opinions of the stakeholders (members of the secretariat, DSD and the CST, the regions and country Parties, and conference participants) obtained from interviews and surveys.

A. Document review

1. White papers

30. As a major part of the preparation for the 1st UNCCD Scientific Conference, three working groups were formed, each of which produced a white paper. The white papers were posted on the Internet for a period of about one month in May–June 2009. They were then modified in the light of comments received and presented at the conference where further discussion took place. The modified white papers are currently available on the DSD website⁴. The goals of the working groups are set out in the white papers:

- (a) “The selection of bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment as the first priority theme in the UNCCD 10-year-strategic-plan highlights the importance given to the issue of scientifically based and sound methods for monitoring and assessing desertification and to the integration of the bio-physical and socio-economic facets of the problem. At the same time the need to come up with actionable recommendations to support political decision-making is stressed by the second phrase of the priority theme, thus highlighting the two important aspects: (1) the need for a holistic

⁴ <www.drylandscience.org>.

analysis; and (2) the need for actionable solutions and recommendations supporting the decision-making process;

(b) “As a consequence, three global working groups of scientists have analysed and summarized the leading scientific knowledge on the priority theme, with the goal to generate practical and actionable recommendations for decision-making from national to global scales. The results of the working groups shall be deliberated during the scientific conference-style CST in September 2009 and the recommendations submitted to the subsequent UNCCD Conference of Parties (COP).”⁵

31. In order to prepare for the conference-style event, the working groups analysed three facets of the priority theme:

- (1) Integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of desertification processes and drivers (working group 1);
- (2) Monitoring and assessing land rehabilitation and sustainable land management efforts (working group 2);
- (3) Impacts of economic and social drivers and knowledge management on monitoring and assessing desertification/land degradation (working group 3).

32. A review of each of the white papers is presented below.

a. *White paper 1*

Integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation processes and drivers

33. Working group 1 focused on “the needs, options and practical possibilities for monitoring and assessing desertification at a whole range of scales. It reviews the scientific state of the art, including previous and current assessments, and highlights best available methods to integrate bio-physical and socio-economic information for better understanding the significance and extent of desertification. The main goal is to propose means to monitor changes in the state of land over time and at different scales as well as methods of data management, analysis and assessment. The proposed methods should enable decision makers to evaluate their previous decisions and provide them with a sound basis for informed future decisions.”⁶

34. The key questions addressed were:

- What information is needed for decision makers at different levels (scales) and what type of information could be provided to decision makers immediately, in the medium term and in the long term?
- What are the major desertification/land degradation issues to be addressed in order to better understand the significance and extent of desertification on different spatial scales?
- How can these issues be addressed best by integrated bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment? What are the most advanced integrated assessment pathways and frameworks, and what are their major strengths and weaknesses?

⁵ Draft white paper of DSD working group 1. Version 2, 19 August 2009.

⁶ Draft white paper of DSD working group 1. Version 2, 19 August 2009.

- What are the data requirements and to what extent can they be fulfilled by existing data collection systems? Where are the gaps? What are the alternative and emerging options?
- Are there potential areas of synergy between the monitoring and assessment of desertification and the monitoring and assessment initiatives from other environmental conventions, primarily the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)?
- How can it best be ensured that all information, methodologies and data are made available to all Parties, decision makers and stakeholders to ensure coherent monitoring and assessment at all levels?

(i) *Conclusions and recommendations*

35. Working group 1 analysed the implications of and options for using advanced scientific concepts as well as existing and emerging monitoring capacities to assess the information requirements implicit in the strategic and operational objectives of The Strategy. Based on the findings described in the full report, the working group's authors concluded and recommended that:

(a) Monitoring and assessment should be based on novel scientifically documented concepts for the analysis of human-environment interactions in order to meaningfully contribute to land-use decision-making and the sustainable management of ecosystem resources and their services. These concepts emphasize the integration of bio-physical and socio-economic factors and the identification of key variables and indicators;

(b) When monitoring and assessment are implemented in a multi-scale system and based on the functioning of human-environment interactions, a set of key variables and indicators can be identified, agreed and monitored across scales. Based on the scientific concepts and the identified key variables and indicators, clear, precise and standardized guidelines for their monitoring are feasible and should be elaborated;

(c) Existing observational networks already provide some of the inputs and indicators required by integrated models to assess current human-environment conditions. However, they still lack the coherence that could be achieved by the setting up of a Global Dryland Observing System (GDOS). The proposed GDOS should complement and assist national, regional and other global initiatives; promote observation standards; and generally contribute to the acquisition of relevant information and its distribution to stakeholders;

(d) Implementing GDOS implies an urgent need for a coherent and open data policy. In particular, clearly identified and properly set up communication channels and access rights must be established to facilitate the exploitation of this information by all concerned actors, while preserving the rights and addressing the concerns of the original data providers. This should be coordinated with the systems and policies set up by the other Rio conventions as well as by other international environmental treaties;

(e) Implementing GDOS will lay the basis for carrying out harmonized multi-scale assessments and provide a regularly updated global picture of the location, extent and trends of desertification, land degradation and drought (DLDD). It will also support monitoring and assessment of national and international sustainable land management (SLM) practices and of rehabilitation and restoration activities over the required long time periods;

(f) The establishment of an independent scientific body to oversee and keep track of scientific coherence in the monitoring programme and to implement a regular assessment is encouraged. This scientific body should be supported by scientific networks

to ensure that the monitoring and assessment are based on accepted concepts of desertification and on the latest technological standards;

(g) A cost–benefit analysis, comparing the costs of establishing a monitoring and assessment framework with the costs (i.e. damage) resulting from inaction, urgently needs to be conducted in order to provide a compelling rationale for Parties to participate and to advise them on the most appropriate and economical course of action.

(ii) *Commentary*

36. Working group 1 spent considerable time on definitions and clarifications. Given the short time available, it also outlined the basic background scientific concepts, emphasizing the interactions between human and environmental components and land systems. The group also accomplished an extensive literature review.

37. However, the extent of the challenge the group took on is reflected in the gap between its goals and objectives and its recommendations. The main recommendations in terms of data issues were to set up GDOS, which in the longer term could provide answers to some of the questions raised in the goals and objectives, and to establish an independent scientific body to oversee and keep track of scientific coherence in the monitoring programme and to implement a regular assessment, supported by scientific networks.

38. It is, therefore, difficult to identify useful activities for practitioners in the field. How to apply the science to the needs of the partners was not discussed. Continued work towards this goal would be a logical next step.

b. *White paper 2*

Monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management

39. Working group 2, perhaps because of its topic, and perhaps because of its broader composition, was able to direct more attention to country-level issues and concerns. The case was made for monitoring and assessment as follows:

(a) Whereas monitoring and assessment are the first steps towards resolving land degradation and desertification problems, the ultimate goal of investors in sustainable development (and of the world community) is to combat the problem of DLDD, as reflected in the title of the Convention;

(b) Governments and other investors need to be able to document successes in combating DLDD in order to justify their investments and to guide future policies;

(c) Where remedial steps are not succeeding, monitoring and assessment can help to diagnose the reasons why, so that corrective action can be taken.

40. By its very nature, SLM has to be implemented in local areas, mainly by local land users. Such local land users do not operate in isolation. Global, national and subnational policies as well as bio-physical endowments, cultural traditions, capacities, infrastructure and many other factors heavily influence their actions. Nonetheless, the need for SLM to be considered in the context of local land users and their environments may have been insufficiently appreciated in the past, where centralized regulatory directives were more common — and were often untenable, unenforced or ignored.

41. The main questions addressed were:

- Are the ecosystem services that are essential to SLM improving, stable or declining?
- How can new tools improve the accuracy, precision, depth and power of these observations and assessments over time?

- Do stakeholders perceive such changes as positive, neutral or negative, or are there both winners and losers (i.e. trade-offs)?
- What strategies might improve the situation?
- How can this information best be presented at different scales?
- What means can be used to estimate risks and forecast the potential impacts of different SLM scenarios, so that decision makers can take proactive steps?

(i) *Conclusions and recommendations*

42. The conclusions and recommendations of working group 2 included the following:

(a) The development of methods for linking ecosystem services to human well-being for monitoring and assessment of SLM, which is required to meet the aspirations of the UNCCD, lies at the frontier of complex systems science;

(b) Remote sensing is a leading-edge methodology with wide applications for investigating land cover/land use;

(c) Remote sensing and geographic information systems can aid the analysis of the social and economic drivers of SLM by linking spatial patterns to human processes on the ground (“socializing the pixel”) and vice versa (“pixelizing the social”);

(d) Modelling natural resource balances, states and flows is important because it is impractical to measure these complex and spatially variable parameters directly;

(e) Carbon forms a vital link between SLM and climate change mitigation that should be used to bridge the activities of the UNCCD with those of the UNFCCC;

(f) Case studies are often needed to investigate complex cause-effect relationships in the policy/social/economic domain, but should be geared to produce lessons that have wider application;

(g) Negotiations are required among different stakeholders in order to agree on the vision of SLM that is to be pursued, requiring ‘vertical knowledge management’, that is, sharing knowledge and ideas dynamically and synergistically between stakeholders across different scales;

(h) The ‘hybridization’ of SLM knowledge from formal institutional and informal local sectors can provide a richer and more useful capacity-building base than knowledge from either source alone;

(i) SLM capacity-building should be done in a way that also strengthens national institutions and infrastructure;

(j) SLM and water management are key tools for adaptation to climate change.

(ii) *Commentary*

43. The white paper provides a good literature review and analysis, and also incorporates the work of ongoing projects such as the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) project of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the SLM initiatives of the GEF. It emphasizes the importance of remote-sensing technology to identifying and monitoring land use systems, but also shows that human processes on the ground are better understood using ground-level analysis and monitoring.

44. This is a good preliminary document with a focused, well-articulated approach and strong, clear findings and recommendations. However, several steps are still needed to define action points more specifically at the country level. The steps to be taken are well

articulated at the international level and in the recommendations dealing with linking the conventions, but the group stopped short of a clear definition of action points.

c. *White paper 3*

Monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation: Knowledge management, institutions and economics

45. Working group 3 was the largest and most widely representative of the three working groups with more than 100 members. It had a broadly based mandate and was used:

- (a) To emphasize the need for monitoring and evaluation as key parts of SLM;
- (b) To summarize the principles of “horizontal” and “vertical” knowledge management in the context of DLDD;
- (c) To identify the important economic and policy considerations affecting SLM and its costs and benefits; and
- (d) To make recommendations on the future structure of the scientific bodies needed to support UNCCD activities.

(i) *Conclusions and recommendations*

46. Recommendations were made on a number of specific issues and four general points by working group 3:

(a) Specific issues dealing with knowledge management and institutions for monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation:

(i) Parties to the Convention may wish to consider the creation of a new multidisciplinary body of scientists to work alongside the CST to publish regular science reviews. This would enable the provision of independent, proactive, relevant and credible scientific expertise to the COP. Such a body would regularly review the state-of-the-art science, identify regional scientific priorities and gaps through consultation with the research and policy communities, and develop recommendations or good practices with regard to land use and management, and could provide inputs to the COP regarding the development of any further instruments, guidelines, principles, and so on, on global soil conservation. This group may also wish to consider developing a “Stern Review” for DLDD in order to raise the global visibility of the Convention and identify novel approaches to resourcing its work;

(ii) Parties to the Convention may wish to develop an international knowledge management system that can bring together evidence from research (collated by the multidisciplinary body discussed in subparagraph (a)(i) above) alongside relevant data and information collected at the local and national levels, building further capacity for DLDD monitoring and assessment through the exchange of knowledge and experience. Such a step would help to reduce knowledge seepage and improve institutional memory, allowing the more effective identification of research gaps and priorities, and provide an integrated knowledge base by which to assess, monitor and tackle DLDD. This system could build on the framework proposed under the DESIRE project funded by the European Union (EU) and the learning network proposed under the project funded by the GEF on Knowledge Management of the Land (KMLand);

(iii) Parties to the Convention may wish to develop an online desertification knowledge platform, to act as a knowledge repository and facilitate knowledge exchange based on data and information emerging from the KMLand system at the

national and international levels and material from the UNCCD secretariat library in Bonn, Germany;

(iv) As part of the knowledge platform (subparagraph (a)(iii) above), good practices and success stories need to be shared and showcased through a variety of media to enhance their accessibility to those who can benefit from the rich diversity of existing experiences in sustainable soil use and combating desertification. Efforts would need to be coordinated with the CST and could build on the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) approach and Web 2.0 technologies to enable users to share and update material;

(v) As part of the knowledge platform (subparagraph (a)(iii) above), findings from science reviews (subparagraph (a)(i) above) should be made accessible through multiple media, extending beyond press releases and radio broadcasts to incorporate innovative media such as audio/video podcasts, online computer games and visual decision-support tools that allow users to model on-screen the outcomes of their land-use decisions and practices;

(vi) As part of the knowledge platform (subparagraph (a)(iii) above), Parties to the Convention may wish to develop joint information-sharing mechanisms between the UNCCD, CBD, UNFCCC and other relevant multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs). This would enhance horizontal information sharing between the secretariats of the Rio conventions while also enabling information-sharing between national focal points and science correspondents, and between non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and CSOs engaged in the quest for sustainable soil use. Such a system would also enable vertical knowledge sharing between stakeholders at different levels;

(b) Specific issues dealing with knowledge management and institutions for monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation:

(i) The lack of sufficient data on the economics of DLDD is a major limitation on efforts to convince policymakers of the need to invest in combating DLDD. It is therefore recommended that the UNCCD COP urgently commission a special assessment report on the human, economic and environmental costs (both monetary and non-monetary) of DLDD and the benefits that can be obtained from combating DLDD to support evidence-based decision-making and investment policies.

(ii) The special assessment should also address the topics of ecosystem services valuation and potential payments for the protection of those services, and the rebuilding of natural resource assets that have been depleted (soil carbon, biodiversity, water, forests, etc.). The outcomes of these special assessments should be carefully reviewed by the COP and a dissemination strategy should be launched to inform the world community. National decision makers are flooded with urgent demands for action on a wide range of issues and must make choices among them. A major factor influencing those decisions is the prospective return on investment, as demonstrated by the impressive impacts of the *Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change 2006*⁷ and the highly anticipated impacts of the *Economics of*

⁷ Stern, N.H., 2007. *The Economics of Climate Change. The Stern Review*, Cambridge University Press. Available online at < http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/sternreview_index.htm>.

*Ecosystems and Biodiversity 2009*⁸ on decision-making by Governments. Because of insufficient data, DLDD-related cost–benefit analyses are few and based on rough assumptions. These shortcomings are unfortunate because combating DLDD could yield considerable returns on investment. Hundreds of millions of poor people depend heavily on the land as a source of their livelihoods, and successes in combating DLDD can significantly improve their well-being and alleviate poverty. SLM options, for example, can transform situations of continuing DLDD losses into steady SLM gains. SLM can raise incomes, reduce vulnerability to climate fluctuations and extend the productive use of land well into the future. Other means of combating DLDD and sustaining livelihoods can also deliver important benefits (land rehabilitation, carbon sequestration, ecotourism, off-farm employment, etc.). Monitoring and assessment activities should be designed to collect the data needed to perform cost–benefit analyses. The benefits and costs of monitoring and assessing should also be included in the analysis so that Parties can gain a clear rationale for engaging in this activity. The analyses must be forward-looking. Many dry areas are likely to be severely affected by climate change, increasing further the potential benefits of actions to combat DLDD. Historically, environmental services have largely been assumed to be free goods for the taking, but this led to them being plundered, often irreversibly. An accurate cost–benefit analysis must consider the value of environmental services, regardless of whether a mechanism exists for actual monetary payments for their conservation. Not all values (benefits or costs) are monetary. The land provides a range of ecosystem services that benefit humans in both tangible and intangible ways (e.g. cultural and spiritual benefits).

47. General points: working group 3:

(a) Urged the COP to encourage and support the improvement of national and regional coordination of monitoring and assessment among Government ministries, enabling national MEA focal points to collaborate on issues of mutual interest and pursue a more integrated and coordinated approach to accessing funding and resources;

(b) Urged the COP to support the formation of national and regional scientific bodies through a knowledge-management-based approach, and to feed local, national and regional traditional and scientific knowledge on monitoring and assessment into an international mechanism, as described in the following recommendation;

(c) Recommended that the COP establish an independent, international, interdisciplinary, scientific body to provide advice to stakeholders on monitoring and assessment as well as other scientific issues relevant to DLDD and SLM;

(d) Encouraged the COP to urgently commission an independent report on the social, economic and environmental costs of DLDD and the benefits of combating desertification, which should include consideration of the economic costs of monitoring and assessment as well as the design of policy mechanisms for prevention and rehabilitation.

(ii) *Commentary*

48. The recommendations contained in working paper 3 create a framework within which UNCCD can identify a monitoring and assessment programme, decide on the

⁸ TEEB, 2009. *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, Interim Report*. European Communities, Cambridge, UK. Available online at <http://www.unep.org/pdf/TEEB_D1_Summary.pdf>.

scientific support options and provide guidelines for the topic of the next UNCCD Scientific Conference.

49. Although these recommendations are directed to the COP, they should more appropriately be directed to the CST for transmission to the COP at its next session. The four recommendations are important and, if agreed by the CST, need to be followed up with a detailed implementation and financial plan.

2. Summary of the conference recommendations

50. A synthesis paper considered the findings of the working groups and identified 11 key messages or recommendations. These are summarized below.

- Recommendation 1. Desertification, land degradation and drought as defined by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification results from dynamic, interconnected, human-environment interactions in land systems, where land includes water, soil, vegetation and humans – requiring a rigorous scientific framework for monitoring and assessment, which has heretofore been lacking;
- Recommendation 2. To be sufficiently realistic and insightful in the light of this complexity, monitoring and assessment must make use of a wide range of analytical methodologies, and distil their lessons into forms useful for decision makers through integrated assessment modelling;
- Recommendation 3. Public land-use and land-management decisions are mainly taken at national and subnational levels, and so a UNCCD global monitoring and assessment strategy should be designed to be compatible and synergistic with these levels;
- Recommendation 4. Sustainable land management (SLM) is imperative to address the UNCCD core mission to combat desertification; therefore SLM monitoring and assessment should be fully integrated into DLDD monitoring and assessment;
- Recommendation 5. DLDD/SLM monitoring and assessment should include the collection of information relating it to climate change and biodiversity, and to other land-related issues that are the focus of multilateral environmental agreements;
- Recommendation 6. To aid decision makers in setting priorities, monitoring and assessment should collect information on the economic, social and environmental costs of DLDD, and the benefits of SLM. The potential role of economic modelling should be explored to develop policy mechanisms that can facilitate SLM decisions;
- Recommendation 7. Monitoring and assessment should capitalize on knowledge management to stimulate valuable synergies between different sources of expertise across different spatial and temporal scales and levels, social settings, institutions, scientific disciplines and development sectors;
- Recommendation 8. Sharing of local and scientific knowledge, tools and methods will enhance monitoring and assessment and strengthen human and institutional capacities;
- Recommendation 9. 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 which would include (but not be limited to) monitoring and assessment, with clear channels for consideration of its advice in Convention decision-making;

- Recommendation 10. In order to propel principles into action, regular global DLDD/SLM monitoring and assessment and early warning mechanisms should be organized and implemented, based on agreed standards protocols and open data access policies, to harmonize with other efforts worldwide and to minimize any duplication of effort;
- Recommendation 11. The UNCCD community would benefit from a science networking mechanism so that the large yet dispersed body of DLDD/SLM knowledge and expertise worldwide could be more effectively accessed, used and shared.

3. Analysis of the book of abstracts and the poster sessions

a. Information about the authors

51. The book of abstracts contains 47 papers. Table 1 shows that there were 47 primary authors and 61 co-authors of the 47 papers, giving a total of 108 authors (see appendix II for more details). Table 1 shows that 42.5 per cent of the first authors and 47.2 per cent of the second authors are from Argentina. The contribution of European researchers was 20 per cent for the first, second and third authors. As for Asian researchers, their input as first authors was equal to 17 per cent, increasing for the second authors to 19 per cent and to 24 per cent for the third authors. African researchers have a small share in the contributions to the book of abstracts: African first authors made up 13 per cent, second authors 5 per cent and third authors 4 per cent (see table 1 and appendix II for more details).

Table 1
Geographical origin of the authors of the papers included in the book of abstracts

Region	Number of papers		
	1 st authors	2 nd authors	3 rd authors
Europe	Italy (3), United Kingdom (1), Spain (1), Switzerland (2), Romania (1), Republic of Moldova (1) → 9	Switzerland (2), Italy (3), United Kingdom (1), Republic of Moldova (1) → 7	Italy (1), United Kingdom (1), Netherlands (1), Portugal (1), Switzerland (1) → 5
Africa	Somalia (1), Nigeria (1), Cameroon (2), Congo (1), Senegal (1) → 6	Somalia (1), Senegal (1) → 2	Senegal (1) → 1
Asia	Thailand (1), India (6), Uzbekistan (1) → 8	India (6), Uzbekistan (1) → 7	India (5), China (1) → 6
North South and Latin America	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) (1), Mexico (1), Argentina (20), Canada (1) → 23	Mexico (1), Argentina (17), Canada (1) → 19	Mexico (1), Argentina (11) → 12
Australia	1	1	1
TOTAL	47	36	25

* The gender of the authors was defined in only 35 of the 47 papers (see table 2). It was difficult to determine the gender of the authors of all the papers because in some cases only initials are given and/or the corresponding author for each paper is not clearly defined.

