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REPORT ON THE REVIEW OF THE HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE EXISTING UNCCD REGIONAL COORDINATION UNITS*

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* This report has been prepared by Ambassador Rogatien Biaou, as UNCCD consultant. The views expressed and suggestions made in this report are the ones of the consultant and do not represent those of the secretariat.

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Executive summary

1. This review was conducted pursuant to decision 3/COP9 on “Mechanisms to facilitate regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention”. In the operative paragraph 5 of this decision, the COP *<<requests the Executive Secretary to review the current hosting arrangements of the existing RCUs, and to conclude, where appropriate, new memoranda of understanding with host institutions and hosts countries with the view of reducing direct operational costs, accommodating additional staff, and strengthening partnership at sub-regional and regional levels and to explore alternatives where appropriate>>*.
2. The present study first aims to assess the existing host country agreements and the current hosting arrangements that have been taken by each host country.
3. The study then underlines the assessment of the existing Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with the host institutions and the current institutional arrangements, including the costs associated with the functioning of and the logistic and administrative support for the Regional Coordination Units (RCUs) in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.
4. The report also presents a comparative analysis, based on offers received from the institutions, that demonstrated the interest to host the RCU for Annex V country Parties.
5. Finally, in order to facilitate the process of decision making by the Conference of the Parties, the study develops some recommendations and suggestions which need to be considered and, as appropriate, using the objectives of the Convention and the RCUs and the general criteria and requirements, as well as commitments of host countries and/or host institutions as guidance.

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List of abbreviations

AfDB	African Development Bank
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CEE	Central and Eastern Europe
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRIC	Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
DF	District Federal
DLDD	desertification/land degradation and drought
ECA	Economic Commission for Africa
ECLAC	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
ESCAP	Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GM	Global Mechanism
IGRAS	Institute of Geography of Russian Academy of Sciences
KMST	Knowledge Management, Science & Technology
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCDCCM	National Centre for Desertification, Climate Change and Monitoring
NGO	non-governmental organization
NRM	natural resources management
ORPC	Operational Resources and Policies Department of AfDB
ORRU	Partnerships and Cooperation Unit of AfDB
OSAN	Natural Resources Management and Environment Division of AfDB
OSS	Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel
PAGI	Policy for Advocacy on Global Issues
RECC	Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus
RCM	Regional Coordination Mechanism
RCU	Regional Coordination Unit
ROLAC- UNEP	Regional Office for Latin America & the Caribbean of UNEP
SLM	sustainable land management
TPN	thematic programme network
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNISDR	United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction

I. Background

1. By its decision 3/COP.9, the Conference of the Parties (COP) took note of document ICCD/CRIC(7)/INF.6 and, in particular, of its Annex II containing factual information on services or engagements relating to coordination that are currently provided by the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) at sub-regional and regional levels. In the same decision, the COP calls upon the Executive Secretary and the Managing Director of the GM to strengthen effectiveness and efficiency of Regional Coordination Mechanisms (RCMs), to facilitate the implementation of the Convention, as requested in The Strategy, to facilitate cooperation among affected country Parties within the regions and to enhance synergies among relevant institutions, programmes and mechanisms of the United Nations System, multilateral development banks, bilateral donors and other regional and sub-regional actors and mechanisms in order to facilitate regional and sub-regional action programmes and, where appropriate, provide technical assistance to the national action programmes.

2. In decision 3/COP.9, the COP requests the Executive Secretary and the Managing Director of the GM within available resources to provide assistance to regional coordination according to existing and emerging needs, capacities and specific issues, in consultation with the regions, with the view of enhancing interaction with and among affected country Parties and other organizations and institutions, as well as strengthening the efficiency and impact of their activities in support to the achievement of the operational objectives of The Strategy and the objective of the Convention.

3. The COP, in operative paragraph 6, requests the Executive Secretary, at the initiative of the Annex V country Parties, to facilitate the establishment of a Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) for the Central and Eastern European countries, by exploring synergies with the relevant national, sub-regional and regional institutions who have expressed their interest to host such mechanism. For this purpose, it requests the Executive Secretary to provide one post as indicated in operative paragraph 3. In the beginning, this post might be based at the secretariat headquarters and, upon request of the Annex V Parties to the region, relocated at a later stage.

4. Finally, the COP requests the Executive Secretary in operative paragraph 5 to review the current hosting arrangements of the existing RCUs, and to conclude, where appropriate, new MOUs with host institutions and host countries with the view of reducing direct operational costs, accommodating additional staff, and strengthening partnership at sub-regional and regional levels, by exploring alternatives, where appropriate.

5. The report on the review submitted for consideration aims to provide information on current hosting arrangements with host countries and host institutions, to make remarks on the functioning of the RCUs and to propose some recommendations on ways and means of improving the work done and thereby moving forward.

II. Methodology and sources of information

6. The methodology used consisted of compiling, reviewing and analyzing relevant COP decisions and official documents such as: MOUs or agreements with host countries, MOUs or arrangements with host institutions, relevant reports of the secretariat of the Convention, etc.

7. The methodology consisted also of producing a questionnaire and meeting representatives of country Parties from concerned regions and relevant staff members of RCUs and host institutions. Many people helped with comments, ideas, and references. Others took time to be interviewed or to fill in the questionnaire submitted to them and to give their view on the issues and examples I have been looking at.

8. The main sources of information were the COP decisions, the legal instruments, the answers to questionnaires, relevant reports of the secretariat and exchange and discussions with resource persons, representatives of country Parties and programme officers of host institutions and the secretariat, including staff of RCUs.

9. I would like to thank all who have contributed their expertise, experiences, comments and critical questions. However, I, as consultant, am responsible for the contents of the report.

III. Assessment of host country agreements

10. At the request of country Parties of Africa (Annex I), Asia (Annex II) and Latin America and The Caribbean (Annex III) the secretariat of the Convention facilitated the establishment of three (3) RCUs in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire), Bangkok (Thailand) and Mexico City (Mexico) by negotiating and concluding host country agreements with countries concerned. In this regard, the following host country agreements were developed, negotiated, concluded and signed by both the secretariat of the Convention and the host countries.

A. Information on the host country agreement in Africa

11. The host country agreement in Africa was signed between the Government of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire and the secretariat of the UNCCD for the establishment of the RCU in Abidjan, on 17 July 2000, by HEM Charles GOMIS, Minister for External Relations and Mr Hama Arba DIALLO, Executive Secretary. The agreement is composed of six (6) articles on: use of terms, objective, support measures, privileges, immunities, financial and fiscal facilities, settlement of disputes and final provisions.

12. The agreement has been signed to cover an unlimited period and gives diplomatic status to the RCU staff. In article 4, paragraph 9.3, it is stressed that <<the Government should be informed periodically about the RCU staff, who in any case, will be limited in number>>. No information about the staff was sent to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, because the unit was limited to one person.

13. It is important to stress that the agreement has not been implemented since 2003, because of the transfer on an interim basis of the headquarters of the African Development Bank (AfDB) from Abidjan, in Côte d'Ivoire, to Tunis, in Tunisia in view of the complex political situation in that country. From 2000 to 2003, prior to its transfer to Tunis, the RCU did not receive any financial contribution or other forms of support from Côte d'Ivoire.