Table 2
Gender of the authors of the papers included in the book of abstracts

Paper number	Number of authors	Gender of the authors			
		1 st author	2 nd author	3 rd author	Other authors
1	2	F	M		
2	2	M	M		
3	2	M	F		
4	1	M			
5	2	M	M		
6	5	M	M	F	F
7	8	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined
8	4	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined
9	5	M	M	M	M
10	6	F	M	F	M
11	2	Not defined	Not defined		
12	2	F	M		
13	4	F	Not defined	M	F
14	2	F	M		
15	1	M			
16	3	M	M	M	
17	4	M	M	F	M
18	1	M			
19	2	F	Not defined		
20	1	M			
21	3	M	M	M	
22	1	M			
23	1	M			
24	5	F	F	M	1 M, 1 F
25	4	M	F	Not defined	M
26	3	F	F	M	
27	1	F			
28	1	M			
29	13	M	M	F	M
30	4	M	M	M	M
31	6	M	M	M	3 M
32	2	F	M		
33	6	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined
34	1	M			

Paper number	Number of authors	Gender of the authors			
35	2	Not defined	Not defined		
36	1	M			
37	1	M			
38	7	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined
39	3	F	F	M	M
40	4	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined
41	4	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined
42	4	M	M	M	M
43	2	F	M		
44	4	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined
45	6	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined
46	4	Not defined	M	M	
47	3	Not defined	Not defined	Not defined	

* About 50 per cent of the first authors work in research institutes (see table 3 and appendix III). The rest work in universities (32 per cent), ministries (8.5 per cent), NGOs (2 per cent), private companies (2 per cent) and international organizations (4 per cent).

Table 3
Type of institution of the authors of the papers included in the book of abstracts

Institution	Number of papers		
	1 st author	2 nd author	3 rd author
Research institutes	24	17	13
Universities	15	13	10
Ministries	4		
NGOs	1	1	
Private companies	1	1	
International organizations	2	4	2
TOTAL	47	36	25

b. *Structure of the book of abstracts and the papers*

52. The book of abstracts lacks a table of contents. The number of pages is not specified for most papers (paper 1 to paper 40), and in some cases the numbering is not correct.

53. Not all the authors followed the specifications set out for the structure of submissions (abstract, introduction, a section on the body of work, results, conclusions, recommendations and references); see table 4.

Table 4

Papers in the book of abstracts that did not comply with the structure specification

<i>Paper number</i>	<i>How the paper does not comply with the structure specification</i>
2	The paper lacks recommendations and references
4	The paper comprises only an abstract and body of work, and lacks an introduction, conclusions, recommendations and references
12, 13, 18	The papers do not respect the requested format structure
27	The paper lacks an introduction and references
28	The paper comprises only an abstract and an introduction, and lacks the body of work, the results, conclusions, recommendations and references
36	The paper contains only a resume in Spanish is found (without the content of the manuscript)
37	The paper lacks the body of work

54. The number of pages per paper ranges from 0.5 to 2.25. Around 42.5 per cent of the papers (20) are 1.75 pages in length, and 31 per cent have 2 pages (see table 5). Seven papers lack references and the others have between one and 11 references per paper (see table 6).

55. In addition, the list of keywords (immediately after the abstract) is lacking in three papers (papers 21, 26 and 29). Where available, the number of keywords ranges from three to five per paper, most of which are ambiguous terms.

Table 5

Range of number of pages in the papers included in the book of abstracts

<i>Number of papers</i>	<i>Number of pages per paper</i>
3	0.5
4	1.25
1	1.5
20	1.75
15	2
4	2.25

Table 6

Range of number of references in papers included in the book of abstracts

<i>Number of papers</i>	<i>Number of references per paper</i>
7	0
1	1
3	2
13	3

<i>Number of papers</i>	<i>Number of references per paper</i>
5	4
7	5
7	6
1	7
2	8
1	11

56. In some papers, not all the references in the reference list are cited in the text (no. 3, 6, 7, 11, 17, 19, 23, 24, 25, 39, 40, 41 and 44). The reference style used was not consistent across all the papers and there was no consistent system for listing the references.

c. *Book of abstracts: Content*

57. Some papers reported on studies carried out at local scales and had highly specific monitoring and assessment methodologies, for example, for evaluating soil loss at field sites (papers 8, 16 and 31), whereas others were an integral part of projects applied at regional or international scale (e.g. paper 34). The numbers of papers reporting on studies in various geographical areas are show in table 7.

Table 7
Geographical area of study in the papers included in the book of abstracts

<i>Geographical area of study</i>	<i>Number of papers^a</i>
Europe	2
Africa	8
Asia	15
Latin America	25
Australia	1
Not defined	5
TOTAL	56

^a The total is more than 47, the total number of papers, because some papers reported on investigations carried out in several geographical areas.

58. The papers reported on studies using various tools (table 8). The papers that reported the use of geographical information systems and remote sensing techniques focused on: monitoring vegetation changes (papers 6, 14 and 19); developing desertification models and maps (papers 12, 13, 24, 30, 34 and 37); modelling hydrological responses (papers 35 and 45); understanding the relationship between climate change and land degradation (paper 39); and modelling drought (paper 32). Paper 12 and paper 13 are similar in content and some of the authors of paper 12 also participated in the preparation of paper 13.

Table 8
Tools used in the papers included in the book of abstracts

<i>Main used tool</i>	<i>Number of papers^a</i>	<i>Paper numbers</i>
Geographical information systems /remote sensing	13	6, 12, 13, 14, 19, 24, 30, 32, 34, 35, 37, 39, 45
Field experiments	13	3, 7, 8, 16, 17, 18, 21, 23, 29, 31, 33, 38, 46
Questionnaires	3	25, 40, 47
Collection of existing data	6	5, 9, 11, 26, 41, 42
Management strategies	1	15
Miscellaneous	11	1, 2, 4, 10, 20, 22, 27, 28, 43, 44, 36
TOTAL	47	

59. Field experiments were used for several purposes: monitoring the movement of sheep (papers 3 and 21); estimating carbon stocks (papers 7 and 38); measuring soil loss due to wind erosion/run-off (papers 8, 16, 18 and 31); addressing the bio-physical and socio-economic impacts of desertification (papers 17 and 23); monitoring rangelands (paper 29); rehabilitating arid/semi-arid ecosystems (paper 33); and studying the impact of farm pond intervention on water availability (paper 46).

60. Questionnaires were used in the studies for diverse purposes: they were included in the WOCAT knowledge management system on SLM in paper 25; they were part of a new methodology for appraising and selecting SLM options using a participatory approach in paper 40; and they were used to analyse the LADA project in paper 47.

61. Eleven of the papers focused on widely accepted concepts: mentioning the need to use thematic mapping and remote sensing, and the establishment of measurement plots for desertification monitoring and assessment (paper 1); presenting the need to formulate indicators at different scales, from the global to the project level (paper 2); describing the expected outcomes of the COP workshop (paper 10); presenting the benefits of establishing protected areas (paper 44); presenting general ideas about the relationship between climate change and water resources (paper 20); discussing generalities about SLM measures and global environmental issues (paper 22); mentioning the benefits of cocoa trees for poverty alleviation and sustainable development (paper 27); and dealing with the impact of land use systems (papers 4, 28 and 43).

62. The main subjects of the papers are shown in table 9. Just over half (51 per cent) of the papers discuss integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation processes and drivers, and 36 per cent of the papers focus on land rehabilitation and SLM.

Table 9
Main subject of the papers included in the book of abstracts

<i>Main subject</i>	<i>Number of papers</i>	<i>Paper numbers</i>
Formulation of desertification indicators/observation systems	5	2, 5, 17, 25, 29
Monitoring vegetation changes	3	6, 14, 37
Impact of overgrazing (and other land use systems)	8	3, 4, 9, 15, 19, 21, 42, 43
Quantification of soil loss due to run-off or wind erosion	5	8, 16, 18, 31, 41
Estimation of carbon stocks	2	7, 38
Modelling desertification/monitoring drought	8	1, 12, 13, 24, 30, 32, 34, 47
Relationship between climate change and land degradation	3	20, 26, 39
Participatory approaches and land degradation	2	23, 40
Water availability and land degradation	3	35, 45, 46
Ecosystem rehabilitation/plantation	4	27, 28, 33, 44
SLM measures and environmental issues	2	11, 22
Expected outcomes of the COP	1	10
Other (paper 36 is only a resume in Spanish)	1	36
TOTAL	47	

4. Analysis of the synthesis and recommendations

63. Overall, 82 items were included in the synthesis and recommendations. They can be divided into 11 subthemes (see table 10).

Table 10

Distribution of the synthesis and recommendations by subtheme

<i>Subtheme</i>	<i>Synthesis and recommendations on the following subjects</i>
1-Lack of a rigorous scientific framework for monitoring and assessment of human-environment interactions in land systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eight items (numbered from 5 to 12) - Items 5 and 6 deal with the need to address complex human-environment interactions - Items 7 and 9 address existing monitoring and assessment procedures for analysing complex desertification, land degradation and drought issues - Items 8 and 10 present the need for innovative assessment and monitoring concepts for analysing desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) (including the adoption of integrated approaches, the need for long-term measures, recognition of non-linear processes, anticipation of cross-scale interactions, and a focus on environmental knowledge) - Item 11 can be regrouped with item 7: it highlights the existence of a certain number of tools and methods for monitoring and assessing complex human-environment interactions - Item 12 indicates the need for integrated assessment modelling to address complex human-environment interactions
2-Integrated assessment modelling for assessing DLDD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seven items (numbered from 13 to 19) - Item 13 indicates the need to take into account the different perceptions of stakeholders vis-à-vis DLDD - Items 14 and 15 discuss the simple indicators used for monitoring complex DLDD, and the need for greater use of the full range of the available analytical methods - Item 16 presents existing proven techniques (e.g., mapping, scenario analysis, participatory analysis, trend analysis, etc.) for monitoring and assessing DLDD - Item 17 presents the advantages of expert knowledge in monitoring and assessment of DLDD - Item 18 presents the advantages of integrated assessment models for linking the human and bio-physical dimensions of DLDD - Item 19 provides some practical examples of implementing the integrated assessment models (World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT), the Land Degradation Assessment in Drylands (LADA) project)
3-Areas of synergy between UNCCD global monitoring/assessment methodologies and public land use/management decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Twelve items (numbered from 20 to 31) - Item 20 highlights the need to know the nature, spatial distribution, severity and extent of DLDD as well as its causes and risks and the outcomes of DLDD prevention - Items 21 and 22 indicate the need to provide the degree of detail about DLDD requested by decision makers at all levels

<i>Subtheme</i>	<i>Synthesis and recommendations on the following subjects</i>
4-The need to integrate SLM monitoring and assessment into DLDD monitoring and assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Item 23 addresses the cross-scale linkages of stakeholders - Item 24 presents the scale dimensions for monitoring and assessment of DLDD and highlights the need to determine the most important variables for such monitor - Item 25 indicates the difference between slow and fast drivers of DLDD (with examples) - Item 26 focuses on the causes and symptoms of DLDD (referring to recent examples) - Item 27 presents the effect of cross-scale interactions on dryland systems down to the local level (with examples from Africa) - Item 28 indicates the need to use nested variables, patterns and symptoms of DLDD that can be meaningfully linked at all levels - Item 29 presents the use of multi-temporal analysis of remote sensing data for monitoring DLDD - Item 30 describes the methods and tools developed by WOCAT for evaluating sustainable land management (SLM) and assesses their dissemination to the subnational and national levels - Item 31 indicates (once again) the need for integrated assessment models for monitoring and evaluating DLDD (repetition) - Nine items (numbered from 32 to 40) - Items 32 and 33 indicate the need for a strong emphasis on the monitoring and assessment of solutions to identify corrective actions against DLDD - Item 34 mentions the need to use advanced geospatial methodologies for observing land cover/use/management systems - Item 35 indicates the need to use participatory SLM monitoring and assessment (e.g. involving a representative range of stakeholders, integrating socio-economic and policy dynamics, etc.) - Item 36 addresses the need to take into account climate change, the adaptation of agricultural species and management practices, as well as drought early warning systems for monitoring and assessing SLM - Items 37 and 38 address monitoring and assessing the nutrients needed for the growth of vegetation - Items 39 and 40 present the need to improve the models used to evaluate carbon states, trends and impacts
5-The need to collect information on climate change and biodiversity (as well as other land-related issues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Eight items (numbered from 41 to 48) - Item 41 highlights the focus of different conventions (UNCCD, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)) on diverse land issues - Items 42 and 43 present the interactions between DLDD, climate change and biodiversity - Item 44 presents the monitoring and assessment of social forces affecting the implementation of carbon

<i>Subtheme</i>	<i>Synthesis and recommendations on the following subjects</i>
	<p>policies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Item 45 presents the need to support in-situ and gene bank strategies to preserve natural/agricultural biodiversity and wild species - Item 46 indicates the need to promote the concept of eco-agriculture - Item 47 presents the use of indicators that aim to monitor biodiversity at the regional, national and subnational levels - Item 48 indicates the need for monitoring and assessment of climate change and anthropogenic risks to provide early warning for decision makers
<p>6-The need to collect information on the economic, social and environmental costs of DLDD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nine items (numbered from 49 to 57) - Item 49 addresses the need to consider long-term strategies and land-use planning for implementing preventive/corrective SLM actions - Item 50 presents the need for monitoring and assessment of DLDD-related benefits and costs - Items 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56 and 57 present the social and environmental benefits of implementing SLM interventions
<p>7-Capitalization on knowledge management across different spatial and temporal scales, social settings, institutions and so on</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nine items (numbered from 58 to 66) - Item 58 presents the use of knowledge management at different scales - Item 59 indicates the role of social networks in knowledge management - Item 60 indicates the need to conserve local knowledge as societies develop - Items 61, 62 and 63 present the need to hybridize local and scientific knowledge (with examples from different countries) - Item 64 presents the requirements for effective storage and dissemination of knowledge - Item 65 presents the need to improve knowledge sharing between international organizations - Item 66 indicates the need to mainstream the principles of sustainable development into the policies and programmes of affected country Parties
<p>8-The need to share local and scientific knowledge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Five items (numbered from 67 to 71) - Item 67 presents the lack of institutional, financial and human capacity in diverse institutions - Items 68 and 69 present the need for knowledge management and sharing between the local, national, regional and international levels (repetition) - Items 70 (repetition) and 71 present the need to include local knowledge and strengthen capacity-building

<i>Subtheme</i>	<i>Synthesis and recommendations on the following subjects</i>
9-Establishment of an independent, international, interdisciplinary scientific advisory mechanism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Five items (numbered from 72 to 76) - Item 72 indicates the need to evaluate/disseminate the scientific studies on DLDD - Items 73, 74, 75 and 76 present the need for an ongoing, independent and scientifically credible mechanism on DLDD/SLM
10-Implementation of global DLDD/SLM monitoring and assessment and early warning mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Two items (numbered 77 and 78) - Items 77 and 78 present the need for a scientific mechanism (observation system) to implement the modern principles of DLDD/SLM
11-The benefits of a science networking mechanism for DLDD/SLM knowledge and expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four items (numbered from 79 to 82) - Items 79 and 80 present the need to identify and mobilize the dispersed knowledge on DLDD - Item 81 presents the need for a networking and coordination mechanism for the global DLDD science community (e.g. DesertNet) - Item 82 focused on the need to strengthen the networks of scientists

Note: Items 1–4 are not shown above because they relate to generalities about the conference.

64. Recommendations can be summarized as follows:
- Develop integrated assessment modelling of the complex human-environment interactions (subthemes 1 and 2) .
 - Carry out monitoring and assessment of the nature, spatial distribution, severity and extent of DLDD as well as its causes and risks and the outcomes of DLD prevention (determination of the most important variables to monitor, cross-scale interactions, etc.).
 - Use advanced geospatial methodologies to observe land cover, land use and land-use management systems
 - Use participatory SLM monitoring and assessment (e.g. involving a representative range of stakeholders, integrating socio-economic and policy dynamics, etc.)
 - Develop early warning systems for monitoring and assessing SLM
 - Monitor and assess the nutrients needed for the growth of vegetation
 - Improve the models used to evaluate carbon status trends and impacts
 - Support in-situ and gene bank strategies to preserve natural/agricultural biodiversity and wild species
 - Promote the concept of eco-agriculture
 - Monitor and assess climate change and anthropogenic-related risks to provide early warning for decision makers
 - Monitor and assess DLDD-related costs and benefits
 - Hybridize local and scientific knowledge
 - Improve knowledge sharing between the local, national, regional and international levels
 - Develop a scientific mechanism (observation system, networking and coordination system) to implement the modern principles of DLDD/SLM
65. It is more appropriate first to regroup existing knowledge on diverse issues and then to state clearly the recommendations and gaps.

5. Comments on the conference proceedings

66. The conference proceedings included several presentations distributed as follows (see tables 11, 12 and 13):
- **General sessions:** an opening session, opening remarks (by the CST chair and the chair of UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference), and three presentations on understanding, assessment/monitoring and combating desertification (the first on the working group process leading to the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference, the second specific to Argentina and the third devoted to dry areas);
 - **Specific sessions:** presented within the framework of the three working groups: two presentations from working group 1, two presentations and two focus issues from working group 2 and four presentations from working group 3.

Table 11
Gender, institution and nationality of the keynote speakers (as listed in the conference proceedings)

<i>Title of the presentation</i>	<i>Working group</i>	<i>Speaker's name</i>	<i>Speaker's gender</i>	<i>Institution of the speaker</i>	<i>Country of the speaker</i>	<i>No. of pages per presentation</i>	<i>No. of references per presentation</i>
Plenary session							
Understanding desertification and land degradation trends	Working group process leading to the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference	Mark Winslow	Male	DSD Coordinator/ International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)	International organization, India	1.5	0
Desertification assessment and monitoring in Argentina	-	Elena Maria Abraham	Female	Argentine Institute for Research on Arid Lands	Argentina	7	11
The role of science and technology in combating desertification, land degradation and drought in the dry areas	This presentation was not included in the conference proceedings	Mahmoud Solh	Male	International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA)	International organization, Syrian Arab Republic	Awaiting receipt of contribution	
Integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation processes and drivers	Working group 1 (in addition to the chair, two male rapporteurs were indicated in this session)	Charles Hutchinson	Male	University of Arizona	United States	3.25	0
A summary of working group 1 presentation 1: Integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation processes and drivers	Working group 1	Youba Sokona	Male	Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel (The Sahara and the Sahel Observatory) (OSS)	International organization, Tunisia	3	2
An integrated, science-based framework for	Working group 1	James	Male	Duke University	United States of	7	10

<i>Title of the presentation</i>	<i>Working group</i>	<i>Speaker's name</i>	<i>Speaker's gender</i>	<i>Institution of the speaker</i>	<i>Country of the speaker</i>	<i>No. of pages per presentation</i>	<i>No. of references per presentation</i>
monitoring and assessing desertification/land degradation processes and drivers		Reynolds			America		
Monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management (SLM)	Ephraim Nkonya	Male		International organization		2.75	0
A summary of working group 2 presentation 1: Monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management (SLM)	Pedro Luiz Oliveira de Almeida Machado	Male	Centre	Not indicated		4	0
Experiences in monitoring and assessment of SLM	Hanspeter Liniger	Male	World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCA T)	International organization		8	6
Focus issue: Application of geospatial technologies for monitoring and assessment of SLM	Michaela Buenemann	Female	University	Mexico		4.5	0
Focus issue: Modelling as a tool for the practice-based assessment of biophysical parameters that underlie SLM	Johannes Lehmann	Male	University	United States of America		2	0
Impacts of economic and	Working group 3	Martin	Male	Nouveau partenariat pour le	Not indicated	4	0

<i>Title of the presentation</i>	<i>Working group</i>	<i>Speaker's name</i>	<i>Speaker's gender</i>	<i>Institution of the speaker</i>	<i>Country of the speaker</i>	<i>No. of pages per presentation</i>	<i>No. of references per presentation</i>
social drivers and knowledge management on monitoring and evaluation of land degradation	(in addition to the chair, two rapporteurs were indicated – one male and one female)	Bwalya		développement de l'Afrique (New Partnership for Africa's Development) (NEPAD) secretariat			
A summary of working group 3 presentation 1: Vertical and horizontal knowledge management; implications at the local, national, regional and global levels	Working group 3	Dra Mary Seely and three co-authors	Female	Research Foundation of Namibia	Namibia	7	3
Knowledge management for monitoring and assessment of desertification, land degradation, drought and sustainable land management	Working group 3	Mark Reed	Male	University	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	3.5	0
Monitoring and assessment: challenges at the national and international levels	Working group 3	One author and three co-authors	The primary author is female. One female and two male co-authors	Not indicated	Not indicated	4	0
Economic aspects and social drivers of land degradation	Working group 3	Stefan Sperlich	Male	University	Germany	3.5	0

Table 12
Summary of the gender of the keynote speakers

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Not specified</i>
Plenary session	2	1	
Working group 1	3		
Working group 2	4	1	
Working group 3	3	2	

Table 13
Summary of the institution of the keynote speakers

	<i>Universities</i>	<i>Research centres</i>	<i>International organizations</i>	<i>Not specified</i>
Plenary session		2	1	
Working group 1	2		1	
Working group 2	2	1	1	
Working group 3	2	2		1

67. The content of each of the presentations is summarized below:

- *Desertification assessment and monitoring in Argentina*: This presentation lacks reference citations in the text even though several references are listed in the bibliography. It describes the status of desertification in Argentina by detailing the physical-morpho-dynamic characteristics of some regions (Puna, Dry Chaco, the southern Caldenal rangelands, Monte and Patagonia). Some gaps, such as the absence of a map of affected areas in Argentina, and the implementation of an integrated monitoring and assessment system, are mentioned in the conclusions;
- *The role of science and technology in combating desertification, land degradation and drought in the dry areas*: Awaiting contribution, no text was found in the conference proceedings;

Working group 1

- *Integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation processes and drivers*: This presentation focuses on the need to harmonize data and information flows on DLDD, and develop a dryland observation system and integrate complex human-environment interactions across nested scales. Several ideas are similar to those mentioned in the synthesis and recommendations above;
- *A summary of working group 1 presentation 1: Integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation processes and drivers*: This presentation provides information on DLDD at all levels (the spatial extent, severity and trends of desertification, the nature of the process, the causes of desertification, its consequences, etc.), and what is needed to efficiently assess DLDD (integration of bio-physical and socio-economic

information, adequate observation systems, institutional arrangements, harmonization of scientific knowledge, etc.);

- *An integrated, science-based framework for monitoring and assessing desertification/land degradation processes and drivers*: This presentation begins by defining desertification and then details the six steps needed for an integrated analysis of desertification: an integrated framework, a scoping process, selection of which variables to monitor, scaling and integration, integrated assessment, and a global monitoring system for drylands;

Working group 2

- *Monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management*: A summary of the presentation by Pedro Luiz Oliveira (cited below);
- *A summary of working group 2 presentation 1: Monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management*: This presentation provides a definition of SLM in the context of the Convention, a specification of the parameters and a citation of the advanced scientific methods for monitoring and assessing SLM, including a detailed definition of remote sensing, as well as a presentation of the key natural resources underpinning SLM. Some repetition was found, specifically the details given about the Rio conventions;
- *Experiences in monitoring and assessment of SLM*: This presentation provides information on the standard methods and tools used for monitoring and assessing DLDD (i.e. WOCAT, LADA and DESIRE);
- *Focus issue: Application of geospatial technologies for monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management*: This focus issue defines and sets out the advantages of remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS);
- *Focus issue: Modelling as a tool for the practice-based assessment of bio-physical parameters that underlie SLM*: This focus issue highlights the benefits of remote sensing tools in up-scaling point measurements to create regional estimates, and discusses the bio-physical factors of sustainability such as soil carbon and soil organic matter;

Working group 3

- *Impacts of economic and social drivers and knowledge management on monitoring and evaluation of land degradation*: This presentation summarizes the presentations from working group 3;
- *A summary of working group 3 presentation 1: Vertical and horizontal knowledge management, implications at the local, national, regional and global levels*: This presentation suggests the use of several knowledge management platforms for SLM;
- *Knowledge management for monitoring and assessment of desertification, land degradation, drought and sustainable land management*: This presentation specifies the four generic themes needed for monitoring and assessing SLM: establishing land degradation context and sustainability goals; identifying/evaluating/selecting land degradation remediation strategies; identifying/evaluating/selecting land degradation indicators; and applying remediation options;
- *Monitoring and assessment: challenges at the national and international levels*: This presentation identifies the gaps in and makes recommendations

for improving knowledge management for monitoring and assessment of DLDD/SLM at the national and international levels; details about WOCAT are provided;

- *Economic aspects and social drivers of land degradation*: This presentation outlines the economic framework of DLDD, provides economic evaluation of the environment, the costs of land degradation and the loss of ecosystem services, as well the cross-scale and related mechanisms (state mechanisms, private mechanisms, etc.) for the economic and social drivers of land degradation.

68. The order of presentation of the rapporteurs’ overview, the summaries and the presentations in the conference proceedings is not consistent, which can lead to some confusion. The different parts of the conference proceedings should be structured in a consistent way.

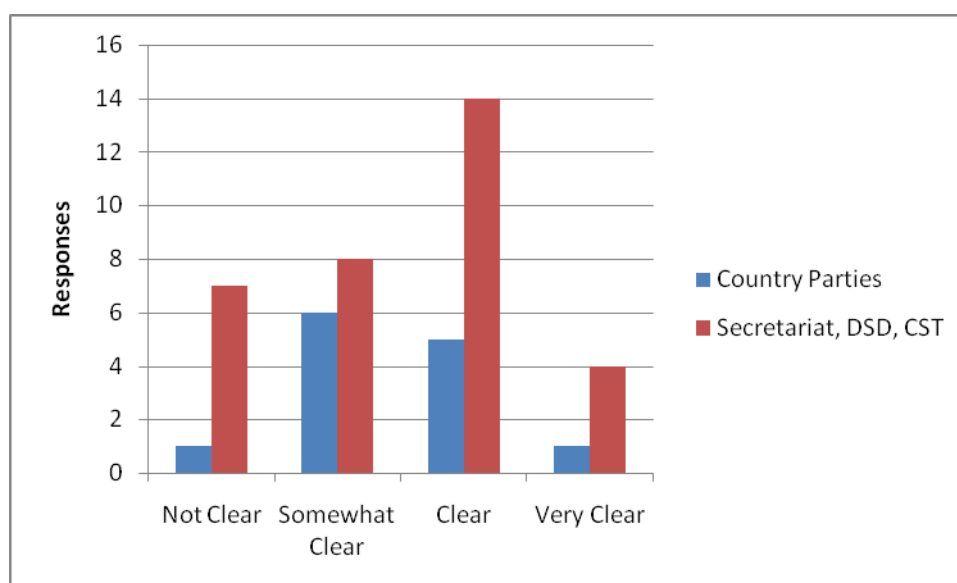
B. Selection of the consortium

1. Terms of reference of the consortium

69. Although the process followed to select the consortium was adequate for achieving the objectives of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference, many among the CST, DSD and the secretariat as well the regions and country Parties did not think that the terms of reference of the consortium were clear. Forty-five per cent (15 out of 33) of the respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST felt that the terms of reference were either not clear or only somewhat clear. The remaining 18 respondents thought that the terms of reference were either clear or very clear. Seven out of 13 respondents among the country Party respondents thought that the terms of reference were either not clear or only somewhat clear whereas six respondents felt that the terms of reference were either clear or very clear (see figure 1).

Figure 1

Perceptions of the country Parties, the secretariat, Drylands Science for Development (DSD) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the terms of reference of DSD



70. This lack of precision and clarity in the terms of reference was also reflected in the review of the terms of reference. There was no timeline in the terms of reference for the major milestones and activities in the organization of the conference. Our review shows that the terms of reference were not specific enough, especially the fund-raising part, which created some misunderstandings between the secretariat and DSD. In addition, the language used in the contract with DSD was not specific. The contract was equally vague about the fund-raising role of the DSD. Section 3.2 of the contract states that “DSD and the UNCCD secretariat will work together to mobilize resources for the science conference.”

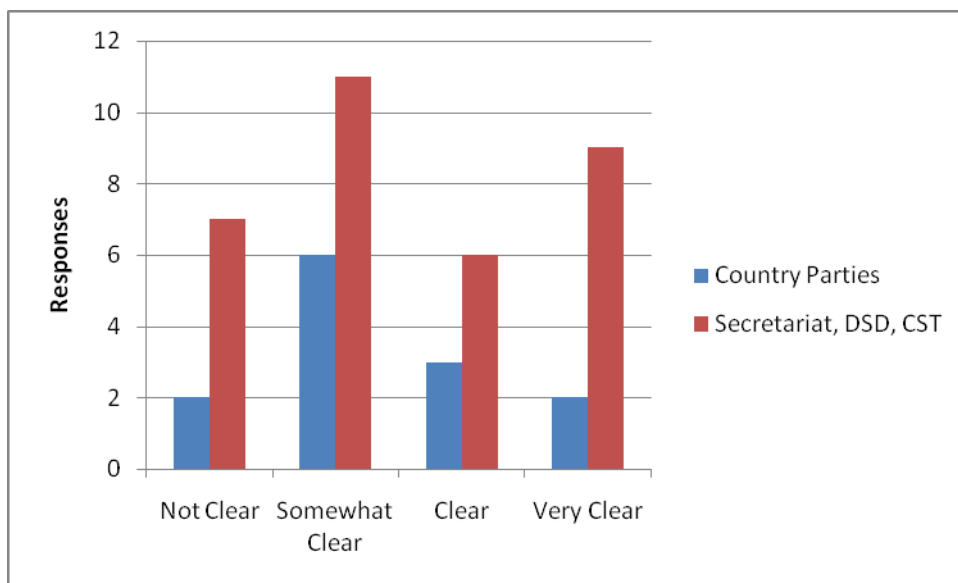
71. These findings were reflected in the opinions expressed by the members of the secretariat and DSD who were interviewed: “The procedure in general was appropriate. However, the terms of reference for the consortium were not clear. A major point of criticism relates to the fact that the secretariat expected DSD to raise all the funds for the conference while in the call the bidders were asked to assist the secretariat in that matter. There were also NO funds available to support DSD in its tasks. This is unacceptable.”

2. Criteria for the selection of the lead institution/consortium

72. The majority of the respondents from the regions and country Parties (7 out of 13) and the secretariat, DSD and the CST (18 out of 33) thought that the criteria for selection of the lead institution/consortium were either not clear or only somewhat clear (Figure 2). Our assessment also showed that the selection criteria lacked clarity.

Figure 2

Perceptions of the country Parties, the secretariat, Drylands Science for Development (DSD) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the criteria for the selection of the lead institution/consortium



3. Mechanisms for advertising and calling for expressions of interest

73. The call for expressions of interest for the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference was posted on the UNCCD website and circulated to national focal points. The call was also sent to the regional units of the secretariat (in Bangkok, Mexico and Tunis) with a request to publicize the call in their respective regions.

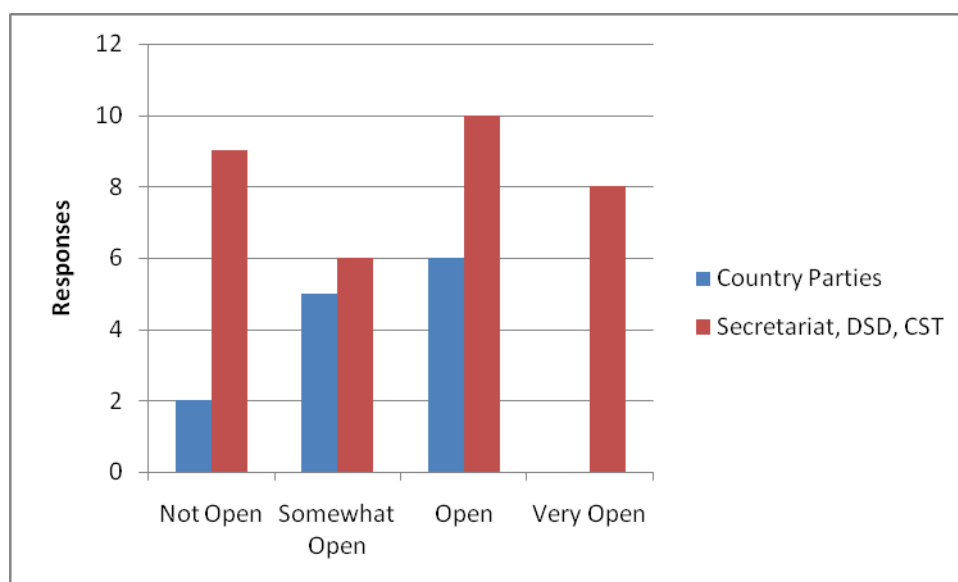
74. We found no evidence that other mechanisms were used to publicize the call for expressions of interest. We believe that the process used was too restrictive given the importance of the task.

75. The mechanisms for advertising were regarded by the secretariat, DSD and the CST as either clear or very clear. Of the 33 respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST, 20 thought that the mechanisms were either clear or very clear, whereas only 5 of the 13 regions or country Party respondents thought that the mechanisms were clear. None of the regions or country Parties thought that the mechanisms were very clear.

4. Selection procedure

76. The assessment of the procedure for the selection of the lead institution/consortium was seen by most country Parties as either somewhat open or open. However, it is interesting to note that almost half the respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST perceived the selection procedure as either not open or only somewhat open (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Perceptions of the country Parties, the secretariat, Drylands Science for Development (DSD) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) of the openness of the selection procedure



77. Our assessment is that the selection procedure was open. There was, however, a perception of a conflict of interest because one of the CST Bureau members was the Director of one of the member organizations of the consortium. It should be noted that that member did not participate in the vote to select the lead institution/consortium, and left the room.

5. Time frame for the selection procedure

78. The time frames for the selection procedure and for the organization of the conference by DSD were both somewhat short. In addition, too much time elapsed between some of the important milestones (see Table 14). For example, two months elapsed between the deadline for the call for expressions of interest and the notification of DSD of their selection, and three months elapsed between DSD receiving notification and its submission of a costed proposal to the UNCCD.

79. The announcement of the selection of DSD was made in July 2008 and it was not possible for the consortium to begin work until September, which meant that the whole conference organization process had to be completed within 12 months. It should be noted that although DSD was given the assignment on 9 July 2008, the contract with DSD was not signed until August 2009 – one month before the start of the conference. This was mostly linked to the fact that DSD did not have a designated person with authority to enter into a contractual agreement with the UNCCD secretariat.

Table 14

Selection procedure timeline

<i>September 2007</i>	<i>COP 8 decision to organize conference</i>
February 2008	Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) agrees on the content of the call for expressions of interest
30 April 2008	Deadline for submission of expressions of interest
9 July 2008	Drylands Science for Development (DSD) informed of its selection as lead consortium
October 2008	DSD submits a costed proposal to CST Bureau
31 October 2008	DSD website up and running on the Internet
4–7 November 2008	CST S-1/CRIC, Istanbul: DSD participates in CST Bureau meeting; conference proposal and budget approved; DSD brochure written and circulated

80. Twelve of the 33 respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST thought that the selection process was communicated adequately ahead of time to the stakeholders whereas only three respondents (10 per cent of the total number of respondents) did not think so. The comments received from some of the other respondents to the survey indicate a mix of opinions:

“Yes we all knew about that and it was well announced to reach a larger audience.”

“The selection process was an internal UNCCD process on which, as far as I know, the results were made public, but not the steps of the process (which is also acceptable, as the criteria were somehow listed one can expect that the process will be done with the maximum relevance to the expected outcome).”

Original comment: “Le temps alloué était un peu trop court.” Translation: “The time allocated was a little too short.”

“After the COP in Madrid, it took the UNCCD secretariat too long to initiate the process. This cost valuable time that was later lacking for the preparation of the conference which had to be done under extremely high time pressure.”

“Yes and no. In fact some stakeholders were informed very early on, others only when the CST insisted on a more regional representation and others not at all.”

“The selection procedures, the involvement of the Bureau, and so on, were never publicized.”

“To my knowledge communication of the selection process was only in March 2008; hence not right ahead of time. In my opinion it should have come immediately after COP 8, hence clearly before the end of 2007.”

“The fact of having been a first-time event made it encounter some difficulties of start-up and piloting that might be overcome in the future through lessons learned.”

“None of the actors, the secretariat, the CST Bureau or consortium, had a lot of time for this. An adequate job was done with the limited lead time provided by the parties.”

“An open call for applications was issued.”

6. Communication of the outcome of the selection process

81. Seventeen of the 33 respondents from among the secretariat, DSD and the CST thought that the outcome of the selection process was communicated to the stakeholders in a timely manner. Some of the respondents did not answer this question with a yes or no but provided comments:

“I don't fully know when it was actively communicated to all stakeholders, but results were made available through the web in a timely manner”.

“As the whole process started late also communication of the result was not particularly quick. DSD was informed of the result of the selection process only in early July 2008.”

“I was not involved in the process and might not have exact information, but the feedback to civil society came a bit late and after repeated requests.”

“We were informed soon after the selection. However, the whole process was far too late for the preparation of such a conference, which resulted in severe time problems.”

C. Format of the conference and the preparation process

1. Format of the conference

82. We assessed the format of the conference. More specifically, our assessment addressed whether the format adopted and the preparation process were adequate for achieving the objectives of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference. This is an area where most of the survey respondents provided useful comments. Fourteen (42 per cent) of the 33 respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST rated this question. The rest provided written comments. Thirteen of the 14 thought that the format was adequate.

a. Comments from the secretariat, DSD and the CST

83. Below is a selection of the comments provided by individual respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST. Additional comments are shown in appendix IV. Some of the comments have been edited for grammar and typing errors.

“The format was OK but feedback from the developing country Governments was poor; they did not grasp the idea and stuck to their old guns; they only demanded resources for capacity-building but themselves did not show the commitment to implement the UNCCD approaches. Also the quality of participation was not up to the expected quality.”

“There was insufficient time to address the complexity of the issues at hand. There was insufficient interaction between scientists and policymakers.”

On the e-conference: “It was the most important pre-conference forum as it allowed and called on really all stakeholders to participate in the process; only that the participation remained low, because maybe not enough reminders were sent and

maybe the stakeholders did not realize this or the documents were still too complex.”

On the conference format: “The formalities and restrictions of a United Nations plenary meeting were such that they prevented this event from being a real scientific conference. No free participation was possible; hence the science community could not represent itself – therefore the preparation of white papers and the e-forum, to accommodate this somehow shortcoming somehow. The format in itself was OK given these limiting conditions. In the future it would be good to keep the conference out of the strict formal United Nations style meeting, but still back-to-back with a normal CST session in order to have at least the scientific focal points participating. Ideally, a real science conference should be held way before the CST, followed by working groups, including scientific focal points, which should then compile the results, and extract lessons and way ahead to present in a concise and not too scientific way to the CST.”

“The indicator related to my response is that the objective of the conference has not been achieved. Just take a look at the final Declaration of the conference. Too general and some of the paragraphs could have been produced even before the conference.”

“The format of the conference mixing scientists and politicians was effective. However, some politicians behaved more like scientists and vice versa. The conference was too politicized, not really a scientific conference as advertised.”

“Given that this was the first conference, some consideration should have been given to the legitimacy of the scientific community. The questions from the floor in the initial days over who was chair/president of DSD, and whether scientists could actually participate in the discussion – this did leave a bad taste in the mouth of many; and whether the scientists had been brought in to rubber stamp the process.”

“Time frames were clearly too tight. Inclusiveness of participation remained an issue. The online comments unfortunately received a very limited response.”

“If the objective was to involve scientists in the questions of the CST, this conference was a good step in that direction. This was the first CST with a full room, and a majority of actual scientists (as opposed to government delegates to the CST). Whether it will be a long-term involvement by scientists will be a real test for the Convention. The conference format is one that scientists can relate to, and the white paper process got them involved and brought them together. However, it is not a format to develop policy recommendations that government delegates will quickly translate into their own decisions. In short, this format is one that can engage scientists, but it will not lead easily to the policy recommendations that the CST needs.”

“Overall the conference organization and the conference itself led to a wide mobilization of the scientific community. In fact more than 100 scientists were involved in one way or another in drafting the white papers and contributing to the discussions. The online consultation opened the space for anybody willing to contribute through comments on the first and the second drafts of the white papers. We kept track of all comments and the resulting changes/amendments applied. The conference provided space for all participants (independent scientists, national delegates) to discuss and contribute to the white papers and the policy recommendations. Unfortunately, the whole process was disturbed by pure political opportunism which had nothing to do with the actual content of the conference.”

b. *Comments from the regions and country Parties*

84. Five of the 14 (35 per cent) country Parties and regional representatives that responded thought that the conference format was adequate. The rest provided comments in answer to our question, some of which are shown below.

“Quizás los objetivos de la conferencia si se cumplieron, la pregunta debería ser si se cumplió con los objetivos que la COP esperaba de la conferencia, y en ese caso, no se llegó a los resultados esperados en su totalidad”. Translation: “Perhaps the objectives of the conference were met, the question should be did it meet the COP objectives for the conference and in that case it did not reach the expected objectives.”

“Creo que el formato debe dar prioridad a nuevos aportes. Los trabajos a presentar deben constituir aportes relevantes a la aplicación de la UNCCD, Entiendo que algunos de los trabajos presentados eran conocidos ya”. Translation: “I think the format should give priority to new contributions. The work presented should be contributions relevant to the application of the UNCCD. I understand that some of the papers presented were already known.”

“Oui, la format a permis de donner de l’information scientifique aux décideurs politiques et/ou aux responsables de la mise en œuvre de la CNULCD dans les pays Parties. Une difficulté qui se pose est celle de la traduction opérationnelle des résultats de la conférence et de l’utilisation (par les décideurs, les « techniciens », etc.) de ces résultats au niveau des stratégies de mise en œuvre de la Convention, et le format de la conférence n’a pas vraiment offert d’espace pour ces réflexions.” Translation: “Yes, the format has given scientific information to decision makers and/or to those responsible for the implementation of the UNCCD in the country Parties. The difficulty that arises is that of the use of the operational results of the conference (by policymakers, technicians, etc.) in terms of strategies for the implementation of the Convention, and the conference format has not really offered space for these reflections.”

“Le format devrait être amélioré et disponible en toutes langues.” Translation: “The format should be improved and available in all United Nations languages.”

c. *Comments from conference participants*

85. Conference participants provided some useful comments about the format of the conference. Seventeen of the 46 respondents thought that the format was adequate. Some of the comments made by the respondents are shown below:

“No, it was too constrained by politics and should have been held separately from the COP, yet providing information that could inform the COP.”

“The political process dominated over science.”

“There is a need for more case studies from the various regions. Also, the CST should work and advise country Parties on the type of case studies/research to undertake, whereby these can be used and be continually evaluated at the CST meetings. By so doing, we will all be involved in lessons learned. Research should also be conducted or focused at all levels, including small island developing States (SIDS), not only the developed countries or countries with large land masses. Most times, the ideas and findings are not applicable for trial in SIDS.”

“The time for discussion at the conference was too short.”

“The conference adopted a format that was adequate to achieve the conference objectives. In addition, it is desirable to: (i) promote multidisciplinary and multi-

level scientific dialogues and panel discussions; and (ii) organize a special gender session or a round table gender dialogue in the framework of the conference.”