14. Since 2003, taking into account the transfer on an interim basis, no agreement has been concluded with Tunisia. But after eight (8) years, the African country Parties should consider the following options during the next COP and decide what to do:

(a) Continue on an interim basis until the board of the African Development Bank decides to return back to Abidjan. Nobody can say when this will be. The political situation in Côte d'Ivoire remains complex. It should be noted that, with this option, the host country agreement signed with Côte d'Ivoire could not be implemented in Tunisia, because they are two different states in spite of both being African countries;

(b) Sign a new host country agreement with Tunisia. To do so, the secretariat of the Convention shall end the agreement by giving written notification to the Government of Côte d'Ivoire three (3) months before, in conformity with article 6, paragraph 2.2, of this agreement. But in this case, the agreement should be limited to renewability after two or three years until the final decision has been made by the AfDB about its location. Then the COP will decide whether to follow the AfDB decision;

(c) Choose another country for the location of the RCU. This option implies, inter alia, new arrangements, such as:

- (i) Development, negotiation, conclusion, signature and entry into force of a new host country agreement;
- (ii) Selection of a new host Institution;
- (iii) Development, negotiation, conclusion, signature and entry into force of a new MOU with the new host institution;
- (iv) Estimation of the cost of the transfer to another country and a new host institution, and mobilization of the financial resources needed for a quick transfer;
- (v) Evaluation of the add-value of this option in terms of advantages, limitations based on general criteria and requirements for hosting arrangements and commitments of the host country as well as the host institution.

15. In any case, the option chosen should include the formulation of a new host country agreement where the role, mandate and objective of the RCU are clearly underlined in the provisions. By adopting The Ten Year Strategy in Madrid, in 2007, and the decision 3/COP.9, the role, mandate and objective of the RCU are today beyond article 2 of the host country agreement which stipulates: << The current agreement between the Government and the UNCCD secretariat has the objective to put in place and to support the functioning of the RCU in charge to promote the development, the implementation and the follow up of the Regional Action Programme (RAP) to Combat Desertification in Africa>>.

16. Adequate, predictable and sufficient financial resources are crucial to coordination, documentation, meaningful participation, follow up and assessment. The new host country agreement should contain provisions on possible financial contribution and other forms of support that the host country could provide for the functioning of the RCU.

17. It is important to note that a limited number of relevant regional and sub-regional organizations or institutions to the objectives of the Convention have their headquarters in Abidjan or Tunis. Apart from the African Development Bank, with its regional dimension, temporarily based in Tunis, and the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (SSO) "Observatoire du Sahara et du Sahel (OSS)", which is an international organization and also based in Tunis, the other institutions are represented just at national level of Tunisia. This point could be considered to be a limitation for the RCU easily to build a partnership and to consolidate contact with those organizations and institutions dealing with DLDD issues in Africa.

B. Information on the host country agreement in Asia

18. Since 2000, the year of the establishment of the RCU in Asia, which is hosted by ESCAP in Bangkok, Thailand, the UNCCD secretariat has not signed any host country agreement with the Government of Thailand. Despite this situation, the RCU Coordinator has a good working relationship with the National Focal Point of Royal Thai Government, the Land Development Department and senior officers of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

19. The Royal Thai Government provides office space to the RCU in town far from UNESCAP headquarters with neither telephone nor other office facilities. From time to time, the Coordinator, uses it to hold some small meetings of a duration of two or three hours or a half a working day. It seems that this contribution is not sufficient. This office is not fully effective.

20. The best way to strengthen the relationship, cooperation and partnership with Royal Thai Government and to provide a legal basis for all stakeholders is to develop, negotiate, conclude, sign and implement a host country agreement between the UNCCD secretariat and the Government of Thailand. In this case, the UNCCD – RCU for Asia and the Pacific will appear on the diplomatic missions list of Royal Thai Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It is *inter alia* a starting point for more visibility to and consideration by the other bilateral and multilateral actors in the country and in the region.

21. The host country agreement should have clear and specific provisions on: the financial contribution for operational costs or daily operation costs, local supporting staff (G-Level), and office supplies. The political will to conclude a host country agreement exists. The UNCCD secretariat should launch the process and report to the COP the result reached.

22. As host city of ESCAP and RCU, Bangkok also hosts several regional and sub-regional organizations and institutions of the United Nations System such as: the Regional Office of FAO for Asia and the Pacific, Regional Office of UNEP for Asia and the Pacific, Regional Office of UNISDR and other United Nations Agencies. This is an advantage for the RCU-Asia/Pacific to build partnerships and consolidate contact with institutions relevant to the objectives of the Convention.

C. Information on the host country agreement in Latin American and the Caribbean

23. The host country agreement was signed in 1999 between the Minister of Environment of the United Mexican States and the Executive Secretary of UNCCD. The agreement contained six (6) articles on: location of the RCU, legal capacity of the UNCCD secretariat to contract, immunity from jurisdiction and exemption of the unit, privileges, immunity and facilities of officials of the unit.

24. It is important to underline that, before this instrument was signed, a letter of intent, regarding the coordinating mechanism for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought, was signed, on 17 June 1997, by Julia Carabias LILLO for the Secretariat of Environment, National Resources and Fisheries of the United Mexican States, Arsenio Rodriguez MERCADO for The Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean of the United Nations Environment Programme and Hama Arba DIALLO for the Interim secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and Mitigate the Effects of Drought.

25. Paragraphs 2, 3 and 10 of the letter of intent were clear about how:

(a) To promote the establishment of a RCU to fulfil the mandate of article 7, paragraph 1(b) of the Regional Implementation Annex III of the Convention;

(b) To support the establishment of the RCU in the headquarters of the UNEP Regional Office for the Latin America and the Caribbean and to contribute with in-kind and/or financial resources for the installation, operation and maintenance of the unit;

(c) To make the establishment of the RCU official.

26. As regards the host country agreement signed in 1999 by the Minister of Environment of the Government of the United Mexican States and the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD, it has been not implemented, because the Ministry for Foreign Affairs does not accept the existing host country Agreement. It rightly declares that host country agreements shall be negotiated, concluded and signed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs not by the Minister of Environment or any other Minister of the Government. If the RCU should continue to be located in Mexico City and hosted by the subregional office of ECLAC in Mexico, the secretariat of the Convention should launch as soon as possible a process of development, negotiation, conclusion, signature and entry into force of a new host country agreement.

27. This irregular political, diplomatic and legal situation has been raised for at least, ten (10) years, without any reaction from the secretariat or/and from country Parties of the region. Maybe this is because the Mexican Ministry for Foreign Affairs has written an official letter to the UNCCD secretariat on the issue or raised the situation through a declaration during a regional meeting/conference of LAC country Parties or during a session of the Conference of the Parties.

28. In any case, this problem should be solved to pave the way to the implementation of the Convention in the LAC Region. It is important to recall that, after the signature of the host country agreement by the Minister of Environment and before the Ministry for Foreign Affairs raised the problem of the irregularity of the host country agreement, on 20 August 1999, the Mexican Government, gave USD 20,000.00 as financial assistance for the activities of the RCU in support to the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is the only support received from Mexican Government for the functioning of the RCU.

29. It is certain that the performance of the RCU would be better if some support could be provided by the host country. Promises have been made since 1999 and reconfirmed several times, but nothing has been received despite good relationship with the different national focal points and the decision taken by the Mexican Senate on 2 October 2007 to allocate financial resources to RCU from the Mexican National Budget for the 2008 fiscal year. The difficulties noted are at follow up level and the process of translation of a political decision into concrete actions. In order to improve the relationship with the host country, the UNCCD secretariat should take the initiative to launch the process of formulation of a new host country agreement.

30. Among the constraints and limitations in the current situation, is that the ECLAC Sub-regional Office for some Central America Countries and Cuba is the only sub-regional institution in the United Mexican States . In such a situation, it is difficult to successfully build partnerships with regional and sub-regional organizations and keep good contacts with all country Parties of the region in the framework of the current mandate of the RCU.

IV. Assessment of host institutions memoranda of understanding

31. Pursuant to the decision taken by country Parties of each region, the UNCCD secretariat facilitated the process of the development, negotiation, conclusion and signature

of MOUs with appropriate host institutions, such as: the African Development Bank, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific, and the Economic Commission for Latin America and The Caribbean.

A. Memorandum of understanding with the African Development Bank

32. At the request of African country Parties and based on their own decision, after negotiation, a MOU was concluded with the African Development Bank and the African Development Fund, as an African regional group of financial institutions to host the RCU for Africa. The MOU was signed by the President of the bank and the fund, Omar KABBAJ and the Executive Secretary of the Convention, Hama Arba DIALLO, in Abidjan, on 22 May 1999. The MOU has twelve (12) articles related to objective, functions, location, structure, organization of the RCU, financial arrangements, etc.

33. Under this MOU, the bank has been providing the RCU with necessary facilities, such as: office space, office utilities (computers, printers, phones, fax and other administrative support, electricity, etc.). A request for additional office space was submitted to the relevant division of the bank. A promise to satisfy this request was made during the wrap-up meeting.

34. On the matter of the costs associated with the functioning of the RCU-Africa, the African Development Bank, pursuant to the provisions of the MOU, has taken over since 1999, all charges. The level of those costs has not been calculated year by year. In this regard, African country Parties and the UNCCD secretariat should recognized this important financial contribution and take note that the decision to place the RCU in AfDB offers benefits that go beyond mere physical hosting.

35. The presence of the RCU in the AfDB contributes, inter alia, by influencing the activities relating to action programmes launched by this regional financial institution and linking the activities in question to one another. In addition, the presence of the RCU has stimulated increase support granted to the objectives of the Convention in the Group Bank portfolio devoted to rural development, as well as in the activities launched by the World Bank in this sector in cooperation with AfDB. (See Annex on main actions taken by RCU-Africa in cooperation with the AfDB).

36. A study conducted by the GM and the African Development Bank and sponsored with support from the British government revealed that, from 2000 to 2005, the African Development Bank portfolio devoted to sustainable land management was USD 1.6 billion. Unfortunately this result was not reported to the COP and the other stakeholders involved in the implementation of Convention, in particular African States bilateral and multilateral development partners. This situation should be corrected through a new review covering the period of 2000 to 2010, and by participation at appropriate level of representatives of the bank to the COP session every two years. The next session of the COP will be held in Changwon City, Republic of Korea from 10 to 21 October 2011.

37. For the current year 2011, the RCU and the bank have adopted a collaborative framework focus in five areas:

- (a) Harmonize and coordinate their efforts at the policy, strategy, technical and programme levels;
- (b) Expand and consolidate actions that support SLM and other desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) issues in Africa;
- (c) Benefit from qualitatively and quantitatively increased flows of knowledge, information and expertise to and from members;

- (d) Better mobilize and channel financial resources to African country Parties;
- (e) Provide and obtain mutual encouragement and support in their commitment and efforts towards SLM and other DLDD issues.

38. In this framework, the RCU should serve as a technical authority in desertification control/dry-lands management and SLM through:

- (a) Advising the bank on global UNCCD initiatives and the likely relevance and importance of these initiatives on the bank's sectoral programmes and policy goals;
- (b) Contributing to the raising of the awareness of the bank staff of land aspects, and DLDD in general, in the development of Bank NRM policies and strategies and taking into account the regional member countries' needs and priorities in the sector;
- (c) Advising member countries on the preparation of natural resource projects, including the assessment of national capacities for to deal with desertification.

39. The logistic and administrative support provided by the host institution for the functioning of the RCU-Africa is in conformity with the provisions of the MOU. Therefore there is no need to develop, negotiate, conclude and sign a new MOU. In the case of complementary provisions and amendments, article 9.1 stipulates that: <<Parties to present Memorandum may by simple exchange of letters conclude complementary arrangements in conformity with the scope of application of the Memorandum or to amend any existing provision>>. The country Parties, the UNCCD secretariat and the relevant structures of the African Development Bank should keep in mind this article if they have to decide on how to integrate or to take on board new arrangements to move forward.

40. Among the existing three RCUs, only the RCU-Africa is located in a regional financial institution. This arrangement has both advantages and limitations. The advantages have already been discussed above. The limitations are that: AfDB is not member of the United Nations System; the host country does not host several regional and sub-regional institutions relevant to the objectives of the Convention; located in the northern part of the continent, the access is easy for some, but not for all African country Parties. If African country Parties decide to choose new host institution and new host country, they should bear in mind the general criteria and requirements related to hosting arrangements, including costs of the transfer. Proposals have been made by some countries about a transfer to ECA or African Union Commission in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Other countries are proposing to move to the headquarters of UNEP in Nairobi, Kenya.

41. Considering the current situation of RCU-Africa, three (3) opportunities are offered to African country Parties and the UNCCD secretariat for selection during the regional conference preparatory to COP 10. The selection should be confirmed by a COP 10 decision. The three opportunities are: the RCU continues to be in Tunis, the RCU is moved to Addis Ababa or the RCU is transferred to Nairobi.

1. The Regional Coordination Unit in Tunis

42. The RCU could continue to be in Tunis hosted by the African Development Bank despite limitations raised on paragraph 40 above. To do so, some actions would have to be taken:

- (a) The UNCCD secretariat has to develop a host country agreement with Tunisia and launch the process of negotiation, conclusion and signature with the Tunisian Ministry for Foreign Affairs;
- (b) The UNCCD secretariat has to launch the process of integrating new arrangements and/or updating some provisions of the current host-institution MOU in conformity with article 9.2 as underlined in paragraph 39 above;

(c) The African country Parties and the UNCCD secretariat should bear in mind that, taking into account the political situation in Côte d'Ivoire, it is not certain that the African Development Bank Governing Board will take a decision to return to Abidjan before the next presidential election in that country in the coming five or six years. Also, the political situation in Tunisia must be followed and observed over a period of two to three years.

43. In the framework of this option and in any case, to locate RCU somewhere, the parties and the secretariat have to consider the factors of peace, stability and security in the host country.

2. The Regional Coordination Unit in Addis Ababa

44. The African country Parties and the UNCCD secretariat have two possibilities for hosting institutions in Addis Ababa: the African Union Commission or the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA/ECA).

a. African Union Commission

45. All African States, excepted Morocco, are represented in the African Union Commission at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This is an important factor for political synergy and communication. But the African Union Commission is not an organization of United Nations System. One of the African country Parties, in particular Morocco will, for political reasons, not participate directly in meetings and other activities organized under the aegis of African Union Commission as host institution of the RCU. The Convention should avoid taking action that will exclude one party from fully contributing to its implementation.