“The format was adequate but more emphasis should be put on providing equal participation especially through the chairing of sessions to avoid repeated comments from a few country Parties. Time allocations for different topics should be looked into to provide adequate time for various aspects and (socio-economic and bio-physical) components.”

2. Roles and collaboration between the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology, the secretariat and the consortium in the preparation of the conference

86. The results of the survey of members of the secretariat, DSD and the CST Bureau, as well as of the conference participants, indicate that the secretariat, DSD and the CST Bureau are all seen as having played either an important or a very important role in the preparation of the conference. DSD is seen as having played a more important role than the CST and the secretariat (see figure 4). The same perception was true when the regions and country Parties were asked about the importance of the role that the CST, DSD and the secretariat played in the preparation of the conference, although the variability of the opinions of the respondents about the role of the three organizations was not as wide (see figure 5).

87. One of the survey respondents commented: “Le CST a, selon mon entendement un cadre d’échange et d’examen des efforts scientifiques réalisés dans la mise en œuvre de la UNCCD tandis que la Conférence devrait mettre à la disposition de la UNCCD des solutions adéquates pour lutter contre la dégradation des terres et la désertification.” Translation: “My understanding is that the role of the CST is to exchange and examine the scientific efforts obtained in the implementation of the Convention while the conference should put at the disposal of the UNCCD solutions for combating land degradation and desertification.”

Figure 4

The role of the secretariat, Drylands Science for Development (DSD) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) in the preparation of the conference as perceived by members of the secretariat, DSD and the CST Bureau

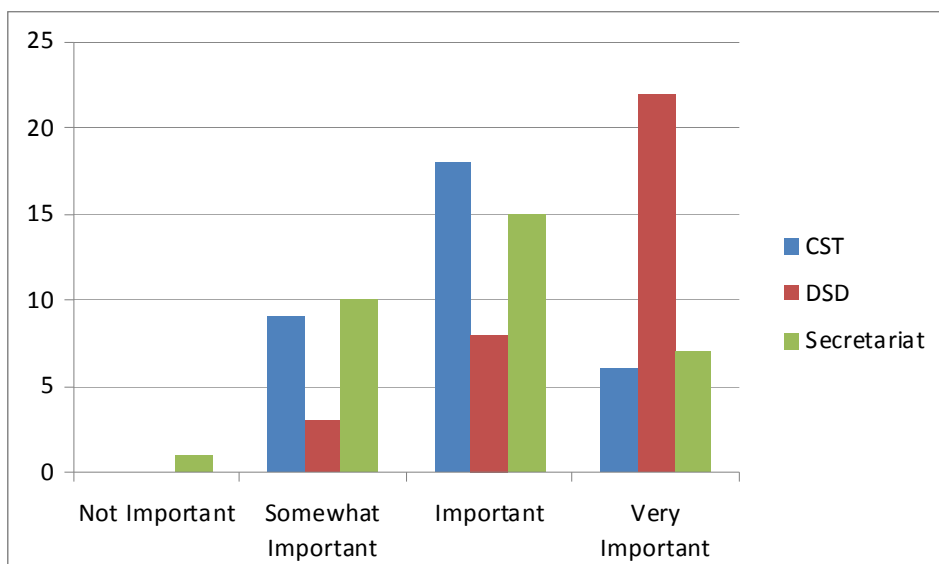
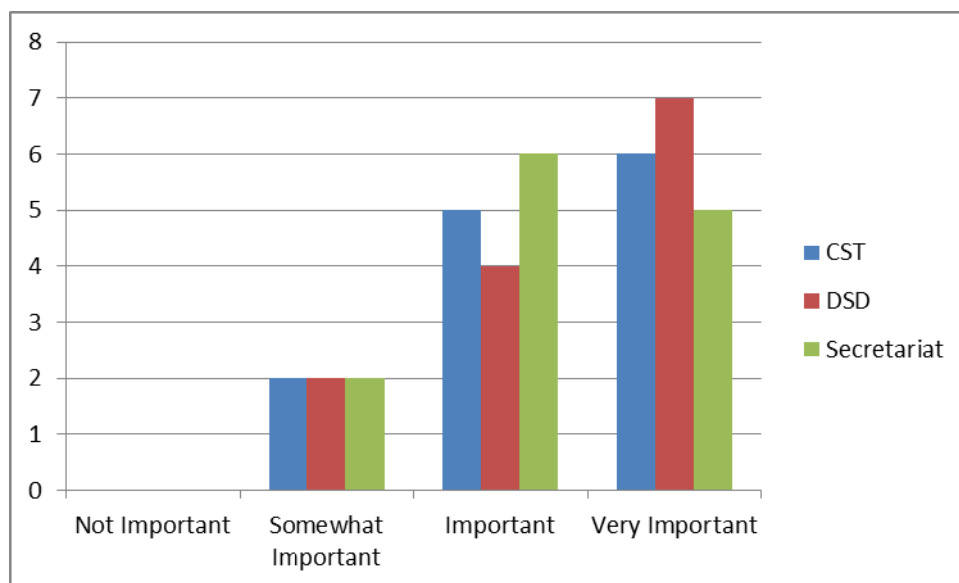


Figure 5
The role of the secretariat, Drylands Science for Development (DSD) and the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) in the preparation of the conference as perceived by the regions and country Parties

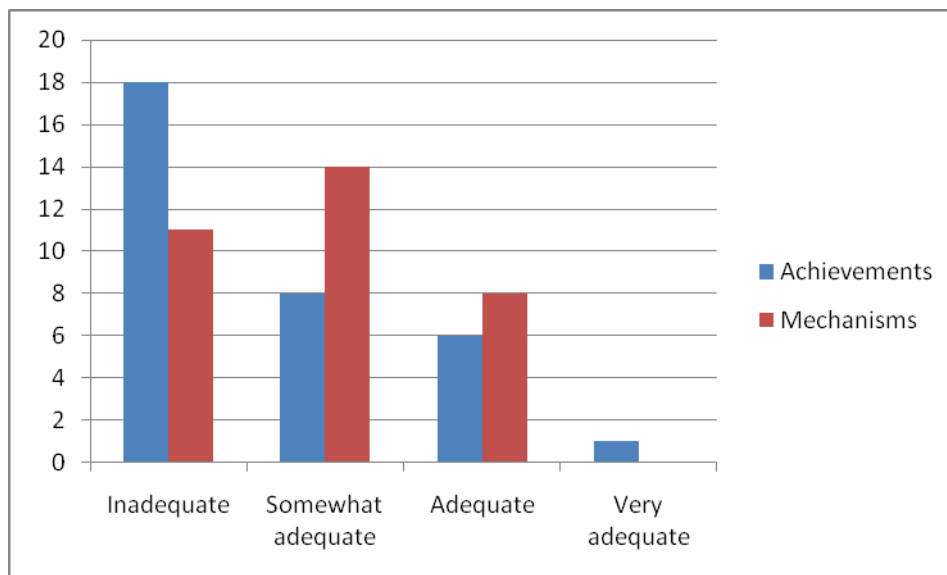


3. Fund-raising mechanisms and achievements

88. The fund-raising mechanisms were not very clear and more could have been achieved if the DSD member institutions had had more time. The lack of clarity in the terms of reference perhaps contributed to the relatively low levels of fund-raising. This was one of the major issues raised by DSD staff members. They had not expected the consortium to be in charge of fund-raising, even though members of the secretariat had from the beginning expected the consortium to raise the funds necessary for the pre-conference preparations and to fund some of the participants from affected country Parties.

89. One member of the secretariat, DSD and CST group commented: “More time should have been given to the institutions to prepare the proposals, in particular to show the fundraising strategy.” As is indicated in figure 6, the majority of the respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST felt that the fundraising mechanisms (23 out of 33 respondents) and achievements (26 out of 33 respondents) were either inadequate or only somewhat inadequate. This view is supported by the interviews with members of the secretariat and DSD.

Figure 6
Assessment of the fund-raising mechanisms and achievements as perceived by members of the secretariat, Drylands Science for Development and the Committee on Science and Technology



90. The funds raised by DSD consisted of in-kind contributions from the DSD member institutions, and financial contributions from these institutions and international donors to support travel and the activities of the working groups. As is indicated in table 20, a total of USD 1,150,800 was raised by DSD member institutions. A more in-depth discussion of the funding raised and its use is presented below.

4. Pre-conference preparations

91. The system of working groups, white papers and e-consultations used by DSD for the pre-conference preparations was adequate. As is discussed in section IV.C.7 below, however, regional participation in the working groups was somewhat disproportionate.

92. Responses to the survey of the secretariat, DSD and the CST indicate that the role of the three working groups was either important or very important. The three working groups received similar evaluations (see figure 7). The responses from the regions and country Parties show that respondents were almost equally divided over what they thought about the role of the three working groups. Four of the 13 respondents thought that the working groups were somewhat important, five thought that they played an important role and four thought that their role was very important (see figure 8).

Figure 7

Opinions of the role of the three working groups: secretariat, Drylands Science for Development and the Committee on Science and Technology

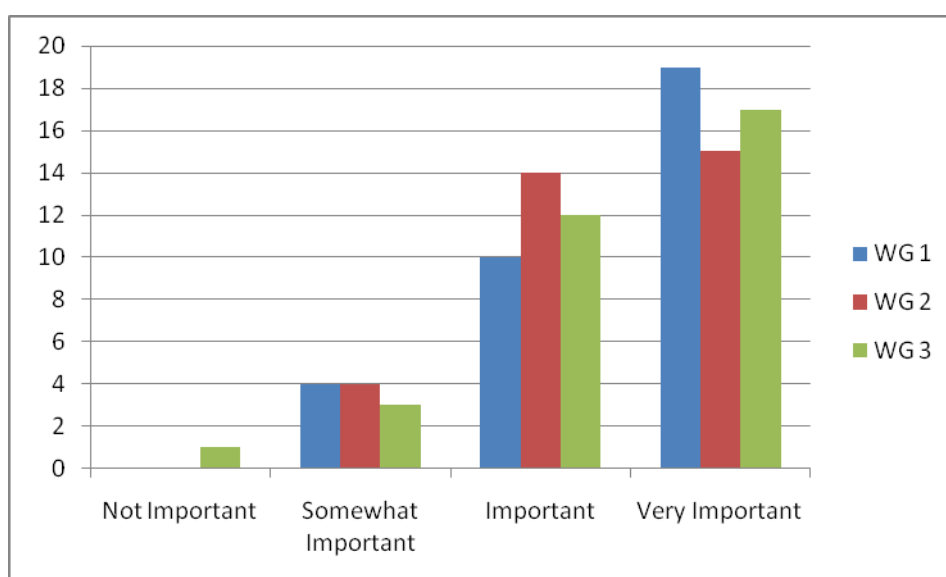
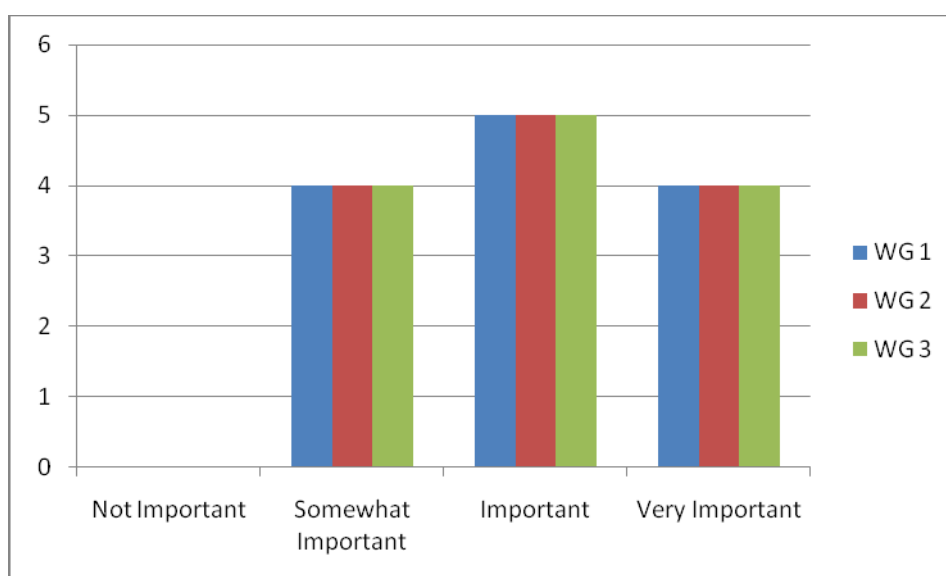


Figure 8

Opinions of the role of the three working groups: regions and country Parties



5. The conference set-up: chairs, moderators, keynote speakers, posters and pre-conference recommendations

a. Conference set-up

93. Some of the comments concerning the conference set-up made by participants in response to the survey are set out below:

“The conference looked like a General Assembly where a determined focus on issues was lacking and in-depth discussion was absent. Participants spoke rather of their own experience and country. Beside the keynote speakers we wish to see representatives of continents or regions presenting case studies and national-inter-regional experience in adapting to and/or mitigating land degradation and desertification (with both successful and unsuccessful stories).”

“The adoption of the conventional scientific mode of paper presentations under subthemes could have enhanced the achievement of the conference objectives.”

b. Chairs, keynote speakers and moderators

94. Most survey respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST felt that the chairs (22 out of 33 respondents), the keynote speakers (25 out of 33 respondents) and the moderators (23 out of 33 respondents) were either focused or very focused on the goals of the Convention during the conference (see figure 9). When conference participants were asked the same question, about half the respondents thought that the chairs (23 out of 46 respondents), keynote speakers (24 out of 46 respondents) and moderators (24 out of 46 respondents) had focused on the goals. The rest of the respondents were almost equally divided between somewhat focused and very focused (figure 10). The response from the country Parties was somewhat similar to that of the conference participants.

Figure 9

Opinions on the degree of focus on the goals of the Convention by the chairs, keynote speakers and moderators: secretariat, Drylands Science for Development and the Committee on Science and Technology

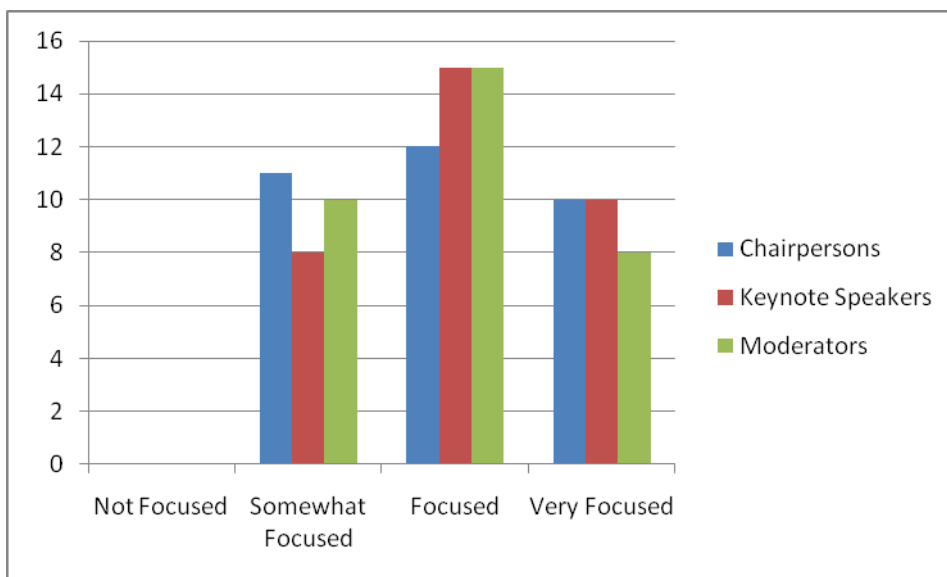
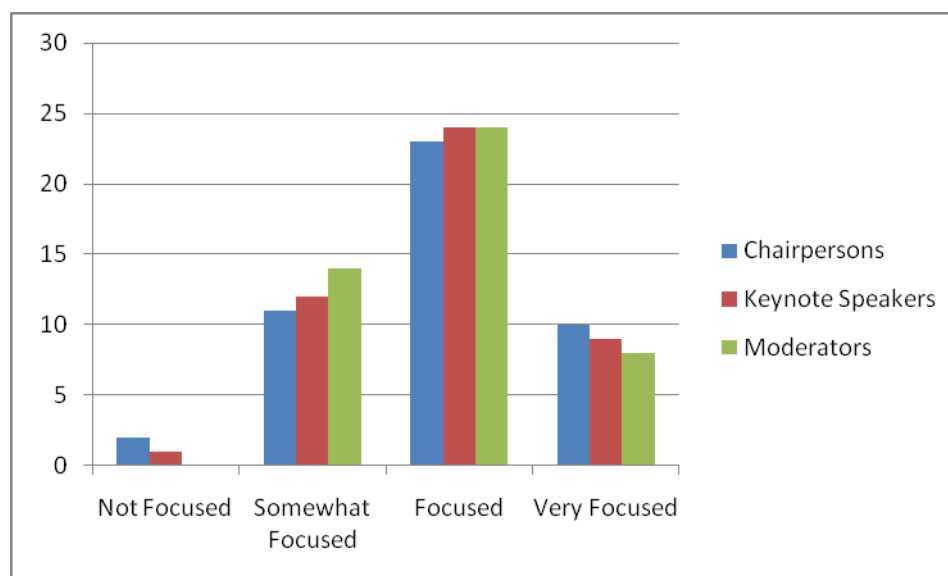


Figure 10

Opinions of conference participants on the degree of focus on the goals of the Convention by the chairpersons, keynote speakers and moderators



c. Poster session

95. Respondents to the survey from the secretariat, DSD and the CST felt that the poster session provided some useful background data, information to the country Parties and proposals for responses to land degradation/desertification (see figure 11). Some conference participants felt that the poster session provided useful background data (21 out of 46 respondents), useful information to the Parties (19 out of 46 respondents) and useful responses to land degradation/desertification (20 out of 46 respondents). However, a large proportion of the respondents among this group felt that the background data, information to the Parties and responses to land degradation/desertification were only somewhat useful (see figure 12). Six respondents among the country Parties (out of 13) felt that the poster session provided somewhat useful background data, information to the Parties and proposals for responses to land degradation/desertification. The other seven respondents in this group thought the poster session either useful or very useful (see figure 13). This is supported by our review of the book of abstracts discussed in the document review above.

96. Most posters dealt with methodologies for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation processes and drivers as well as land rehabilitation and sustainable land management.

97. It should be noted that the poster session venue, a tent, was across the street from the conference venue and as such it did not provide for effective connection between the conference and the poster session.

Figure 11

Opinions on the poster session: secretariat, Drylands Science for Development and the Committee on Science and Technology

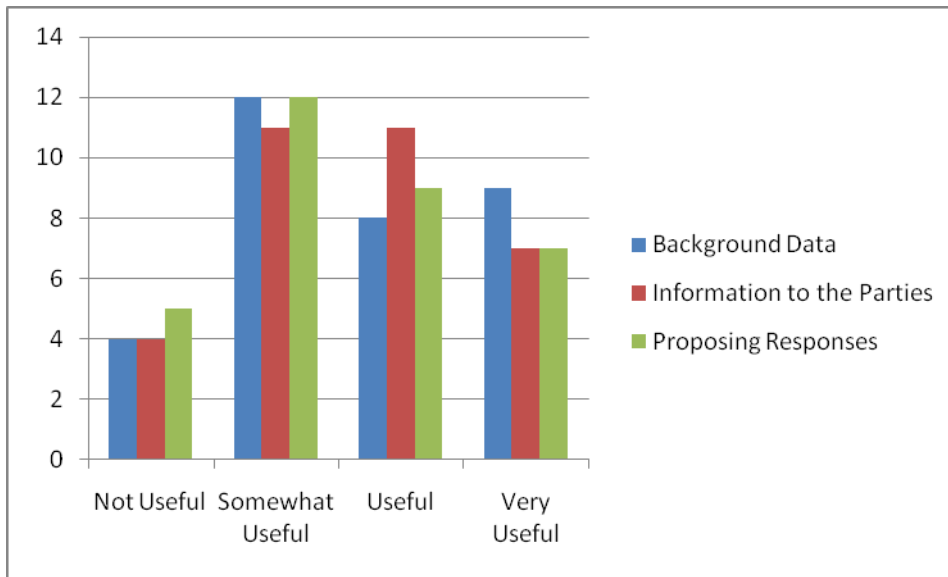


Figure 12

Opinions on the poster session: conference participants

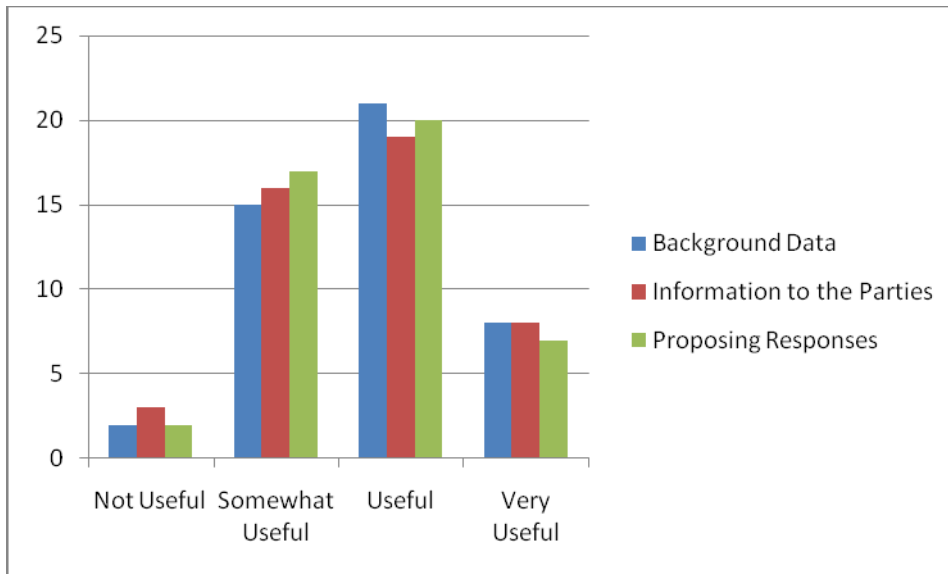
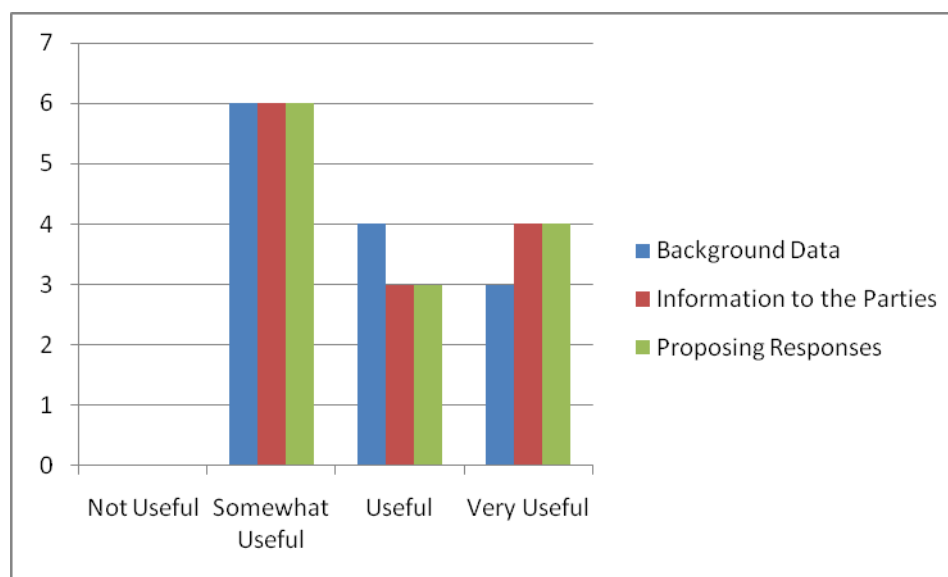


Figure 13
Opinions on the poster session: country Parties



6. The feasibility of the conference as part of an ordinary CST session, including timing and duration

98. This section presents the comments made by survey participants from the three groups.

a. Comments by the secretariat, DSD and the CST

99. On the question of whether the UNCCD Scientific Conferences should be part of an ordinary CST session, eight respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST agreed, two disagreed and most of the remaining respondents provided comments, some of which are shown below. These comments are somewhat divided between those who would like to see the conference held in conjunction with an ordinary CST session and those who would not.