46. Further, on legal point, by a decision adopted by the thirteenth ordinary session of the assembly in Syrte, Libya, on 3 July 2009, the African Union is authorized to accede to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. As Party to the Convention, it will be difficult for the African Union to host the RCU and to manage all hosting arrangement aspects. This issue should to be considered in depth by all country Parties to the Convention.

b. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

47. The headquarters of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa is in Addis Ababa as is the headquarters of the African Union Commission. All African Countries, including Morocco, fully participate in the Commission's activities and meetings. This offers opportunities for synergy and partnership among countries as well as between relevant institutions based in Addis Ababa. In the event of selection of ECA to host the RCU-Africa, all RCUs will be hosted, in each region, by an institution of the United Nations System, if the RCU-LAC, continues to be hosted by ECLAC in Mexico or elsewhere.

48. It is important to underline that, despite the political synergy among African States, the easy communication between institutions based in Addis Ababa, and partnership opportunities offered by this city; the geographical situation constitutes a problem. The high altitude of the town creates health problems for people suffering from high blood pressure. Travel connection for many African Countries particularly for those from West Africa and communication facilities (phone calls) from or to Addis Ababa for some African countries also constitute a problem. These factors do not reduce the value of the advantages raised above; they should however be known to all Parties in the framework of this study.

3. The Regional Coordination Unit in Nairobi

49. The headquarters of UNEP at global level as well as the Regional Office of UNEP for Africa are based in Nairobi. An important number of African countries are represented in Nairobi, and also the secretariat of the African Ministerial Conference on Environment (AMCEN). As regards the environment issues in Africa, AMCEN is the top political authority in the continent to deal with. The RCU in Nairobi will benefit from this political structure and this will facilitate more strong political commitment of African ministers for the environment. The building of partnerships with relevant UNEP organs will be easy. The security issue in Nairobi may be a serious constraint in the framework of the selection of a new host country and a new host institution.

50. The secretariat of the Convention should consider all proposals, analyze comparative advantages and submit the result to country Parties for selection. Should there be the transfer of the RCU from the African Development Bank and from Tunis to another institution and country, it might be useful to have a liaison office with one (1) programme officer at the bank headquarters in order to not lose the excellent relationship with the Convention and to keep the current momentum to strengthen portfolio of activities related to the objectives of the Convention.

51. In fact, cooperation with the bank can be very fruitful if the chief of the unit to which the RCU is attached is active and willing to collaborate, as has been demonstrated since the RCU has been attached to a new unit (OSAN 4). The collaboration until now has materialized in concrete activities such as project development or training. RCU could envisage contributing more in policy papers of the bank bearing in mind the creation of substantive units (PAGI & KMST) at the UNCCD secretariat level. Meetings with senior officers of OSAN 4, ORPC 1 and ORRU lead to the hope that new and positive developments will help reinforce the cooperation and partnership with the bank and be beneficial to affected country Parties in their day-to-day efforts to combat desertification, land degradation and effects of drought.

52. In other respects, despite many efforts deployed to make the African Development Bank a special and first partner of the Convention, as it is only one of the three (3) Rio Conventions explicitly dedicated to Africa, the bank is focusing its environmental efforts on climate change. This could change if a more active involvement is made at policy level and more references are made to what the bank is doing on DLDD and SLM issues in its annual reports and documents. On the other hand, African country Parties should be more active to make UNCCD and SLM part of their agenda priorities with the bank and to implement a desertification fund, as they did with the Green Fund set up by the ClimDEV Initiative.

53. The continuously changing structure and reform of the bank, with the consequent relocation of the RCU, have also hindered collaboration between the two institutions. Therefore, the current positioning of the RCU within OSAN, the operational arm of the bank, should be an advantage and positive point, since it seems more stable and likely to continue to be so. Furthermore, OSAN has now the ability to develop its own strategy. This is where the RCU can have action-oriented and more active role to play with the substantive support of PAGI and KMST.

B. Memorandum of understanding with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

54. The Inter-Organizational Host Agreement between the UNCCD secretariat and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) was signed on 13 September 2000 by the Executive Secretary of the Convention Hama Arba

DIALLO and the Executive Secretary of the Commission, Kim HAK-SU. The Agreement is composed of eight (8) paragraphs and one (1) Annex on arrangement for the functioning of the RCU, in particular personnel and office facilities.

55. This clear, concise and short agreement has been implemented for more than ten (10) years. This is a fact which is greatly appreciated by the hosting organization (ESCAP) and the entrusting organization (UNCCD secretariat). As a political and legally binding agreement between two institutions of the United Nations System, it has validation of unlimited duration. It works well and does not need to be revised.

56. Concerning the costs associated with the functioning of the RCU –Asia/Pacific, since the signature of the agreement, UNESCAP provides office space, facilities and logistic service free of charge. It is interesting to note that, among the 37 United Nations agencies and institutions located at the headquarters of ESCAP in the United Nations Complex Building in Bangkok, RCU Asia is the only one that pays nothing to UNESCAP. But, in the framework of the implementation of decision 3/COP.9, UNESCAP has started since 2009 to charge for one (1) additional office space which is prepared for the resource mobilization officer from GM.

57. Regarding the logistic and administrative support for the functioning of the RCU, ESCAP offers the same logistic and administrative service to all agencies, in particular: protocol + visa, personnel + salary pay, administrative assistance, logistic + security, duty-free, IT + mail service paid for by the UNCCD.

58. The limitations or constraints/difficulties that are not from the ESCAP side are:

(a) A language problem: the Coordinator and the staff of the RCU have difficulties in communicating and exchanging easily with Russian and Arabic speaking countries of Asia and Pacific Region. The recruitment of a technical assistant fluent in English, Arabic and Russian will solve the problem and the RCU will better serve all country Parties in the region;

(b) The lack of a bilingual secretary (fluent in English and Thai) familiar with United Nations system administration and methodology of work;

(c) The level of the Coordinator. As junior officer (P-3), he cannot attend senior meetings or high level initiative sponsored by the United Nations and/or Thai Government.

59. To benefit more from the host institution, the RCU Asia should, submit for adoption a clear and specific annual programme of work, which should be in conformity with the result based management (RBM) integrated to The Ten Year Strategy, in order to enhance synergies between the activities of ESCAP and the Convention in one hand, and build partnership with relevant regional and sub-regional institutions based in Bangkok with a view to provide support to Asian and the Pacific country Parties activities at regional, sub-regional and national levels.

C. Memorandum of understanding with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

60. The RCU for Latin America and the Caribbean was established in 1998 in Mexico City under an initial MOU with the UNEP Regional Office in Mexico. After the transfer of UNEP Regional Office from Mexico City to Panama City a new MOU was signed with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) on October 2002 by José Antonio OCAMPO, Executive Secretary of ECLAC and Hama Arba DIALLO, Executive Secretary of UNCCD.