“The conference format adopted was a bit complex for those unfamiliar with United Nations Convention working set-up. I would have preferred the free symposium type of gathering that presents proper scientific papers, discussions, poster sessions, etc.”

“The scientific conference could be part of an ordinary CST session if it is allowed to remain a scientific conference with a scientific flair. Thus, where science comes first and is not hindered by political debates during scientific discussions. Politicians may wish to remember that even their own profession is an object of scientific interest: policy research or political sciences. Thus, scientists will observe and assess how the political arena acts, discusses and implements e.g. science for sustainable dryland development.”

“Yes, it should. The Scientific Conference was the highlight not only of the CST session, but of the entire COP 9. It was a venue for very useful discussion and dialogue.”

“Yes, if there is sufficient time to prepare and the delegates who attend are actually officials and scientists who work on the ground to address land degradation rather than diplomats who do not.”

“I would see it more as an inter-sessional event in order to leave time after a (real, open scientific) conference to digest the science and prepare the translation of it to the CST. CST members should participate but it should not be bound by limiting United Nations meeting regulations.”

“Absolutely, yes. Taking a strong foothold in science is the only way to produce more relevance in the UNCCD.”

“No. I think the conference notion should be replaced by a panel like the IPCC, which serves the UNFCCC, or the currently negotiated International Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) that is due to serve the CBD.”

“In order to avoid the very negative political aspects seen in Buenos Aires, it might be wise to keep the scientific conference separate from the ordinary CST sessions. However, the conference should prepare scientific reviews and produce concise policy recommendations for the CST. The negative side of this approach will be that the participation of national delegates will be more difficult. There might be a budget issue.”

“UNCCD should encourage an independent science body to form to give UNCCD objective advice. It should hold conferences 6 to 12 months before the COP to give time for its recommendations to be studied before the COP. A small panel of scientists should come to the COP to communicate and discuss the conference findings.”

“Too much time wasted in the conference itself on procedural matters and an obvious lack of preparation of delegates in terms of familiarizing themselves with the published work of DSD. Delegates should take this task much more seriously by holding substantive discussions with their scientific communities before the conference. Too many countries paid lip-service or did not consult with their communities beforehand. This suggests an urgent need to produce a more fruitful dialogue within countries. DSD consortium members were surprised at the number of inputs from country scientists that were not known about or solicited by their own country’s delegations. For meaningful inputs the Parties must set up open and transparent dialogues with their scientific communities and not confine their discussions to only the usual UNCCD delegate teams who had, in many cases, not prepared themselves adequately for participation in the conference but rather dominated proceedings by prolonged questioning on procedures that should (and were) made clear before the conference by the UNCCD secretariat. This came across as being of a political nature, especially from the Group of Latin America and Caribbean Countries (GRULAC) that served no constructive purpose but rather achieved the opposite – a negative destructive atmosphere that has discouraged scientists from participating and/or helping the UNCCD achieve its objectives.”

“As a first attempt to change the format and get scientists involved, I think it was a positive step. The CST room has never been full like it was at this conference. And the background preparation showed a lot of scientific attention to the conference agenda. The main shortcomings would be on the side of the Parties and not necessarily the scientists. The Parties should identify specific questions on which they want the scientists to comment and offer policy recommendations. In the absence of this, the scientists will develop suggestions that they find interesting, but may not be relevant to the questions on the agenda for the parties.”

b. *Comments by the conference participants*

100. Of the 19 respondents to the question of whether the UNCCD Scientific Conferences should be part of an ordinary CST session, 17 conference participants agreed and five did not. The rest of the respondents provided comments on this question. Most of the comments argued that a scientific conference should be separate from an ordinary CST session.

“Oui, sur des thèmes précis.” Translation: “Yes, on very specific themes.”

“Une conférence scientifique plus globale peut s'organiser à part.” Translation: “A more global conference could be organized separately.”

“It is desirable to provide a conference both as an ordinary CST session and during the COP. However, the conference as an ordinary CST session should be with wider participation of scientists and representatives of affected countries and regions.”

“It will more useful if it is separate.”

“It should be run by independent international scientific institutions with contributions from national scientific institutions.”

“The scientific conference should be independent of nations or Parties and should not follow the CST format.”

“No, it should be independent.”

“The ordinary CST session and the conference should be held separately.”

“To achieve better results the scientific conference should be organized in its own session.”

c. *Comments by country Parties*

101. Four respondents from the country Parties thought that future UNCCD Scientific Conferences should be part of an ordinary CST session and two did not. Others provided comments:

“Si la conferencia científica tiene el formato de la realizada, no. Si la conferencia científica se conduce con las normas de la Convención, y favorece la articulación entre el sector científico independiente y el sector científico que representa a las partes y con los puntos focales, si debe realizarse en el marco del CST.” Translation: “If the scientific conference is conducted using the format of the first conference then no. If the scientific conference is conducted under the rules of the Convention, favours articulation between the independent scientific sector and the scientific community which represent the country Parties and with the Focal Points then it can be held as part of the CST.”

“But with involvement of Parties.”

“La conférence doit permettre des échanges scientifiques ouverts et la valorisation de l'expertise existante sur une thématique identifiée ; elle doit également permettre d'ouvrir la Convention à l'ensemble de la communauté scientifique et ne doit pas se limiter au cercle des experts « traditionnels » de la désertification ; les sessions ordinaires du CST, qui réunissent les points focaux des pays, ne permettraient pas cela. De plus, il est indispensable d'assurer l'indépendance de la conférence scientifique par rapport aux négociations « politiques.” Translation: “The conference should allow for open scientific exchanges and the valorization of existing expertise on the identified themes, it should also allow the opening of the Convention to the scientific community and should not be limited to a circle of traditional

desertification experts. The ordinary CST sessions that gather the focal points do not allow this. Furthermore, it is crucial to ensure the separation of the conference from the political negotiations.”

“La Conférence Scientifique doit toujours se faire en session spécial.” Translation: “The scientific conference should always be held in special session.”

7. Regional balance and mechanisms to secure the attendance of scientists from affected country Parties

102. The DSD consortium faced challenges in getting members from the different regions to participate in the working groups. Participation in the working groups was by invitation, and unpaid. The latter made it hard to achieve a regional balance within each of the three working groups despite the efforts of the members of the consortium. Budgetary limits existed throughout the planning and organization of the conference, thus, limiting the financial support given to members of working groups. The composition of the working groups was analysed to identify their regional profiles (see table 15).

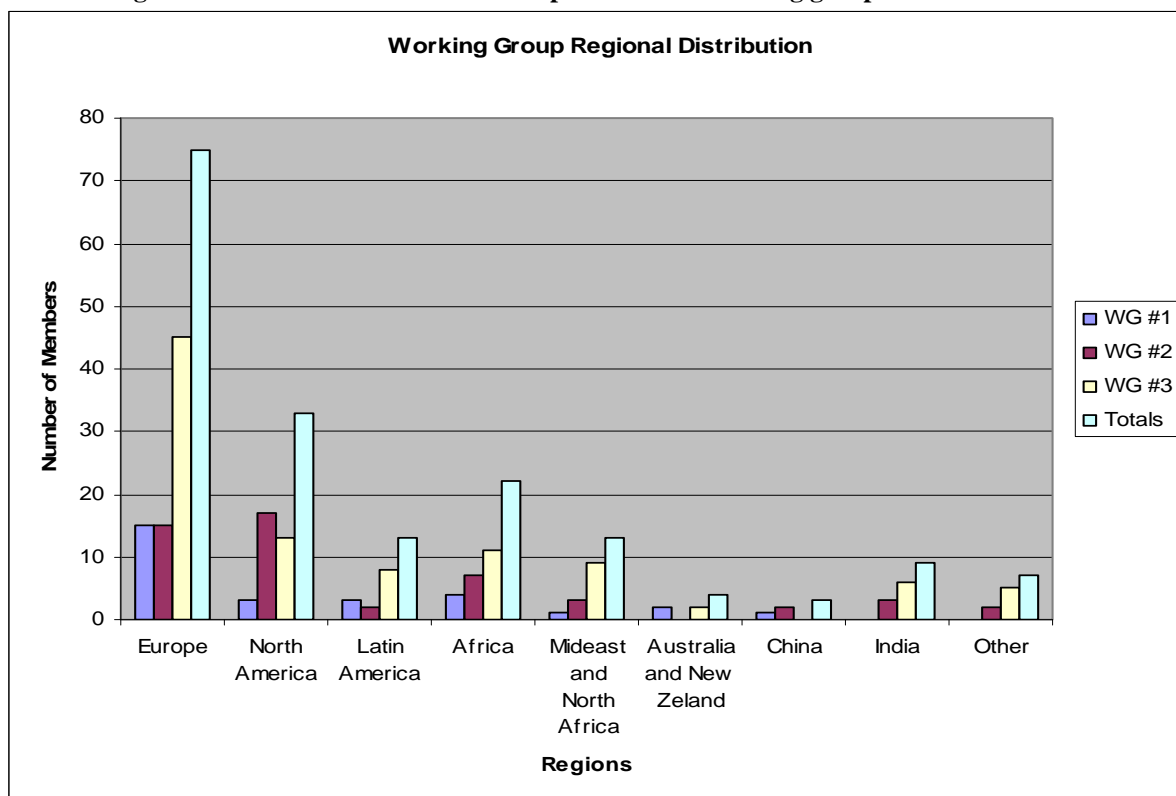
Table 15

Regional distribution of the membership of the three working groups

<i>Region</i>	<i>Working group</i>			<i>Regional Total</i>	<i>Percentage of regional total</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>		
Europe	15	15	45	75	41.9
North America	3	17	13	33	18.4
Latin America	3	2	8	13	7.3
Africa	4	7	11	22	12.3
Middle East and North Africa	1	3	9	13	7.3
Australia and New Zealand	2		2	4	2.2
China	1	2		3	1.7
India		3	6	9	5.0
International organizations		2	5	7	3.9
Total	29	51	99	179	
Percentage of working groups Total	16.2	28.5	55.3		100

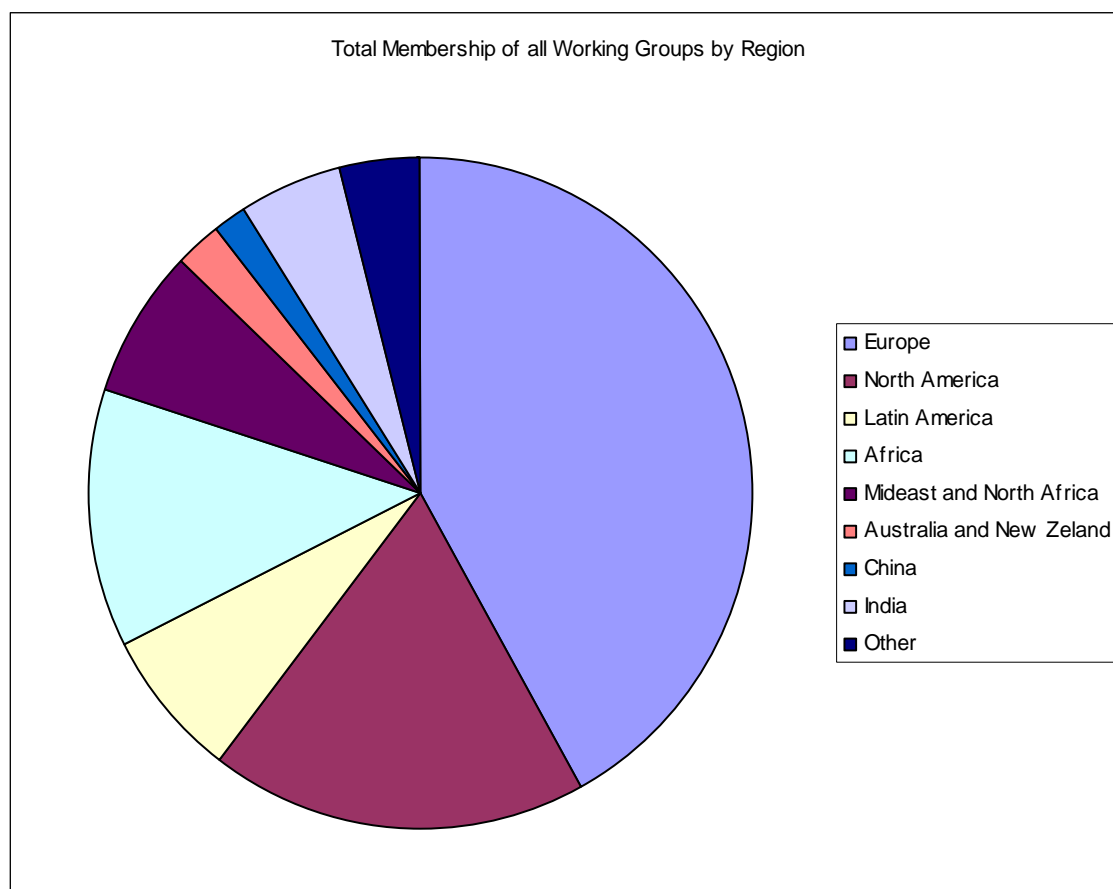
103. As is noted above, working group 1 addressed processes and drivers. Half of its membership was from Europe. North America had the largest level of participation in working group 2, which focused on monitoring and assessment of SLM. Affected regions were under-represented in these two groups. Working group 3 looked at the impacts of economic and social drivers and knowledge management. It was much larger than the other groups with strong European representation but also substantial membership from Africa, the Middle East and South America (see figure 14).

Figure 14
Regional distribution of the membership of the three working groups



104. Overall, the composition of the working groups showed a predominance of European and North American members (108 of a total of 179). Europe contributed about three quarters of the total. Given the importance of land degradation in China and India, these regions were under-represented (see figure 15).

Figure15
Geographical distribution of the membership of the three working groups



8. Gender balance and the mechanisms to secure the attendance of scientists from affected country Parties

105. No mechanisms were used to secure gender balance among the working group participants. The percentages of women scientists involved in the working groups are shown in table 16.

Table 16
Gender breakdown of the membership of the three working groups

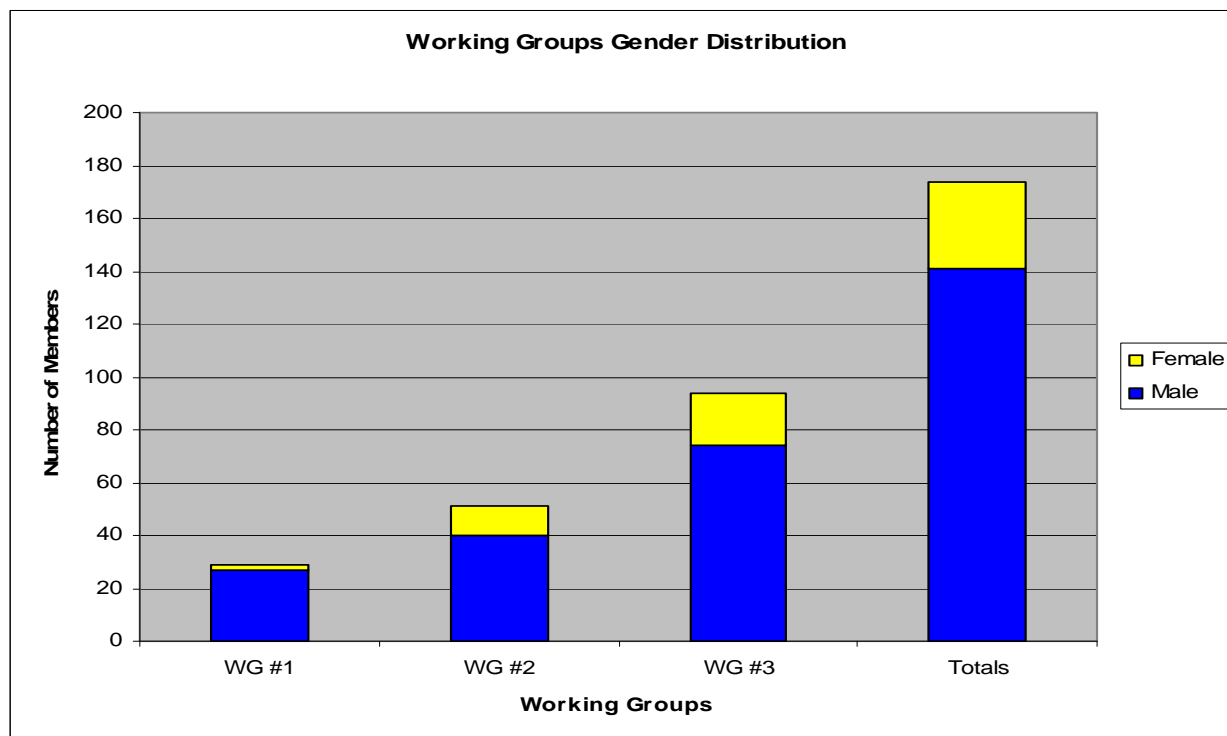
<i>Working group</i>	<i>Number of male scientists</i>	<i>Percentage of male scientists</i>	<i>Number of female scientists</i>	<i>Percentage of female scientists</i>	<i>Total number of scientists</i>
Working group 1	27	93.1	2	6.9	29
Working group 2	40	78.4	11	21.6	51
Working group 3	74	78.7	20	21.3	94
Totals	141	81.0	33	19.0	174^a

^a The gender of five scientists could not be identified.

106. The three working groups were male dominated, working group 1 in particular. This may be due to the recruitment methods or be merely a mirror of the gender imbalance in the field (figure 16).

Figure 16

Gender breakdown of the membership of the three working groups



D. Results of the conference

107. The major objectives of the conference were effectively and efficiently achieved given the short time frame for the preparation of the conference. We feel that the conference was able to bring the necessary scientific expertise on board, and to produce sound scientific outputs to inform decision-making. The areas to which the conference contributed are highlighted below.

1. Scientific outputs and discussion

108. The survey results show that a large number (21 out of 46) of the respondents from the conference participants' group felt that the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference resulted in somewhat sound scientific outputs and discussion. The majority of the respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST were equally divided between those who believed the conference produced either sound scientific outputs (12 respondents) or good scientific outputs (13 respondents). The responses of the country Parties were somewhat divided among three categories (figure 17).

109. When asked whether they felt the conference produced sound scientific outputs to inform decision makers, the conference participants were equally divided between the three categories of somewhat sound, sound and good scientific output, as were the respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST. The response from the country Parties was slightly

different; seven of the 13 respondents felt that the conference produced only somewhat sound scientific outputs (see figure 18).