61. The new MOU with ECLAC is clear and concise. It has nine (9) short paragraphs. Paragraph 2 stipulates that: “The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to ensure adequate cooperation between ECLAC and UNCCD with regard to the office accommodation that ECLAC will provide UNCCD/RCU in ECLAC’s sub-regional headquarters in Mexico City. The accommodation will be provided under the conditions set forth herewith”.

62. There has been no problem in the implementation of the mentioned Memorandum since ECLAC has provided good service to the RCU (in terms of office spaces, office supplies, etc) and its functioning has been ensured in an efficient manner, even though the RCU-LAC must pay the associated costs. These include the rent of the office space, telephone, internet and common services. The costs associated with the functioning of the RCU-LAC are USD 17,072.00 for the year 2010. From 2004 to 2009 the costs associated paid by the secretariat of the Convention to ECLAC are as follow:

* **2004:** USD 20,495.20; * **2005:** USD 22,061.51; * **2006:** USD 15,845.89

* **2007:** USD 13,571.98; * **2008:** USD 11,981.26; * **2009:** USD 10,951.31

63. However, the UNCCD secretariat should urgently consider new options for the RCU office spaces. This is because the ECLAC sub-regional office in Mexico City must move to a new building before the end of 2011. This situation must be considered during the meeting with the ECLAC’s Director and the Chief of Administration Section. It has been stressed and repeated that ECLAC is moving to a new building on 1st December 2011 and, due to very limited spaces in the new building, ECLAC cannot guarantee any space for the RCU offices, despite the existence of the MOU. It has been recommended that the UNCCD secretariat should envisage new arrangements for the RCU and inform ECLAC no later than 30 April 2011. Actually, ECLAC has already signed the contract with the owner of the new building and RCU has not been considered as part of the new ECLAC premises. However, even if the RCU could be accommodated in the new premises, the cost for remodelling and finishing the office spaces would be around 20,000.00 USD. The rental costs would be increase to USD 1,000.00 per month for 40 m². **This is an urgent matter and a decision should be taken before the end of April 2011.**

64. Analyzing the situation, three options are open. The UNCCD secretariat and country Parties of the region have to choose one of them, as soon as possible, in any case before the 30 November 2011 deadline to move from the current building to a new building in Mexico City. Neither building is ECLAC’s property. The three options are: the RCU remains in Mexico City; the RCU is transferred to Santiago de Chile; the RCU is transferred to Panama City.

1. The Regional Coordination Unit in Mexico City

65. The RCU could remain in Mexico City hosted by the sub-regional office of ECLAC, the only sub-regional institution in Mexico. There is no other regional or sub-regional institution relevant to the objectives of the Convention. To benefit from this option, urgent measures should be taken:

(a) The secretariat has to sign a rental contract directly with the owner in order to occupy some space on a different floor of the building to that occupied by ECLAC. These negotiations with the new building landlord should be completed before 30 April 2011. It should be noted that in any case, the UNCCD secretariat is expected to prepare and finish the office and the cost will be around USD 20,000.00 for the construction of 40m². The new building is still under construction. Furthermore, this situation could generate some legal constraints to the UNCCD secretariat, since the RCU does not have a legal status for signing a rental contract;

(b) Purchase or acquire new equipment and other furniture for the new office spaces;

(c) Launch a process of development, negotiation, conclusion and signature of a new host country agreement with the Mexican Ministry for Foreign Affairs which should include provisions on concrete support from Mexico such as, among others, an annual financial contribution for daily operation costs, and assignment of professional staff (technical assistant) from CONAFOR.

66. For this option, some adjustment in the host institution agreement should be made. ECLAC is willing to continue supporting the RCU in the administrative matters.

2. The Regional Coordination Unit in Santiago de Chile

67. The transfer of the RCU to the headquarters of ECLAC in Santiago de Chile is an option. This was discussed briefly in 2010, between the Executive Secretary of the Convention and the Executive Secretary of the Commission. No decision was made and there was no follow up. There is more potential in this option for synergies and substantive work with ECLAC and FAO, two regional United Nations agencies operating in Santiago de Chile as well as with other institutions relevant to the objectives of the Convention such as: UNDP, UNESCO, OPS/OMS and UNICEF. In addition, forty one (41) embassies are based in Santiago de Chile, of which twelve (12) are from Latin America, none from The Caribbean.

68. This option, does not need a new host-institution MOU. An exchange of letters between the two institutions could be enough to notify that, from a date to be determined, the RCU would be located at the ECLAC headquarters in Santiago de Chile. But a new host country agreement should be negotiated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile Republic.

69. With regard to the associated costs and taking into account informal consultations with the administration division of ECLAC in Chile, it seems that as the RCU is a United Nations organization and, considering that in Santiago de Chile the building is a United Nations property, it would only be charged for operational costs. This is not equivalent to a rent. In such a framework, ECLAC may charge USD 2,208 per year for one (1) professional and USD 545 for office space for a post of G-Level. In this case, the associated costs would be lower than in Mexico.

70. The relocation cost of the staff must be limited to a coordinator (P-3 Level). That will be around USD 45,000.00. The relocation cost for the Spanish Associate Programme Officer could be negotiated with Spain. There is no cost associated with furniture shipment but only with documents, which would be around USD 2,000.00. The relocation cost would be almost the same regardless of whether the move is to Santiago de Chile or to Panama City.

71. In terms of constraints or difficulties related to hosting arrangements, convenient travel connections for the Caribbean sub-region could be a problem in view of the geographical situation of Santiago de Chile. Another aspect is that, because of the earthquake in 2010, some parts of ECLAC's building in Santiago de Chile are still under re-construction and the work will take some time to be completed. Further consultations should be taken to clarify the details of the situation.

3. The Regional Coordination Unit in Panama City

72. The transfer of the RCU to Panama City is another option, for which there would be a need to develop two agreements: the host country agreement and the host institution agreement or MOU. There are several regional offices of the United Nations System in

Panama City such as: Regional Office of UNICEF, Regional Office of UNHCHR, Regional Office of UNDP, Regional Office of UNEP, Regional Office of UNFPA, Regional Office of WFP, Regional Office of UNJP on HIV/AIDS, Regional Office of UNOPS, Regional Office of UNISDR, Regional Project of UNODS, Sub-regional Office of FAO, Regional Centre of RAMSAR Convention (CREHO), Regional Centre of CATHALAC. The most relevant to the objectives of the Convention are: UNEP, UNDP, UNISDR, FAO, RAMSAR CONVENTION, and CATHALAC.

73. Regarding the general criteria and requirement for hosting arrangements, Panama as a country fulfils them. It is an excellent hub for LAC countries and has the most convenient travel connections and good communication facilities. Among relevant organizations and institutions, UNEP Regional Office for LAC could be the host institution of the RCU. It's worth remembering that the UNEP Regional Office for LAC was in Mexico from 1998 to 2002 and moved from Mexico City to Panama City. Additional options for the host institution could be one of the agencies such as: FAO, UNDP, UNISDR, etc.

74. Panama City also offers an important potential for synergies and partnerships with existing regional and sub-regional institutions in the country. Taking note of the conditions offered and arrangements provided to institutions located to Panama City, the RCU may benefit, from the Government of PANAMA through the National Environment Authority (ANAM), in the way such support is already begin given to other institutions as through a ten (10) years MOU with some direct support such as a material and financial contribution, support for staff member, etc.

V. Selection process leading to the establishment of a Regional Coordination Unit for Annex V country Parties

75. At the eighth session of the COP to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), in the report ICCD/COP (8)/13 the importance to coordinate efforts to ensure efficient implementation of the Convention was pointed out and the report stressed that The Strategy should consider the appropriate arrangements for the RCUs.

76. By its decision 3/COP.9, the Conference requests the Executive Secretary “*to review the current hosting arrangements of the existing RCUs and to conclude, where appropriate, new Memorandums Of Understanding with host institutions and host countries, with a view to reducing direct operational costs, accommodating additional staff, and strengthening partnerships at sub-regional and regional levels, and to explore alternatives, where appropriate*”.

77. But in the case of Annex V, the process of establishing the RCU is on going under the aegis of the UNCCD secretariat. Three (3) institutions expressed their interest to host the RCU in the region. Comparison table of applications received on or before 31 December 2010, from institutions interested to host the RCU for Annex V is made. Comparative analysis of the offers received, including the possibility to maintain the office at the headquarters, is being formulated for consideration by the parties, from 16 to 25 February 2011, during the regional consultations prior to and during the CRIC 9.

78. In the framework of this consultancy, it is stressed in the terms of reference that the report on the outputs shall include an “evaluation of the offers made by the 3 candidate institutions to host Annex V RCU should be completed by 7 February 2011, so that the conclusions or suggestions could be considered by the Parties at the regional meeting in preparation of the CRIC 9, to be held in February 2011”. It was done. Parties of the region shared the methodology and criteria used as well as the table of responses to the questionnaire received from the three institutions interested to host RCU for Annex V country Parties.

79. It is good to know that the UNCCD secretariat did not receive any official feedback from the FAO Sub-regional Office for Central and Eastern Europe based in Hungary, UNDP Regional Centre based in Slovakia and UNEP Office based in the Russian Federation. An exchange of views was held during CRIC 9 from 21 to 25 February 2011 in Bonn, Germany. The way has been paved to enable Central and Eastern European country parties to agree or not on the most suitable host institution.

A. Initial approach and proposed methodology

80. The Strategy adopted by COP 8 in Madrid, 2007, identified the concept of “result-based management (RBM)” as a useful tool for and means of addressing the need for the coordination of activities that require an integrated, systematic approach to issues under UNCCD secretariat responsibility. The approach is also aimed at involving inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations and brings Central and Eastern European country Parties together to address problems that have been identified and to jointly develop solutions contributing to the implementation of Regional Annex V.

81. This broad approach is relevant to a wide range of UNCCD initiatives. The purpose here is to “test” the effectiveness of the approach in the context of this evaluation and to identify its practical as well as strategic implications. COP 10, and its preparatory process, provide an important opportunity and target for this work. They serve as a significant venue for examining the need and potential for greater coordination during the implementation of regional Annexes.

B. Criteria for selection of the institution to host the Regional Coordination Unit for Annex V

82. Recognizing that the overall objectives are designed to address matters of coordination and interface among the stakeholders of the same region, the selection of an institution to host the RCU Annex V should be based on, and meet, several key criteria pertaining to relevance:

- (a) Feasibility: The institution must be results-oriented and a feasible outcome must be envisioned;
- (b) Knowledge: The institution must be able to incorporate advances in knowledge, science and technology;
- (c) Leadership: The institution must be a leader in responding to combating desertification, land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought;
- (d) Partnership: The institution must have partners involved in the implementation of the UNCCD;
- (e) Opportunity: The opportunity must exist to create synergies through collaboration among the relevant players, country Parties and the institution;
- (f) Resources: The institution must be able, from its own funds, to allocate resources for the functioning of the RCU as well as for the implementation of Regional Annex V, and to invite partners to do so;
- (g) Mandate: The institution interested to host the RCU must be willing to work to the implementation of the Regional Annex V;
- (h) Timing: The institution must be relevant and “ripe” for action.

C. Selected test of the three institutions interested to host the Regional Coordination Unit

83. The selected test is based on the comparison of applications received from the three institutions interested to host the RCU for Annex V and the eight criteria listed above. The final choice should take into account general criteria and requirement for hosting arrangements.

1. Feasibility

84. The feasibility criterion is linked to the experience and capacity in desertification and land-degradation control and/or drought mitigation in Central and Eastern European country Parties of each candidate to host the RCU for Annex V. In this regards, the institution should played a crucial role not only in theorizing an uncovering the threats to desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation, but also in diplomatic efforts as well as in financial resources mobilization.

85. The institution should contribute to combating desertification, controlling land degradation and mitigating the effects of drought, identify innovative alternatives, develop models of the mechanisms involved and make projections. To accomplish these roles, the representatives of the institution-candidate should be involved in political processes along with diplomats and negotiators, and to assume responsibility for the policy implementation of the Regional Annex V.

86. After analysis of the feasibility criterion, the Institute of Geography of Russian Academy of Sciences (IGRAS) came in first position, the National Centre for Desertification, Climate Change and Monitoring (NCDCCM) in second and the Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (RECC) in third.

2. Knowledge

87. The knowledge criterion concerns the capacity of the institution in networking to gain access to information on development needs in general, and land degradation, desertification and drought in particular. The Convention was designed so that country Parties, institutions, NGOs and independent experts could be, individually or collectively, commissioned periodically to reassess scientific, social, economic, financial and technological aspects related to the UNCCD and consider new problems as well as emerging challenges. The whole negotiation and implementation process was designed to minimize confrontation, work step-by-step and gradually overcome opposition, through, inter alia, regional consultation or conference.

88. With regard to this criterion, the RECC came first, the IGRAS second and NCDCCM third.

3. Leadership

89. The leadership role of the institution should be demonstrated through, inter alia, the effective connection to affected country Parties of the Regional Annex V. The institution would take the lead in making earlier and stronger proposal measures. Affected country Parties of the CEE, as appropriate, will follow with a defined time lag. Experience with the Convention shows that, even with full scientific information, the institution interested to host the RCU should have effective linkages from global to the local and from the local to the global levels. Leadership involved several aspects and success in the implementation of the Convention, particularly of the Regional Annex V, depends not only on horizontal institutional coordination and synergy, but also on vertical cooperation.

90. Taking into account this criterion, the IGRAS came first, the RECC second and the NCDCCM third.

4. Partnership

91. The process and the Convention were designed to allow solidarity, cooperation and partnership among stakeholders with a view to coming up with consensual solutions that facilitated the implementation of the Convention. Partnership should include, inter alia, travel connection to the headquarters of the institution interested to host the RCU convenient for CEE countries.

92. In the field of partnership, both inside and outside the Annex V region, the IGRAS is in first position, the RECC in second and the NCDCCM in third.

5. Opportunity

93. In terms of opportunity, the institution should play a strong role by using extensively scientific information and active provision of information to the media and the conduct of various workshops. These will be effective strategies to reach and involve a large number of people and open the door for opportunities to boost the implementation of Regional Annex V.

94. For this criterion, it seems that the three institutions are almost at the same level. It is difficult to classify them objectively. We keep them at the same level.