Figure 17

Soundness of the scientific outputs and the discussion produced by the conference

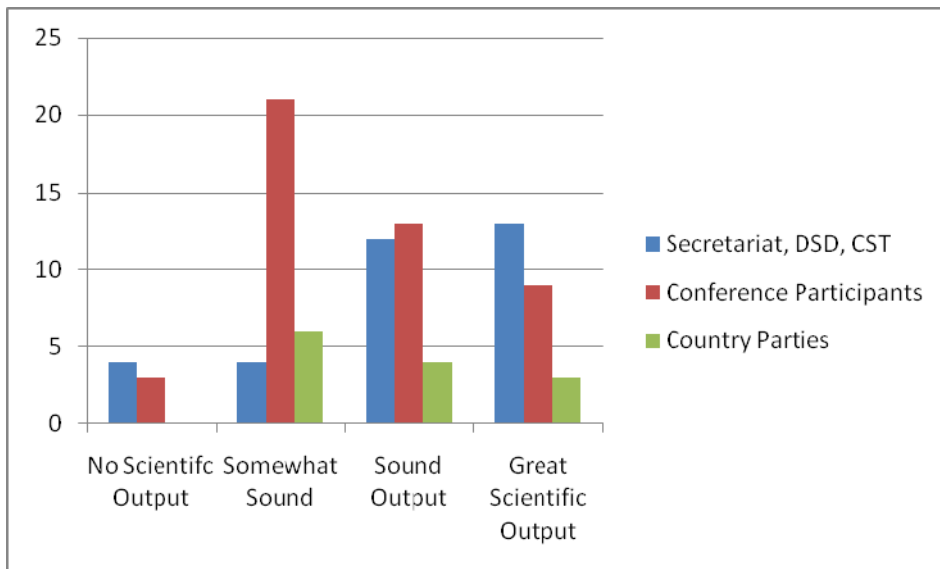
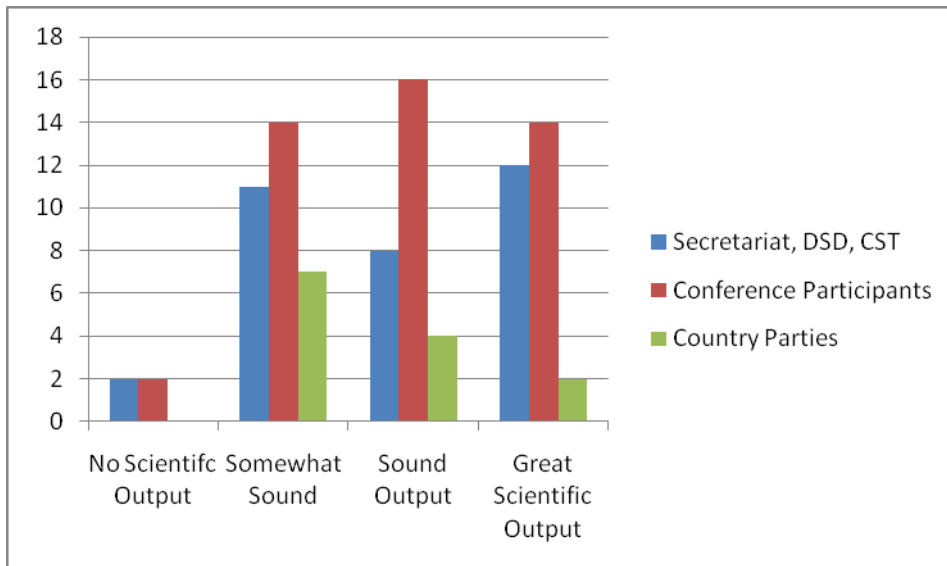


Figure 18

Soundness of the scientific outputs to inform decision makers produced by the conference



110. Based on the work of the three working groups and the resultant white papers, our assessment shows that the conference directly addressed the main scientific goals. The plenary presentations and the posters brought additional material, including case studies and field examples, to further illustrate the specific scientific goals. The working papers are still in draft form and need to be finalized and made more generally available. However, in

early 2010, the white paper of working group 3 was published in the UNU Desertification Series No. 9 and is available at <http://www.european-desertnet.org/docs/DSD-WG3_WP_final_web_with-cover.pdf>. In addition, it is understood that an upcoming special issue of *Land Degradation and Development* will include significant components of the scientific outputs.

2. Policy-oriented dialogue and recommendations

111. The conference produced a set of 11 key recommendations or messages. All of them are valuable messages but the three below are more directly policy-oriented:

(a) 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 which would include (but not be limited to) monitoring and assessment, with clear channels for consideration of its advice in Convention decision-making;

(b) In order to propel principles into action, regular global DLDD/SLM monitoring and assessment and early warning mechanisms should be organized and implemented based on agreed standards protocols, as well as open data access policies, to harmonize with other efforts worldwide and to minimize duplication of effort;

(c) The UNCCD community would benefit from a science networking mechanism so that the large yet dispersed body of DLDD/SLM knowledge and expertise worldwide could be more effectively accessed, used and shared.

112. The conclusion is that policy is mainly addressed at the broader levels. Additional steps may be needed to move other findings to the policy and action levels.

3. COP 8 recommendations and the consortium's terms of reference

113. The terms of reference for the consortium state "the CST conference is expected to produce sound scientific outputs and policy-oriented recommendations based on the analysis and compilation of peer-reviewed and published literature that informs policy formulation and dialogue at the Conference of the Parties. This would also provide a clear picture of available options and possible solutions to the questions of decision makers on monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation." The scientific conference fulfilled the major expectations outlined in these general guidelines. Given the short time frame for preparing the conference, DSD did an excellent job.

E. Achievement of the outputs and activities

114. The conference outcomes were consistent with The Strategy and the framework of the UNCCD. However, these outcomes are not all concentrated in one place. For example, some of the documents, such as the white papers, are still on the DSD website and have not been finalized. More detailed examination was undertaken of some of the specific outputs and activities of the conference.

1. Impact in producing sound scientific outputs and policy-orientated recommendations

115. The conference produced sound scientific outputs and policy-orientated recommendations, mainly in the form of a synthesis of current scientific knowledge of the topic illustrated by some (albeit too few) specific case studies. Given the time frame, this was a major achievement. The science and the policy-oriented recommendations were not useful at the global or regional levels, however, although some of the specific

recommendations, particularly from working group 3, were relevant at the country and local levels.

2. Effectiveness of the synthesis and wrap-up session

116. The synthesis and wrap up session was useful, but several new topics of discussion were raised and due to time constraints these could not all be addressed.

3. Contribution to the establishment of an international, interdisciplinary scientific mechanism to advise the UNCCD

117. It does not appear that the conference contributed to the establishment of an international, interdisciplinary scientific mechanism to advise the UNCCD. However, it has contributed to initiating a discussion on the importance of such a mechanism, and laid the groundwork for the establishment of such a mechanism.

118. It is now necessary to get the CST to endorse this concept and convene a small working group made up of representatives from the CST, the secretariat and scientists to map out specific details and options for how this might work and what it might cost, as well as a timetable for moving forward.

4. Regional and global benefits of the conference

119. The conference was obviously of benefit to Argentina and South America in general as it highlighted the importance of land degradation and desertification there and allowed a good level of participation by local scientists.

120. It is more difficult to assess the global benefits at this time and much will depend on the follow-up, the distribution of papers and the implementation of the conference recommendations.

5. Extent of the conference's contribution to local, subregional, regional and global networking

121. The conference made some contribution to networking, particularly at the global scale, but this is difficult to quantify or assess at this time.

6. Effectiveness of the distribution of the outcomes of the conference

122. The distribution of the outcomes of the conference was not very effective, although it is too soon to assess the final distribution. The proceedings have not been finalized at the time of writing. Most of the documents are still posted on the DSD website. It is important that the conference documents (working papers, etc.) are moved to the UNCCD website. As is noted above, a special issue of *Land Degradation and Development* is expected to present the conference findings. Until then, websites that are not easily accessible remain the main vehicle for dissemination.

F. Ownership

123. To address the ownership issues relating to the conference, we examined the mechanisms used to secure regional and gender balance and their effectiveness. This analysis covered the regional balance and gender balance among the working groups and the conference participants. In addition, we examined the involvement in the conference of CSOs, for example, whether they were given appropriate room during the preparatory phase and during the conference. Our findings and survey results are presented below.

1. Conference participants: regional balance

124. The mechanisms used to secure regional balance in the conference attendance were not obvious from the investigation we conducted. It should be noted that not all the participants registered. It was therefore difficult to determine the exact number of people who attended the conference. However, from the partial list we obtained from the UNCCD secretariat we were able to assess the regional distribution of the participants who did register at the conference.

125. A similar number of conference participants came from Europe (45) and Africa (44). Participants from the Americas were the largest group, mainly because of the 21 participants from Argentina – the host country (see table 187). Participants from Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, and the Pacific region were less well represented with 34, 14, and 3 attendees, respectively.

Table 17

Regional distribution of the conference participants

<i>Regions (and others)</i>	<i>Countries</i>
Europe (45 participants)	Albania (2), Belgium (3), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1), Bulgaria (1), Finland (1), France (6), Germany (6), Italy (7), Netherlands (2), Norway (2), Portugal (2), Slovakia (1), Slovenia (1), Sweden (1), Switzerland (2), United Kingdom (7)
Africa (44 participants)	Benin (1), Burkina Faso (5), Burundi (1), Cape Verde (1), Comoros (1), Democratic Republic of the Congo (2), Congo (1), Ethiopia (1), Gambia (1), Ghana (1), Guinea (1), Kenya (2), Lesotho (1), Mali (1), Namibia (1), Nigeria (4), Senegal (3), South Africa (7), United Republic of Tanzania (4), Zambia (4), Zimbabwe (1)
Middle East and North Africa (14 participants)	Egypt (1), Lebanon (2), Morocco (1), Palestinian Territories (1), Qatar (2), Saudi Arabia (2), Syrian Arab Republic (1), Tunisia (3), Yemen (1),
Asia (34 participants)	Bangladesh (1), Belarus (1), Bhutan (1), Cambodia (1), Cameroon (1), China (7), India (1), Indonesia (1), Iran (1), Japan (2), Mongolia (1), Nepal (1), Pakistan (1), Philippines (3), Republic of Korea (2), Russian Federation (1), Solomon Islands (1), Sri Lanka (1), Thailand (2), Turkey (1), Ukraine (1), Uzbekistan (1), Viet Nam (1)
North, South and Latin America (57 participants)	Argentina (21), Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (2), Brazil (6), Canada (5), Chile (5), Columbia (1), Cuba (1), Guyana (1), Honduras (1), Mexico (1), Nicaragua (1), Panama (1), United States (10), Uruguay (1)
Pacific region (3)	Australia (1), Cook Islands (1), Fiji (1)
International organizations (20)	20

Funding of conference participants

126. A total of 25 participants were funded by UNCCD (see table 18). ICRISAT funded 14 participants (see table 19). Overall, with the support of the UNCCD and ICRISAT, 16 funded participants came from Africa, 15 from Asia, 5 from Latin America and 3 from Europe.

127. Scientists from the following countries sought support from ICRISAT but did not receive it: Burkina Faso (1), India (1), Germany (1), Brazil (1) and United Republic of Tanzania but working in the United States of America (1).

Table 18

Conference participants funded by the UNCCD

<i>Region</i>	<i>Number (percentage) of UNCCD participants funded</i>	<i>Country of origin of UNCCD funded participants^a</i>
Africa	10 (40)	Cameroon (1), Chad (1) , Congo (1), Cuba (1), Namibia (1), Nigeria (1), Senegal (1), Sudan (1) , Tunisia (1), Zambia (1)
Asia	9 (36)	China (1), India (1), Jordan (1), Pakistan (1), Philippines (1), Thailand (1), Uzbekistan (1), Viet Nam (2)
Latin America	5 (20)	Argentina (1), Bolivia (Plurinational State of) (1), Chile (1), Columbia (1), Nicaragua (1)
Europe	1 (4)	Albania (1)
Total	25	

^a Countries shown in bold indicate the nationalities of the participants and not their place of work.

Table 19

Conference participants funded by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Number (percentage) of ICRISAT funded participants</i>	<i>Country of origin of ICRISAT funded participants^a</i>
Africa	6 (43)	Kenya (2) , Mali (1), Nigeria (1), Senegal (1), Zimbabwe (1),
Asia	6 (43)	China (1), India (2), Philippines (1), Thailand (1), Viet Nam (1),
Europe	2 (14)	Germany (1) , Switzerland (1)

^a Countries shown in bold indicate the nationalities of the participants and not their place of work.

2. Conference participants: gender balance

128. There were no apparent mechanisms to secure gender balance among the conference attendees. As a result, 168 of the 221 participants (76 per cent) were male. However, respondents from the regions and country Parties thought that there was a good gender balance. Comments by the respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST are shown below.

“Improve the gender balance in the educational and scientific world relating to this subject matter.”

“Difficult as there is probably no gender balance in the interest in the subject.”

“Not sure, difficult question particularly for the least developed countries”

“Wider consultation with key players for suggestions.”

“Not easy to manage, technical as well as cultural aspects concur and influence. Perhaps a stronger gender balance policy in the secretariat is a good start.”

“No idea – fewer female scientists work in the drylands. Turn question around – is there a gender balance in the UNCCD focal points?”

“Competitive funding streams targeted to support female researchers.”

“Yes, the country Parties can provide some advice.”

“Forget gender balance, look for good science.”

“To flag the issue of gender and desertification as one ‘white paper’”

“The word gender in the white papers is only mentioned once, the word woman never. This of course does not simply refer to the terms themselves, but also to the concerns of women/gender relations, which are actually power relations, themselves. For instance, in [the country] where I work, gender relations are the main cause for desertification because men cut all the wood for qat (*Catha edulis*) consumption, to put it in a simple way.”

“Use gender as a criterion when contacting/selecting people for working groups, authors etc.”

“Linkages with professional women’s associations and UNIFEM.”

3. Participation of civil society organizations

129. There was some CSO and NGO participation during the preparatory phase of the conference and during the conference as well. However, this participation was not widespread. It was difficult to assess the extent of CSO and NGO participation in the scientific conference given that some people did not register for the conference.

G. Financial planning

130. It should be pointed out that DSD did not receive any funding from the UNCCD secretariat or any other UNCCD bodies to organize the conference. Thus, all the expenses relating to the organization of the conference were paid by the consortium member institutions and the donors listed in table 20. It was never the intention of the UNCCD secretariat to provide any financial support to the selected institution.

131. According to DSD, its expenditures were USD 1,150,800, of which USD 803,800 (69.8 per cent) was provided by the five DSD core institutions and USD 347,000 (30.2 per cent) by donors. The contributions from outside the DSD consortium were limited to funds provided by four entities: IFAD (7.0 per cent), the Convention Project to Combat Desertification (CCD Project) of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH acting on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) (3.7 per cent), the GTZ and the Government of Germany restricted core programme (6.5 per cent), and UNEP/GEF (13 per cent) (see table 20).

132. Travel (flight tickets) and hotel accommodation expenses for a limited number of participants to attend the two working group 3 workshops and for enabling the participation of lead authors to the conference in Buenos Aires came from the GTZ CCD Project funds mentioned above.

133. The DSD does not distinguish between cash and other forms of expenditure. It is cash that must be paid for scientists’ time, travel and contributions, regardless of whether it

was sourced from donors or institutions. The activities of the working groups accounted for 53 per cent of total DSD expenditure, followed by the conference planning and organization (24.2 per cent) and spending on the conference event itself (22.8 per cent). This is in line with what one would expect for such an event: more money is spent on generating the conference content than on the other aspects of the conference.

134. Despite the issues faced by the secretariat, the CST and DSD in the preparation and the organization of the conference, the collaboration between the three groups resulted in an efficient use of the funds raised. Given more time, it would have been possible to raise more funds from other sources and get more stakeholders to provide financial support for the organization of the conference.

Table 20
Drylands Science for Development (DSD) fund-raising achievements and expenditures relating to the organization of the conference by each of the member organizations
 (in United States dollars)

<i>Item</i>	<i>DNet</i>	<i>ICARDA</i>	<i>ICRISAT</i>	<i>JRC/IES</i>	<i>UNU</i>	<i>Total</i>
EXPENDITURES						
Conference planning and organization						
Three planning meetings; travel and accommodation costs	2 000	2 000	3 000	5 000	9 000	21 000
Scientist time ^a	40 000	44 500		3 000	24 000	111 500
Website				21 000		21 000
Coordination	5 000	3 000	70 000	5 000	5 800	88 800
Administrative support	1 500	1 500	25 000	3 000	5 000	36 000
Subtotal	48 500	51 000	98 000	37 000	43 800	278 300
Working group activities						
Two working group meetings: travel and accommodation costs including invited participants	30 000	5 000	60 000	40 000	12 000	147 000
One DSD consolidation meeting (Ispra): travel and accommodation costs	3 000	3 000	4 000	2 000		12 000
Scientist time ^a	100 000	7 000	70 000	168 000	50 000	395 000

<i>Item</i>	<i>DNet</i>	<i>ICARDA</i>	<i>ICRISAT</i>	<i>JRC/IES</i>	<i>UNU</i>	<i>Total</i>
Administrative support	5 000	1 500	7 000	10 000	5 000	28 500
White paper publication			11 000	10 000	7 000	28 000
Sub total	138 000	16 500	152 000	230 000	74 000	610 500
Conference event						
Travel and accommodation, Buenos Aires (working group members, keynote speakers, session chairs, administrative staff, partners)	14 000	6 000	104 000	21 000	18 000	163 000
Scientist time ^a	9 000	7 000	14 000	9 000	9 000	48 000
Administrative support	500	1 500	10 000	1 000	3 000	16 000
Publications (proceedings, brochure, executive summaries)	1 000	1 000	30 000	1 000	2 000	35 000
Subtotal	24 500	15 500	158 000	32 000	32 000	262 000
Total expenditures by institution	211 000	83 000	408 000	299 000	149 800	1 150 800
FINANCIAL SUPPORT						
Donor support to DSD institutions						
CCD Project of GTZ (Germany)	42 000					42 000
GTZ and Government of Germany restricted core			75 000			75 000
UNEP/GEF			150 000			150 000
IFAD			80 000			80 000
Subtotal donor support	42 000		305 000			347 000
Contributions by DSD institutions	169 000	83 000	103 000	299 000	149 800	803 800
Total contributions	211 000	83 000	408 000	299 000	149 800	1 150 800

Note: This table does not include expenditure by the UNCCD secretariat.

^a Scientist time valued at USD 14,000 per scientist-month.

^b The financial information in the table 21 and the background material for the next section was provided mainly by Mark Winslow, DSD Consortium Coordinator. His contribution provides a good overview of the conference preparation timeline and some of the problems encountered as well as highlights the work done by DSD during the preparation process.

H. Time frame

1. Conference preparation timeline

135. The conference organization process took place over a 12-month period from September 2008 to September 2009. Review and approval of DSD's proposals by the CST took place in September to December 2008. Under the approved plan, three working groups were formed in early 2009 based on a referral network fostered by DSD member institutions, attracting leading experts and encouraging regional and disciplinary diversity. At the same time, fund-raising activities were pursued by DSD member institutions to enable the working groups to undertake their essential functions. About 180 scientists representing all the UNCCD regions were involved in working group activities (see table 15). The three working groups held seven meetings as well as intensive online discussions, and prepared three analytical white papers. The time frame for the working groups to prepare the white papers was very short because they had only about four months from the first meeting to the time the white papers were posted online for global consultations in August 2009.

136. In the months leading up to the conference, the first two drafts of the white papers were posted on the Internet and feedback was invited through e-consultations from the global scientific community (May to June and August to October 2009). A summary of the emerging conclusions in the form of a discussion brief was tabled at the regional meetings of UNCCD Parties organized by the UNCCD secretariat in June–July 2009. Taking feedback from the white papers and the discussion brief into account, two iterations of draft recommendations for submission to the CST were posted online for review by the UNCCD community in August and September 2009. During the conference, each working group led a session consisting of keynote speaker presentations and open discussions with conference participants, who included members of the delegations of the Parties to the Convention, working group members and other scientists, as well as interested stakeholders. Feedback from these conference interactions was considered carefully in drafting the final synthesis and recommendations document, which was submitted to the CST on 25 September 2009 (ICCD/COP(9)/CST/INF.3). The final synthesis and recommendations document generated by DSD was thus a product of five stages of public review and revision: two white paper drafts, the discussion brief and two drafts of the synthesis and recommendations.

137. A poster session and competition was organized in parallel with the process outlined above. After the conference, summaries of the posters were formatted for publication. In addition, two public awareness documents were drafted by DSD for the UNCCD secretariat, one for use during COP 15 of the UNFCCC in Copenhagen in December 2009, and a set of illustrated slides to summarize the process and the synthesis and recommendations for the general public (March 2010). Intensive efforts continued during 2010 to finalize and publish the conference proceedings, the white papers and a special issue of the scientific journal *Land Degradation and Development* with 12 focus articles on the key topics discussed at the conference to be published in late 2010 or early 2011.

138. Table 21 gives a full picture of the conference preparation process. It includes information from the selection process timeline shown in table 14.

Table 21
Conference preparation timeline

<i>September 2007</i>	<i>COP 8 decision to organize the conference</i>
February 2008	Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) agrees the content of the call for expressions of interest (CEI)
30 April 2008	Deadline for CEI submissions
9 July 2008	Drylands Science for Development (DSD) informed of its selection as lead consortium for conference organization
October 2008	DSD submits a cost proposal to the CST Bureau
31 October 2008	DSD website up and running on the Internet
4–7 November 2008	CST-1/CRIC, Istanbul, Turkey: DSD participates in CST Bureau meeting; conference proposal and budget approved; DSD brochure written and circulated
10 December 2008	Funding support achieved by DesertNet from GTZ CCD project for working group 3
December 2008 and January to March 2009	Recruit eminent scientists to participate in working groups on a voluntary basis
3 February 2009	First announcement of conference provided by DSD to UNCCD secretariat for joint publication and worldwide dissemination (published on UNCCD website on 6 February 2009)
27 February 2009	DSD participates in UNCCD secretariat/Heinz Center workshop in Washington, DC, to gain support of United States desertification scientists
4–5 March 2009	DSD provides progress report at CST Bureau meeting, Bonn, Germany
12–14 March 2009	Working group 3 first meeting, Hamburg, Germany
March 2009	Conference Road Map provided and published on UNCCD website
March 2009	Worldwide call for competitive poster summaries
2–3 April 2009	Working group 1 first meeting, Joint Research Centre (JRC), Ispra, Italy
20 April 2009	Elaboration of opportunities to participate in conference provided by DSD to UNCCD secretariat for posting on website
22–23 April 2009	Working group 2 first meeting, Bonn
8 May 2009	Update on conference progress for public dissemination provided by DSD to UNCCD secretariat
12 May 2009	DSD provides views on planning for future conferences in response to CST request
14 May 2009	Funding support achieved by ICRISAT from IFAD for working group 2
18 May to 12 June 2009	First draft white papers placed on the Internet; global feedback invited
May 2009	Approval received by ICRISAT from UNEP to apply de-pipelined UNEP-GEF funds to support conference organization
May 2009	Approval of winning posters, and request to selected applicants to submit poster abstracts
25–26 May 2009	DSD provides progress report to CST Bureau meeting, Bonn
15–16 June 2009	Working group 1 second meeting, JRC Ispra, Italy

<i>September 2007</i>	<i>COP 8 decision to organize the conference</i>
24 June 2009	Discussion briefing on emerging findings provided to UNCCD secretariat for consultation with and feedback from the regions during UNCCD regional meetings in late June and July
30 June to 1 July 2009	Working group 3 second meeting, Hamburg, Germany
Late June 2009	Winning posters selected, authors notified; partnership with Argentinean scientists formed to review and approve posters
2–3 July 2009	Working group 2 second meeting, Bonn
22–24 July 2009	Cross-working group synthesis meeting, Ispra
July 2009	Registration form for conference posted on the UNCCD website and widely publicized for individuals from non-UNCCD accredited institutions
July 2009	DSD prepares a proposal to assist the UNCCD in seeking funds from IFAD to increase developing country participation
July–Sept 2009	Second draft white papers completed and placed on DSD website; global feedback invited
Late July 2009	ICRISAT achieves funding from GTZ/BMZ to bring 26 developing country partners to the conference
End July 2009	Details of working group membership provided to the UNCCD secretariat and posted on the UNCCD website
1 August 2009 to early September 2009	Second drafts of the three working group white papers posted by DSD on the Internet for global feedback
6 August 2009	Draft synthesis and recommendations paper provided to the UNCCD secretariat for translation, and global circulation to obtain feedback
9 August 2009	Contract signed with DSD
August 2009	Funding received by the UNCCD secretariat from IFAD based on DSD proposal to bring additional developing country science partners
31 August 2009	DSD participates in second meeting convened by the UNCCD secretariat to engage United States scientists, Ft. Collins, Colorado, United States
1 September 2009	DSD meets with the UNCCD secretariat in Bonn to finalize conference plans and receive feedback on the first draft of the synthesis and recommendations
September 2009	Intensive logistical and funding assistance provided by DSD to participants, and arrangements made for the conference
11 September 2009	Revised draft synthesis and recommendations prepared by DSD and submitted to the CST and the UNCCD secretariat for distribution in preparation for the conference
18 September 2009	Summaries of the deliberations of the three working groups prepared by DSD and provided to the UNCCD secretariat for printing and distribution at the conference
15 September to 2 October 2009	DSD travels to Buenos Aires for conference preparations and follow-up
22–24 September 2009	Conference event organized and led by DSD
25 September 2009	Final version of conference synthesis and recommendations prepared by DSD and provided to the UNCCD secretariat for provision to the CST
26–29 September 2009	DSD participates in contact group and other CST consultations on conference outcomes

<i>September 2007</i>	<i>COP 8 decision to organize the conference</i>
October 2009 and continuing throughout 2010	Continuing work by DSD on white papers, conference proceedings and special issue of the scientific journal <i>Land Degradation and Development</i> on the conference topic; drafts posted on DSD website; working group 3 published findings in hard copy by UNU-INWEH
20 November 2009	Attractive summary briefing of conference outcomes ('Land Matters') prepared by DSD as a handout to be distributed at UNFCCC COP in Copenhagen
3 February 2010	DSD presents and publishes paper on opportunities for UNCCD–CBD harmonization at conference on 'Indicators to 2010 in Trondheim, Norway
18 February 2010	Draft conference proceedings prepared by DSD and provided to the UNCCD secretariat The white paper from working group 3 was published in the UNU desertification Series N. 9 and is available at: < http://www.european-desertnet.org/docs/DSD-WG3 >
2 March 2010	DSD participates in CST Bureau meeting, Bonn, to review and advise on conference outcomes and lessons
8 March 2010	Popular illustrated summary of conference outcomes prepared by DSD and provided to the UNCCD secretariat for posting on the UNCCD website
Late October and November 2010	Online version of <i>Land Degradation and Development</i> special issue on the conference to be published; hard copy to follow in early 2011

2. Conference duration and timing

139. The majority of the stakeholders thought that the conference duration was either somewhat short or just right. Only 8 out of 33 respondents from the secretariat, DSD and CST and 8 out of 46 respondents from among the conference participants thought that the conference was too short. A total of 6 respondents from the three groups thought that the conference was too long (see figure 19).

140. The majority of the respondents from the three groups thought that the timing of the conference was appropriate. Fifteen out of 33, 29 out of 46 and 8 out of 13 respondents from the secretariat, DSD and the CST, the conference participants, and the country Parties, respectively, thought that the conference timing was appropriate (see figure 20).

Figure 19.
Survey responses by the three stakeholder groups regarding the duration of the conference

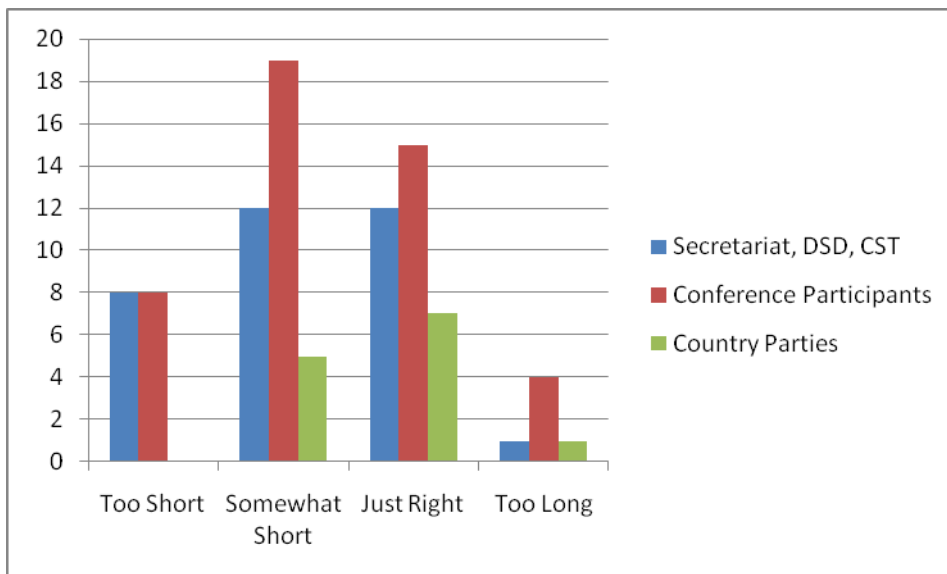
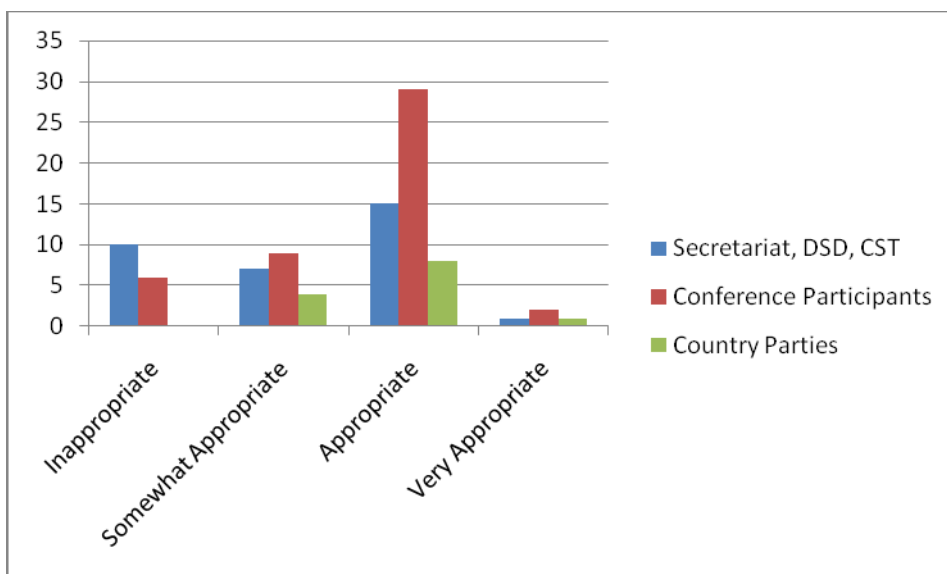


Figure 20
Survey responses by the three stakeholder groups regarding the timing of the conference



IV. Summary and recommendations

A. Summary

141. Our assessment shows that there were some issues with the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference. It took a tremendous amount of work for all the entities

involved to organize the conference in such a short period of time. Considering the short timeline, DSD consortium members did a great job in preparing the conference. The working groups contributed a great deal to the overall scientific content of the conference despite the lack of funds. The participants appreciated this first opportunity to discuss scientific issues relating to desertification and land degradation.

142. Most of the stakeholders agreed that although the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference was a success, they would like to see some changes in the future in order to improve both the format and the content. The participants in the face-to-face interviews and the respondents to the online survey raised issues relating to the timing of the conference, the format of the conference and fund-raising. Issues relating to the planning of the conference were also raised by a number of the respondents. We have compiled a number of recommendations for improvements to be introduced in the preparation of future conferences. These are based on our assessment and the information received from the various stakeholders: the secretariat, DSD, the CST, country Parties and conference participants.

B. Recommendations

1. Conference organization

143. **The COP should give a clear and well-defined orientation to the secretariat about the expected outcomes of the conference and how the knowledge gained at the conference should be transferred to the secretariat, the CST and the country Parties. The process to be used and the kind of follow-up that is expected should also be defined ahead of time.**

144. **The secretariat should have in place a conference steering committee representing the different UNCCD units in order to coordinate the organization of the conference and to work closely with the host country, the institution/consortium chosen to organize the conference and other stakeholders (see the organizational flow chart at appendix VI).**

145. **The secretariat should have a clear and well-defined conference organization time frame that includes the major milestones (see the suggested conference time frame at appendix V).**

146. **The secretariat should strive for stronger inputs from and participation by the affected regions and for a regional balance both during the preparation of the conference and during the conference. This could contribute to helping the pre-conference working groups to address the issues and opportunities of UNCCD affected country Parties.**

147. **The secretariat should create a conference scientific committee, composed of scientists representing the different regions, to work on conference topics and procedures. Committee members should have staggered terms of three to five years so that information and experience are carried over from one conference to another. This committee should serve in an advisory capacity to the CST Bureau and the UNCCD secretariat and provide input for future conferences.**

148. **The conference should be held every two years, in the year preceding the COP, to allow enough time to prepare the recommendations to be addressed by the COP. Holding the conference in an intersessional period, preferably immediately after the meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC), would ensure the participation of scientists and create better opportunities for participation by decision makers.**

149. The conference should be held in different regions on a rotating basis. The decision on where to hold the conference should be taken by the COP for at least two conferences at a time. This will allow the host countries enough time to prepare for the conference.

150. The format of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference was appropriate and fit for purpose and should be followed for future conferences with some modifications to the timing of the outputs. The Working Groups should have six months to prepare and submit their reports for input from the scientific community at large. The Working Groups should finalize their reports three months before the conference. The format of the conference should consist of a plenary session followed by break-out groups (Working Groups), which would be determined based on the themes of the conference. The conference wrap-up should consist of a report of the recommendations from each Working Group.

2. Conference implementation

151. The lead institution/consortium selected to organize the conference should have experience of organizing conferences. It should be given clear terms of reference, and clear objectives and expectations should be set out for the conference.

152. At the end of a conference, the lead institution selected to organize the following conference should be announced. This will give the institution two years to prepare the conference.

153. The lead institution/consortium selected to organize the conference should have a clear “management and reporting structure” included in its proposal, with the name of the person who is authorized to enter into a contractual agreement on behalf of the institution/consortium. This will facilitate communication with the CST, the secretariat, the Conference Steering Committee and the host country. In addition, it will allow for the signing of a contract between the secretariat and the selected organization without delay.

154. The funding expectations and mechanisms should be well thought through and communicated to the institution in charge of organizing the conference to allow for timely fund-raising and the support of participants from affected country Parties. To this effect, the terms of reference for the next conference should spell out all the fund-raising requirements as well as the qualification requirements of the lead institution/consortium and the major milestones with their deadlines.

155. In order to facilitate the decision-making process the communication channels between the secretariat and the institution in charge of organizing the conference should be clear and the responsibilities well defined. The UNCCD Conference Steering Committee should be in charge of this coordination.

3. Participation by scientists and the funding of participants

156. The UNCCD should encourage the participation of scientists experienced in land degradation and desertification issues. In addition, the conference should serve as an opportunity for capacity-building. Young scientists should be encouraged to participate in the pre-conference preparations and in the conference itself.

157. A list of countries where participant funding is needed should be established and the funding mechanisms and responsibilities for fund-raising should be defined. The fund-raising should take place in a timely manner to ensure the participation of representatives (scientists and decision makers) from affected regions.

4. Conference content

158. The topics to be addressed by the conference should not be so broad that they result in only general discussion. Instead, they should focus on proposals for specific responses to the problems of land degradation and desertification relevant to the mission of the Convention. The conference should result in the elaboration of specific recommendations to be presented to the COP for action.

159. The white papers, peer-reviewed papers and presentations at the conference should focus on specific land degradation and desertification issues and not be too broad or too general. They should address concrete desertification and land degradation issues relevant to the theme and subthemes of the conference.

160. The conference outputs, such as the book of abstracts, the recommendations, the white papers, the peer reviewed papers, the final report, and so on, should be published within a reasonable timeframe and shall be specified in future terms of reference. This requirement should also be outlined in the conference timeline document.

161. The preparation of the conference should involve scientists who have experience in the themes of the conference. The working group approach is a good one and should be pursued in future conferences. However, more time should be given to the Working Groups to prepare their reports and for the distribution of the reports to a wider audience for comments before the conference.

5. Communication with the press

162. A uniform and coherent message for communication to the press should be prepared in collaboration with all the stakeholders. They should help write the message in order to present a uniform and coherent message about specific issues. The secretariat Awareness Raising, Communication and Education Unit should be in charge of the coordination of these activities.

163. The CST, the focal points and scientists should be enlisted to speak to the press using well thought out talking points. In this regard, coordination between the secretariat, the CST and the lead institution/consortium is critical.

164. Overall, the team feels that the scientific conference is a good mechanism for addressing scientific issues. It is not, however, a mechanism designed to address issues in the long term and does not provide continuity. An independent mechanism is needed – an honest scientific broker that plays a similar role to that of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on climate change – to allow for continuity within the UNCCD and for broader participation by the scientific community. Such a mechanism would also promote a “science culture” within the Convention and sustain the scientific approach to resolving the problems of land degradation and desertification in the long term.

Appendix I

Conference programme

Understanding desertification and land degradation trends

UNCCD/CST 1st Scientific Conference
Hilton Hotel, Buenos Aires
22–24 September 2009

22 September 3 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Opening session

Chaired by the Klaus KELLNER (CST Chair)

Introduction and announcements by Mark WINSLOW (DSD Coordinator)

Opening statement by William DAR

Opening statement by Luc GNACADJA (UNCCD Executive Secretary)

Keynote addresses:

Mahmoud SOLH, DSD Chair

Elena ABRAHAM, Director, CONICET- IADIZA, Argentina

Brief announcements by Global Initiatives

Uriel SAFRIEL, Global Network of Dryland Research Institutes

Mariam AKHTAR-SCHUSTER, DesertNet International

Tristan TYRELL, 2010-Biodiversity Indicators Partnership

Michael MORTIMORE, IUCN Dryland Opportunities Paradigm

Opening of Poster Session and review of posters

Mahmoud SOLH and Elena ABRAHAM

23 September 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. (working group 1 session)

Integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation processes and drivers

Chaired by Charles HUTCHINSON

Chair's introductory statement

Keynote speeches:

Youba SOKONA:

Integrated methods for monitoring and assessing desertification/land degradation processes and drivers: Highlights from policy-relevant aspects

James REYNOLDS:

An integrated, science-based framework for monitoring and assessing desertification/land degradation processes and drivers

General discussion of working group 1 recommendations (Facilitator: Bertus KRÜGER)

Wrap-up and conclusions (session Chair)

23 September 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. (working group 2 session)

Monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management

Chaired by Ephraim NKONYA

Chair's introductory statement

Keynote speeches:

Pedro MACHADO:

**Monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management to support
decision-making in land and water management**

Hanspeter LINIGER:

Experiences with monitoring and assessment of sustainable land management

Presentations of key aspects by chapter lead authors:

M. Buenemann

J. Lehmann

General discussion of working group 2 recommendations (Facilitator: Bertus KRÜGER)

Wrap-up and conclusions (session Chair)

24 September 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. (working group 3 session)

Monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation:

Knowledge management and economic and social drivers

Chaired by Martin BWALYA

Chair's introductory statement

Keynote speech:

Mary SEELY:

**Vertical and horizontal knowledge management: Implications at the local,
national, regional and global levels**

Presentations of key aspects by chapter lead authors:

Mark REED

Pam CHASEK

Stefan SPERLICH

General discussion of working group 3 recommendations (Facilitator: Bertus KRÜGER)

Wrap-up and conclusions (session Chair)

24 September 3 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Synthesis and wrap-up session
Chaired by Mahmoud SOLH

Chair's introductory statement

Summary of working group sessions:

Working group 1

Working group 2

Working group 3

Overview of the draft synthesis and recommendations by Bertus KRÜGER

Discussion of the draft synthesis and recommendations (Facilitator: Bertus KRÜGER)

Concluding remarks by Klaus KELLNER (CST Chair)

Appendix II

Geographical origin of the authors of the papers in the book of abstracts

Paper number	Number of authors	Origin of the authors			
		1 st author	2 nd author	3 rd author	4 th author and beyond
1	2	Argentina	Argentina		
2	2	Canada	Canada		
3	2	Argentina	Argentina		
4	1	Nigeria			
5	2	Australia	Australia		
6	5	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina
7	8	India	India	India	India
8	4	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina
9	5	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina
10	6	United Kingdom	Kenya		
11	2	Republic of Moldova	Republic of Moldova		
12	2	Argentina	Argentina		
13	4	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina
14	2	Italy	Italy		
15	1	Argentina			
16	3	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	
17	4	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico
18	1	Argentina			
19	2	Somalia	Somalia		
20	1	Congo			
21	3	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	
22	1	Romania			
23	1	India			
24	5	Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan	Uzbekistan/Kyrgyzstan
25	4	Switzerland	Switzerland	Netherlands	Netherlands

<i>Paper number</i>	<i>Number of authors</i>	<i>Origin of the authors</i>			
		1st author	2nd author	3rd author	4th author and beyond
26	3	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	
27	1	Cameroon			
28	1	Cameroon			
29	13	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina
30	4	Italy	Italy	Portugal	Italy
31	6	India	India	India	2 India/1 Thailand
32	2	Argentina	Argentina		
33	6	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina
34	1	Spain			
35	2	Argentina	Argentina		
36	1	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)			
37	1	Argentina			
38	7	India	India	India	India
39	3	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	
40	4	Switzerland	Switzerland	Switzerland	United Kingdom
41	4	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina	Argentina
42	4	India	India	India	India
43	2	Argentina	Argentina		
44	4	Senegal	Senegal	Senegal	Senegal
45	6	India	India	China	1 Thailand/1 China/1 India
46	4	Thailand	India	India	Thailand
47	3	Italy	Italy	Italy	

Appendix III

Institution of the authors of the papers in the book of abstracts

Paper number	Number of authors	<i>Type of institution for the different authors</i>			
		1st author	2nd author	3rd author	4th author and beyond
1	2	Research institute	Research institute		
2	2	United Nations			
3	2	Research institute	University		
4	1	Ministry			
5	2	Research institute	Research institute		
6	5	University	University	University	University
7	8	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute
8	4	University	University	University	University
9	5	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute
10	6	United Nations Environment Programme	United Nations Environment Programme	United Nations Environment Programme	United Nations Environment Programme
11	2	Non-governmental organization	Non-governmental organization		
12	2	University	University		
13	4	University	Research institute	University	Research institute
14	2	Ministry	University		
15	1	University			
16	3	University	University	University	
17	4	University	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute
18	1	Research institute			
19	2	University	Non-governmental organization		
20	1	Research institute			
21	3	University	University	University	
22	1	Ministry			
23	1	Research institute			
24	5	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute

Paper number	Number of authors	Type of institution for the different authors			
		1 st author	2 nd author	3 rd author	4 th author and beyond
25	4	University	University	Research institute	Research institute
26	3	University	University	University	
27	1	Research institute			
28	1	Research institute			
29	13	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute
30	4	Company	European Space Agency	Research institute	Ministry
31	6	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute
32	2	University	University		
33	6	University	University	University	2 university/ 1 research institute
34	1	Research institute			
35	2	Research institute	Research institute		
36	1	Ministry			
37	1	Research institute			
38	7	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute
39	3	Research institute	University	University	
40	4	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute
41	4	University	University	University	University
42	4	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute
43	2	Research institute	Research institute		
44	4	Research institute	Research institute	University	Research institute
45	6	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute	Research institute
46	4	University	Research institute	Research institute	University
47	3	Research institute	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	

Appendix IV

Comments by stakeholders about the format of the conference and the preparation process

Comments from the UNCCD secretariat, Drylands Science for Development and the Committee on Science and Technology

“Highly professional.”