6. Resources

95. This concerns primarily financial resources. One outstanding issue relating to the UNCCD in general, and particularly to the RCU, is getting the strong and action-oriented commitment of all country Parties to the implementation of the Convention, including regional annexes. The institution interested to host the RCU should deployed efforts now and in the long term to facilitate the functioning of the RCU through effective financial support from its own budget and from external resources or extra budgetary resources.

96. Concerning resources criterion, the IGRAS came first with budgetary financing, the NDCCM second with budget from the Faculty of Forestry and the Ministry of Science and Technology as main source, and the RECC third with financial support providing by respective governments due to the elimination of the core budget since 2006.

7. Mandate

97. The mandate is related to the focus of the institution. None of the three institutions are specifically focused on desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation. They deal with environmental issues, including the follow up of the implementation and the evaluation of the UNCCD. But in the title or name of one of the institutions, desertification is included. It is the case of: National Centre for Desertification, Climate Change and Monitoring (NCDCCM).

98. In the framework of the mandate criterion, the three institutions are almost at the same level. It is difficult to make a good classification. Nevertheless, NCDCCM may be first, IGRAS second, and RECC third.

8. Timing

99. The timing means in other words if the institution is ready to host the RCU immediately, a few months, after the decision has been taken.

100. Analyzing answers to questions 10 to 14 of the comparison application, the IGRAS came first, the RECC second and the NCDCCM third.

101. The selection test results on the basis of the eight criteria and analysis of the comparison of applications received from the three institutions interested to host the RCU for Annex V are presented as follow:

- (a) First position: Institute of Geography of Russian Academy of Sciences (IGRAS);
- (b) Second position: Regional Environmental Centre for the Caucasus (RECC);
- (c) Third position: National Centre for Desertification, Climate Change and Monitoring (NCDCCM).

The rating as stated is to facilitate discussions and to open the door for a possible option or choice by concerned parties.

D. Guidelines and remarks

102. The answers to questions on the application contain some strong elements. They are commitments made for the good functioning of the RCU and for support needed to move forwards in the implementation process in Eastern and Central European country Parties to the Convention. The establishment of the RCU for Annex V should invigorate the implementation of the Convention in the region.

103. However, knowledge relating to desertification, land degradation and drought mitigation should be widely disseminated to the region. There is a need to pull together what is known about mechanisms of networking, knowledge networking and management, etc., to help reduce gaps in current knowledge and to eliminate the barriers to applying this knowledge in policies and debates. While the interconnections, the linkages or synergies between the UNCCD, the UNFCCC and the CBD can be a cause for potential conflicts, they can also be a vehicle for coordination and cooperation not only between the Rio Conventions but also among environmental institutions.

104. Another problem is weak national implementation of the Convention commitments. This occurs despite the presence of knowledgeable negotiators and relevant institutions in the region. In terms of finance, it would be desirable to encourage a more holistic financing approach, where the linkages between UNCCD, UNFCCC and CBD are recognized and supported together.

105. The selection or choice of the host institution for the RCU of Annex V country Parties shall take into account the general criteria and requirement for hosting arrangements adopted by the Conference of the Parties. The existing three RCUs are hosted by regional institutions: Regional Development Bank (AfDB for RCU-Africa), and Regional Economic and Social Commission of the United Nations (ESCAP for RCU-Asia/Pacific and ECLAC for RCU-LAC). The host institution for RCU-Annex V should also have regional dimension. It is not the case of the three candidate institutions. Two have national dimension (IGRAS and NCDCCM). The status of the RECC should be clarified. It seems that it is a non-governmental organization (NGO) with sub-regional dimension. In any case the NGO cannot host intergovernmental body of the United Nations System. In principle, RCU must be under the aegis of regional institution or at least sub-regional institution. The country Parties of Annex V should find ways and means to identify relevant regional or sub-regional institution interested to host the RCU.

106. From a legal point of view, the possibility to maintain the office of the RCU for Annex V at the headquarters of the Convention secretariat in Bonn is not an option to

envisage. First of all, the Convention secretariat is not an institution located in Annex V region. The secretariat is not a country Party of Annex V. The secretariat cannot be judge and party by hosting RCU that is administratively integral part of the secretariat. The secretariat cannot sign with itself a host institution MOU. The best way to do is to invite country Parties of Annex V to choose a relevant institution interested to host the RCU and take a decision at COP 10 in South Korea. Once Parties of the Central and Eastern Europe Region agree on the most suitable host institution, the legally binding agreements between the UNCCD secretariat and the host country and the host institution, as appropriate, will be signed prior to the establishment of the RCU.

107. However, if Annex V country Parties decide not to choose any institution at this stage, because none of them might be suitable, it should be clear that the services will still be provided from UNCCD Headquarters for the time being. According to decision 3/COP.9, one post per region should be provided to support RCM as such, not only the RCU, one of the three components. Therefore, one (1) core staff should be provided to support the RCM in Annex V, if the two (2) other components: the regional committee and the TPNs have been already established.

VI. Conclusions and recommendations

108. By decision 3/COP.9, the COP recognizes the importance of the regional coordination in the implementation of the Convention and The Strategy, and the need of coordination mechanisms responsive to existing and emerging challenges, capacities and the specific issues of regions. It stresses also the need to facilitate dialogue among affected country Parties on the global threat of desertification and land degradation, as well as regional specific challenges that can better addressed by creating an enabling policy environment..

109. Having considered the host -country agreements and the host institution MOUs, the study has tried to provide the UNCCD secretariat and the country Parties with information stemming from the provisions of agreements and those collected from meetings, staff members and responses to questionnaires on existing RCUs as well as on the establishment process of a RCU for Annex V countries. For this purpose, Parties may take note of some key points:

(a) Two host country agreements have been signed: one with Côte d'Ivoire in 1999, and another with Mexico in 2000, but neither were implemented. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire the agreement was not implemented, because of the transfer of the host institution from Abidjan to Tunis. Regarding Mexico, the Mexican Ministry for Foreign Affairs does not recognize the host country agreement signed by the Mexican Minister of Environment and the Executive Secretary of the Convention. The process of negotiation of the host country agreement with Thailand has not been initiated;

(b) The three host countries are not providing support to the functioning of RCUs;

(c) * Aside from Thailand, the two other host countries have not hosted relevant regional and sub-regional institutions in order to facilitate to RCUs to build partnerships for the implementation of the Convention;

(d) The host countries are not playing a proactive and leading role in the process of implementation of the Convention at regional or sub-regional level;

(e) The only partnership agreement existing with relevant regional or sub-regional institutions is with Sahara and Sahel Observatory (SSO) in Tunis;

(f) The host institutions MOUs were signed respectively in 1999 with African Development Bank, in 2000 with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific, and in 2002, with United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and The Caribbean;

(g) The implementation of MOUs with host institutions is ongoing, generally speaking, to the satisfaction of the hosting organizations and the entrusting institution;

(h) Apart from ECLAC, the UNCCD secretariat does not pay costs associated with the functioning of RCUs in Africa and in Asia;

(i) The Asia RCU has operated and conducted its daily work with zero budget since 2001. It is proposed to allocate some budget for daily operations, including rental of some facilities, a photocopier, recruitment of necessary technician and/or consultant for short period of work and communication;

(j) There is no specific programme of work between the host institution and RCUs. But for the year 2011, a clear programme of work between AfDB and RCU-Africa has been launched for the first time;

(k) The establishment process of RCU for Annex V is ongoing. The choice of the host institution is of course dependent on a number of factors, the most important of which might be a consensus decision of concerned country Parties from Central and Eastern Europe Region;

(l) Responsibilities of host countries and host institutions need to be clearly stipulated in agreements and to be known by all country Parties, to avoid diffusion of responsibilities, ensure proper communication, and, in general, ensure a smooth running of the implementation process;

(m) The case of the RCU-LAC is an urgent matter, and a special decision has to be taken. The Executive Secretary of the Convention may wish to consult the COP 9 Bureau and to take a decision based on its advice and support.

110. Following these deliberations at its tenth ordinary session in South Korea, the COP should consider taking a decision on RCUs, taking into account, as appropriate, the following suggestions, proposals and recommendations:

(a) launch the process of development, negotiation, conclusion and signature of a host country agreement with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Thailand;

(b) consider, as mentioned above in paragraph 97.13, and decide as a matter of urgency, whether to keep the RCU-LAC in Mexico City or to transfer it to Santiago de Chile or to Panama City;

(c) launch the process of a new host country agreement with Mexican Ministry for Foreign Affairs, in the case the RCU continue, to be hosted by the sub-regional office of ECLAC or, depending on the venue of the transfer, to start consultations with Chile or Panama;

(d) urge the secretariat to enhance coordination of the activities of host institutions and the RCUs as appropriate;

(e) invite host countries to provide in-kind support for the functioning of RCUs and/or financial contributions; if possible, as well as for the arrangement of small meetings/workshops and staff travel;

(f) request the secretariat to maintain arrangements with RCUs' host institutions on their share in funding certain of the operating costs;

- (g) request the secretariat, to allocate as appropriate, some budget for daily operations;**
- (h) request RCUs through the secretariat to initiate and, as appropriate, to build partnerships with relevant regional and sub-regional institutions;**
- (i) request the secretariat to consider upgrading all regional coordinators to P4/P5 Level, as appropriate;**
- (j) make information available, in an appropriate format, about relevant existing agreements, policies and legislation that needs to be shared widely;**
- (k) consider capacity-building measures for and needs of developing-country representatives and decide which capacities and skills are necessary;**
- (l) request the secretariat to report to the eleventh ordinary session of the COP on progress made and the results achieved on the implementation on the decision to be taken.**

References

A. Agreements and MOUs

- 1) Host country agreement with Côte d'Ivoire
- 2) Host country agreement with Mexico
- 3) MOU with African Development Bank
- 4) Inter-organizational Host Agreement with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP/UNESCAP)
- 5) MOU with United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC/CEPAL)
- 6) Letter of intent regarding the coordinating mechanism for Latin America and the Caribbean of the UNCCD signed by the secretariat of Environment, National Resources and Fisheries of the United Mexican States, the Regional Office for LAC of the UNEP and the Interim secretariat of the UNCCD

B. Relevant decisions and documents of the Conference of the Parties

- 1- Decision 12/COP.1
- 2- Decision 3/COP.3
- 3- Decision 4/COP.4
- 4- Decision 6/COP.5
- 5- Decision 11/COP.6
- 6- Decision 11/COP.7
- 7- Decision 3/COP.8
- 8- Decision 3/COP.9
- 9- Document ICCD/CRIC (7)/INF.6: Mechanism to facilitate the regional coordination of the implementation of the Convention
- 10- Document ICCD/COP (9)/MISC.2:
- 11- Document ICCD/COP (9)/3: Evidence-based options for improving regional coordination arrangements
- 12- Untitled document: Compilation of regional proposals
- 13- Untitled document: Terms of reference (TOR) of the relationship between the RCU of the UNCCD for Africa and its host Division of the African Development Bank
- 14- Untitled document: Regional proposal: Central and Eastern Europe
- 15- Untitled document: Setting-up the Regional Coordination Mechanism in Central and Eastern Europe to strengthen the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
- 16- Untitled table: Comparison of applications received from institutions interested to host the RCU for Annex V

Tables

Table 1
Review of existing RCU host agreements

<i>NAME OF AGREEMENTS</i>	<i>DATE & VENUE OF SIGNATURE</i>	<i>STATUS OF AGREEMENTS</i>	<i>COSTS ASSOCIATED</i>	<i>SUPPORT PROVIDED</i>	<i>EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS</i>
MOU with AfDB for RCU Africa	22 May 1999, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire	If necessary, to be update by exchange of letters (See article 9.1)	Free of charge	Logistic and administrative support for the RCU functioning	First programme of work for 2011
Interorganizational host agreement with ESCAP for RCU Asia & Pacific	13 September 2000, Bangkok, Thailand	No need for revision/update	Free of charge	Logistic and administrative support for the RCU functioning	To be established
MOU with ECLAC for RCU LAC	28 October 2002, Mexico City D.F., Mexico	Adjustments in the MOU, if RCU remains in Mexico or moves to Chile. In the case of Panama, new MOU will be signed	Costs associated payment vary from USD 10, 951.31 to USD 22, 061.51 depending on the year from 2004 to 2010	Logistic and administrative support for the RCU functioning	To be established
Host country agreement with Côte d'Ivoire	17 July 2000, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire	Need for a new host country agreement depending decision taken by African country Parties between Tunisia, Ethiopia & Kenya	No costs associated	Any support from host country Côte d'Ivoire and/or Tunisia	To be established
Host country agreement with Thailand		To be develop, Negotiate, conclude and sign as soon as possible	No costs associated	No support provided, except one office space used for small meetings	To be established
Host Country Agreement with Mexico	23 April 1999, New York, USA	Not recognized by Mexican Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Need to initiate new host country agreement, if RCU-LAC	No costs associated	No support provided, except USD 20,000.00 given on 20 August 1999 for the functioning	To be established

<i>NAME OF AGREEMENTS</i>	<i>DATE & VENUE OF SIGNATURE</i>	<i>STATUS OF AGREEMENTS</i>	<i>COSTS ASSOCIATED</i>	<i>SUPPORT PROVIDED</i>	<i>EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS</i>
		remains in Mexico City		of the RCU	
Letter of intent regarding the coordinating mechanism for LAC	17 June 1997, Mexico City, Mexico	Implemented to promote the establishment of a RCU for LAC	No costs associated	Political and diplomatic support	Between UNCCD secretariat, UNEP-ROLAC & Mexican SENRF

Legend: AfDB, DF, ECLAC, ESCAP, LAC, MOU, RCU, SENRF, UNEP-ROLAC, USD
(See list of abbreviations)

Table 2
Selection Test for Annex V RCU host institution

<i>SELECTION CRITERIA</i>	<i>IGRAS (Russian Federation)</i>	<i>NCDCCM (Serbia)</i>	<i>RECC (Georgia)</i>
FEASIBILITY	First position	Second position	Third position
KNOWLEDGE	Second position	Third position	First position
LEADERSHIP	First position	Third position	Second position
PARTNERSHIP	First position	Third position	Second position
OPPORTUNITY	Equally placed	Equally placed	Equally placed
RESOURCES	First position	Second position	Third position
MANDATE	Second position	First position	Third position
TIMING	First position	Third position	Second position
RESULT	First position	Third position	Second position
STATUS	National Institute	National