“The objectives were not clear. The teams were too large, which took the work in too many directions, which diluted the focus. The reason is that the theme of the CST, decided by the previous CST meeting, was also vague and not focused.”

“Different formats can be discussed for future conferences, e.g. more participation from non-scientists during the preparation. But the fact that this meeting was held as part of the COP proceedings was to a great deal responsible for the fact that COP delegates were exposed to scientific content.”

“Conference timing should not be during COP. Too little time for CST to digest the results.”

“Too little time devoted to the science–policy interface.”

“Policy and procedural issues interfered with the conference.”

“Given the time pressure and a considerable number of formal aspects that were not clarified beforehand by the secretariat and CST the format adopted for the first conference proved to be the best possible having brought indeed positive novel elements to the CST discussions. It is perceived that future conferences would probably feed better into the COP when held beforehand in intersessional special CST.”

“Too stultified by political processes.”

Conference participants' comments

“D'une part, la conférence était trop courte par rapport à l'enjeu. D'autre part, les conférenciers présentaient une sorte de vision unique des processus de désertification.”

“I would like to have scientific theoretical and especially field researches of desertified landscapes and influence on health of people, and define regional and global indicators of desertification.”

“Se realizó una importante evaluación de conocimientos y de vacíos e incertidumbres en todos los temas abordados. Brindo importante contexto para el avance de las discusiones multilaterales y de la articulación científicos expertos y delegados de las Partes.”

“El formato fue inadecuado ya que los científicos no fuimos incluidos consistentemente en casi ninguna actividad. La sesión de posters donde participé demostró nula concurrencia y el escaso interés de los participantes y asistentes por trabajo científico en zonas áridas.”

“La préparation des papiers et évaluations devront être effectuées par les personnes ressources ayant des expériences techniques et scientifiques du terrain (vécu). Le temps consacré aux conférences de CST est insuffisant. L'UNCCD a plus besoin de se pencher sur les questions techniques et scientifiques pas uniquement au niveau global mais aussi au niveau régional. Penser aux conférences scientifiques régionales.”

“Dans l'ensemble le format de la conférence adopté était performant, ce pour cette raison que la conférence avait atteint les objectifs visés.”

“No pude lograr comunicarme referentes temáticos, siento que habia algo de desorden.”

“We suggest plenary section together with group section for more discussion.”

“La cohérence entre les activités de la Conférence et les négociations sur la Convention ne sont pas très perceptible. Pour que l'apport de la Conférence soit pertinent, à mon avis, elle devra se tenir avant les sessions de négociations afin que les résultats servent de base de discussions permettant d'avancer dans le processus "Désertification". Mieux la Conférence doit être une référence scientifique capable de pourvoir les pays de solutions adéquates contre la désertification et non une plateforme de débats entre scientifiques.”

“In spite of the great number of researchers attending the conference and in spite of the difficulty to ask question or give some comments on the contributions, it was interesting to see how delegations from all over the world learn together how to approach the problem of desertification and its analysis and evaluation.”

“The conference looked like a General Assembly where focus on a determined issue was lacking and in-depth discussions were absent. Participants spoke rather on their own experience and country. Beside the keynote speakers we wish to see representatives of continents or regions presenting case studies and national-interregional experience in adapting and/or mitigating land degradation and desertification (both with successful and unsuccessful stories).”

“Aucune suite concrète n'a été donnée aux résultats de la conférence.”

“But need more concentrations, grouping for the different issues.”

“Pienso que las próximas Conferencias Científicas de la UNCCD deben tener más espacios y tiempo para más presentaciones, pues es muy importante saber lo que se está haciendo en los países en general. Las presentaciones fuero puntuales. También hay necesidad de que se escoja mejor los ponentes para que hagan las ponencias de un punto de vista más científico y no académico. Algunos de los ponentes hicieran presentaciones como si estuvieran en una clase. Una sugerencia es que en las próximas conferencias sea reservado un espacio para presentaciones de posters.”

“I think that if we include some more time for debate in a less formal atmosphere the efficacy would be much higher.”

“Si bien se realizaron interesantes exposiciones de los 3 grupos de trabajo, creo que faltó participación activa de representantes de muchos países donde la desertificación es un problema serio.”

“Le format gagnerait davantage à intégrer la nécessité de prendre des engagements fermes dans la mise en œuvre et le suivi des recommandations formulées.”

“Les objectifs ont été atteints au regard des questions soulevées.”

“Yes, it was very well planned.”

“The conference format adopted was a bit complex for those unfamiliar with United Nations Convention working set-up. I would have preferred the free symposium type of gathering that presents proper scientific papers, discussions, poster sessions, etc.”

“The adoption of the conventional scientific mode of paper presentations under subthemes could have enhanced the achievement of conference objectives.”

Appendix V

Suggested timeline for future conferences

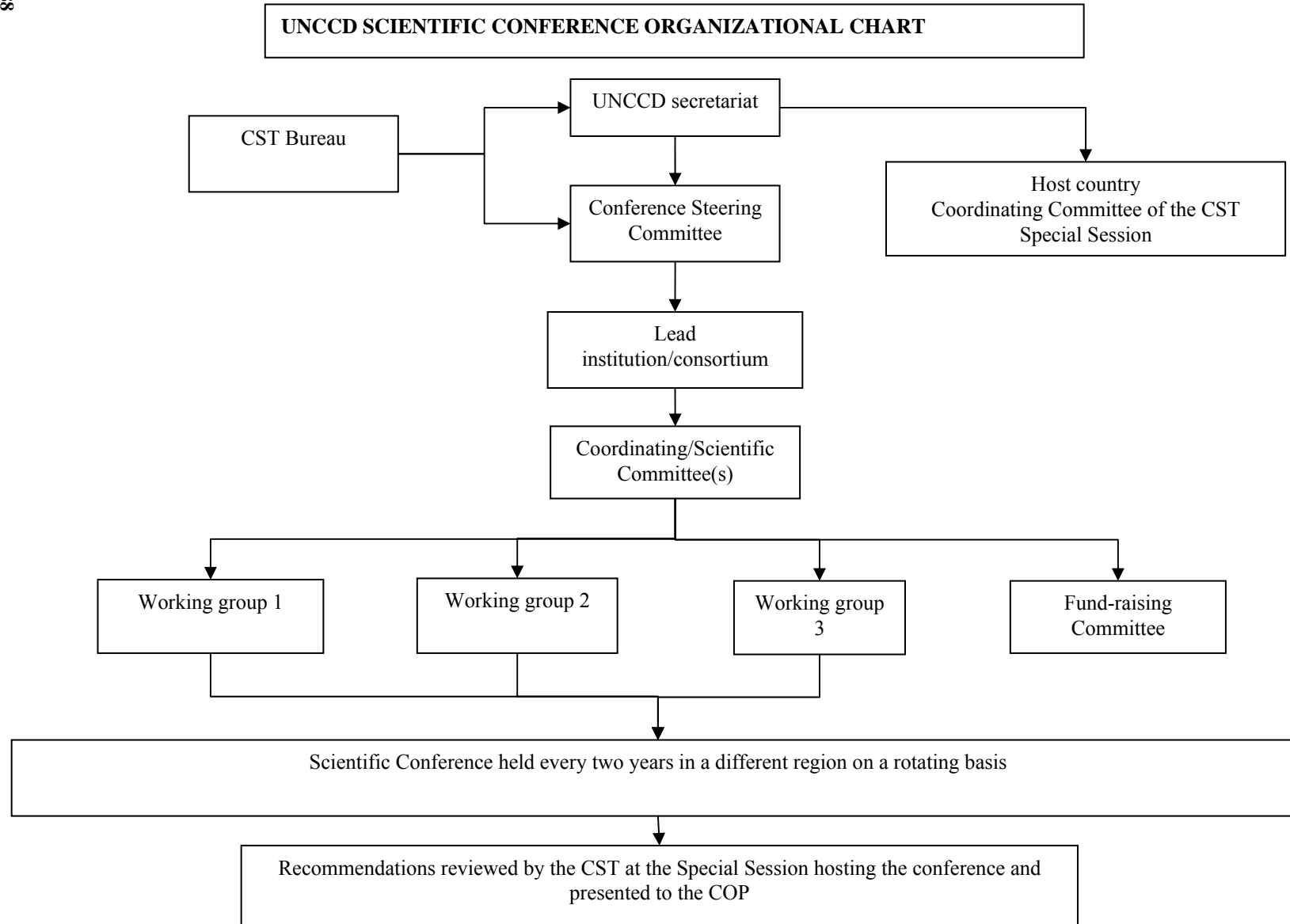
<i>Year</i>	<i>Month</i>	<i>Action</i>	
Year 1	1	Finalize report and proceedings of previous scientific conference	
	2	Conference report and proceedings distributed and posted on the UNCCD website	
	3	Call for expressions of interest launched for the organization of the next conference (terms of reference and theme/subthemes of the conference)	
	5	Deadline for call for expressions of interest	
	6	CST Bureau/secretariat decisions on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selection of lead institution/consortium • Selection of Conference Organization Committee • Selection of Conference Scientific Committee 	
	7	Signing of contract with lead institution/consortium	
	8	Lead institution/consortium develops detailed organizational, marketing and fund-raising plan for comments by CST/secretariat Lead institution/consortium begins process of identifying members of the working groups Comments by the CST and the secretariat submitted to lead institution/consortium on the organizational, marketing and fund-raising plans	
	9	Working group members assembled by lead institution/consortium	
	10	Funding for working groups and other pre-conference activities secured by lead institution/consortium Working group members start working on their assignment	
	12	COP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considers recommendations from the previous conference • Confirms the location and host country for the next conference, to be held in one year • Selects the host country for the conference to be held in three years at the same time as when the confirmation of the next conference is made to allow for ample preparation time. 	
	Year 2	14	Working group reports submitted for comments to the scientific community by e-consultation and other means
		15	Working group reports revised
16		Working group reports approved by CST Bureau/secretariat	
17		Working group reports distributed to stakeholders, posted on the UNCCD website	

<i>Year</i>	<i>Month</i>	<i>Action</i>
18		Funding for participants secured by lead institution/consortium
24		Scientific Conference takes place Announcements about next conference: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Location and themes (in two years)• Conference Organization Committee• Conference Scientific Standing Committee Announcement of the conference location in four years

Appendix VI

Suggested conference organizational flow chart

The organizational structure of the conference should have clear and well-defined lines of communication between the various actors.



Appendix VII

Task allocation assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference

Task allocation for a consultant

Assessment of the Organisation of UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference

A. Background

1. In decision 13/COP.8, the COP 8 decided that each future ordinary session of the CST should be organized in a predominantly scientific and technical conference-style format by the CST Bureau in consultation with a lead institution/consortium which was qualified in, and had expertise in, the relevant thematic topic selected by the COP. This would enable the international scientific community to bring wider scientific and technological expertise to the CST and the Convention process.
2. The priority issue selected by the COP for the 2008–2009 biennium was “*Bio-physical and socio-economic monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation to support decision-making in land and water management*”.
3. Against this background the CST 8 Bureau at its meeting in Bonn, Germany, on 19 February 2008, decided to select a consortium of institutions and agreed on the terms of reference, including criteria for selection, for the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference.
4. In the Terms of reference for the consortium it was stated:
 “The CST conference is expected to produce sound scientific outputs and policy-oriented recommendations based on the analysis and compilation of peer reviewed and published literature that informs policy formulation and dialogue at the Conference of the Parties. This would also provide a clear picture of available options and possible solutions to the questions of decision makers on monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation”.
5. Key stakeholders with knowledge of and a keen interest in the above thematic topic that were prepared to assist the CST to realize its goal were called on, by 30 April 2008, to express an interest in collaborating with the CST Bureau in organizing the conference.
6. Six submissions were received by the UNCCD secretariat. These were sent to CST Bureau members with a summary table, an analytical matrix and a scoring matrix template.
7. The CST Bureau met on 25 June 2008 to select a consortium. Of the six proposals received, only two were considered by the members of the CST Bureau to be consortiums: Dryland Science for Development (DSD) and a consortium represented by Centro de Estudios de Zonas Aridas (CEZA). The other submissions were from individual organizations. Based on the requirements of the call for expressions of interest, the CST Bureau selected by consensus the Dryland Science for Development (DSD) to co-organize the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference. A full report of the two-above mentioned meetings of the CST Bureau is contained in document ICCD/CST(S-1)/2.

8. DSD was a consortium composed of the European DesertNet, the International Center for Agricultural Research in Dry Areas (ICARDA), the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), the European Commission Joint Research Centre — Institute for Environment and Sustainability (JRC-IES), and the United Nations University International Network on Water, Environment and Health (UNU-INWEH). The DSD proposed that three working groups be formed to address the three identified facets of the topic: (a) integrated methods for monitoring and assessment of desertification/land degradation processes and drivers; (b) monitoring and assessing of sustainable land management; and (c) monitoring and assessment of desertification and land degradation: knowledge management, and economic and social drivers.

9. The three working groups prepared written analyses (white papers) and an overall synthesis that reflects prevailing scientific consensus on the three facets of the conference topic, with the goal of generating practical and workable science-based recommendations for decision-making.

10. Scientists and stakeholders made a first draft of the white papers available for review through an e-dialogue worldwide for one month, from 28 May to 28 June 2009. A second consolidated draft, integrating received comments and input, was also made publicly available on the Internet for reading and comments from 16 August to 31 October.

11. During the conference, held in Buenos Aires from 22 to 24 September, the white papers and the overall synthesis were discussed and draft recommendations prepared for consideration at the CST ordinary session and at the COP session. The full text of the synthesis and recommendations of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference is attached to document ICCD/COP(9)/CST/INF.3. In decision 16/COP.9, the COP 9 decided that the recommendations should be considered at a special session of the CST in 2010.

12. Another opportunity for participation of scientists was provided through keynote addresses and a competitive poster session during the conference.

13. Regarding the funding issue, the DSD raised funds for preparing, organizing and executing the conference, including in-kind contributions. The UNCCD secretariat, in consultation with the CST Bureau, secured additional funds to support the attendance of science and technology correspondents and scientists from developing and eligible countries to the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference. The DSD and the secretariat sought voluntary contributions from country Parties and organizations to enable the participation of 50 scientists from developing countries and 10 keynote speakers.

14. The present evaluation is based on the decision 16 COP 9 requesting the secretariat to organise an in-depth assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference in consultation with regional groups.

15. In parallel, but outside this evaluation the outcome of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference, will be review by regional groups through a consultative process in accordance with decision 23/COP 9.

B. Assessment of the organization of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference and its outcomes

1. Aim and scope

16. **The aim is to assess the preparation process, the format, and the outcome of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference, and to make recommendations for the preparation of the next scientific conference. The assessment will focus on the following main questions:**

(a) **Selection of consortium:** Were the steps of the process followed to select the consortium adequate to achieve the objectives of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference? Topics to be addressed in the assessment should include:

- Terms of reference of the consortium;
- Criteria for selection of lead institution/consortium;
- Mechanisms for advertising and calling for candidatures;
- Procedure for the selection;
- Time frame for the selection procedure;
- Communication of outcome of the selection process.

(b) **Format of conference and the preparation process:** Were the format adopted and the preparation process adequate to achieve the objectives of the UNCCD 1st Scientific Conference? Topics to be addressed in the assessment should include:

- Roles and collaboration by the CST Bureau, the secretariat and the consortium in preparation of the conference;
- Fund-raising mechanisms and achievements;
- Pre-conference preparations (working groups, white papers, e-consultations, etc.);
- Regional balance and mechanisms to secure the attendance of scientists, especially those from affected countries in working groups, the preparation of white papers, and for the participation in the Conference;
- The conference set up including chairpersons, moderators, key notes, posters and pre-conference recommendations;
- The feasibility of the conference as part of an ordinary CST session, including timing and duration.

(c) **Results of the conference:** To what extent was the conference able to bring the necessary scientific expertise on board, to produce sound scientific outputs to inform decision-making? Topics to be addressed in the assessment should include:

- Results in the form of sound scientific output and discussion;
- Ability to produce policy-oriented dialogue and recommendations;
- Meet the COP 8 recommendations and the terms of reference set for the consortium;
- Regional representation in the relevant fields of expertise and regional needs.

2. Methodology

17. The evaluation will be conducted as an in-depth assessment using a participatory approach whereby the UNCCD secretariat, key representatives of DSD, scientists contributing to the conference, regional groups, and country Parties are consulted during the evaluation. The consultant will liaise with the UNCCD secretariat and key representatives of the DSD on any logistic and/or methodological issues to properly conduct the review in as independent a way as possible, given the circumstances and resources offered. The draft report will be delivered to the UNCCD secretariat and then circulated to CST 8 bureau and DSD. Any factual comments or responses to the draft report will be sent to the consultant. The findings of the evaluation will be based on the following:

(a) **A desk review of documents including, but not limited to:**

- COP decisions and reports of CST sessions (2008 & 2009);
- Documents relating to the preparation procedure;
- List of participants and scientists involved;
- White papers and the book of abstract of poster session;
- Synthesis and recommendations produced by the conference;
- Conference proceedings;
- Comments by participants to the DSD Consortium and UNCCD Secretariat before and after the conference
- Peer-reviewed papers (if any).

(b) **Self-evaluation:** a questionnaire is to be sent to DSD, to working group members, to members of CST 8 Bureau, and to the secretariat on their roles in the preparation and of the conference. The consultant will prepare the questionnaire. A proper scientific analysis of questionnaire outcomes is advised.

(c) **Interviews:** follow up interviews with DSD, CST 8 Bureau members, and the secretariat. Additional interviews will also be carried out with selected scientists involved in working groups and preparation of white papers, keynote speakers, conference session chairs and moderators, and a subset of scientists attending the conference representing the different regions. A proper scientific analysis of questionnaire outcomes is advised.

(d) **Consultations with country Parties and regional groups:** a questionnaire is to be sent to regional groups, country Parties with copies to science and technology correspondents regarding the selection of consortium, the format of the conference, and the preparation process. The consultant will prepare the questionnaire.

3. Special aspects: the evaluation shall also assess

(a) **Attainment of objectives:** the evaluation should assess the extent to which the major relevant objectives were effectively and efficiently achieved and their relevance.

- Effectiveness: To what extent were the objectives met?
- Efficiency: Was the preparation procedure and the format cost effective? Assess the roles, collaboration and assistance given to the CST Bureau, the secretariat and DSD in preparation of the conference, including fund-raising mechanisms. Assess the contribution of in-cash and in-kind financing contributions. Evaluate the involvement of national and international consortiums, agencies, institutions and projects and programmes (research and development and others) in the preparation, attendance and outcomes of the conference;
- Relevance: In retrospect, were the conference outcomes consistent with 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy) and the portfolio of the UNCCD?

(b) **Achievement of outputs and activities: delivered outputs:**

- Assessment of the success and impact in producing sound scientific outputs and policy-orientated recommendations, both in quantity and quality as well as its usefulness at different scales towards affected Parties;

- Evaluate how effectively the working group, synthesis and wrap-up session at the conference was.
 - To what extent can the conference contribute to the establishment of an, international, interdisciplinary scientific mechanism to advise the UNCCD?
 - What are the regional and global benefits of the conference?
 - To what extent did the conference contribute to local, subregional, regional and global networking?
 - Was the distribution of outcomes of the conference (reports, papers, etc.) effective?
- (c) **Ownership: The consultant should assess:**
- Regional balance. Were mechanisms to secure regional balance and the attendance of scientists, especially those from affected countries, in working groups and during conference effective?
 - Gender balance. Were mechanisms to secure gender balance effective?
 - Were civil society organizations given appropriate room during the preparatory phase and during the conference?
- (d) **Financial planning: the evaluation should:**
- Assess actual project costs compared to budget;
 - Identify the sources of financing as well as in kind contributions.
- (e) **Time frame**
- Was the time frame for the preparation of the papers and conference outputs realistic?
 - Evaluate the duration and timing of the conference, including time frame of presentations, synthesis, wrap-up and any other sessions.

C. Evaluation report format: the consultant report should include:

- An executive summary;
- Introduction and background;
- Scope, objective and methods;
- Project performance and impact providing factual evidence relevant to the questions asked by the evaluator and interpretations of such evidence. This is the main substantive section of the report. This part shall be structured with following headings:
 - Selection of consortium;
 - Format of conference and the preparation process;
 - Results of the conference including the special aspects mentioned above.
- Summary and conclusions
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations

D. Organization of the consultancy

18. The team of maximum three consultants should be selected by February 2010. Two visits to UNCCD headquarters in Bonn are foreseen. After compilation and analysis of information the consultant should prepare a report including conclusion and recommendations for future conferences. The consultant will deliver a draft report before 15 May 2010. A final version will be submitted on 10 June 2010.

E. Requirement

19. Each of the members in the team of consultants should have:

- An advanced university degree or equivalent in relevant disciplines such as natural resource management, environmental policy and economics, geography, agronomy, forestry, and social sciences;
- A minimum of seven (7) years of experience in one or more of the areas listed below;
- Fluency in oral and written English. Knowledge of other official languages of the United Nations would be an asset.

20. The following competences and experiences should be represented in the team:

- Familiarity with United Nations system and procedures;
- Well documented experience in evaluation and scientific assessments;
- Experience of the transfer of knowledge from science to policy making;
- Knowledge and experience within scientific fields relating to the themes of the conference.

F. Contractual terms

21. The contract will be issued for the period 1 March to 10 June 2010. Consultants are requested to undertake two missions to the UNCCD headquarters.
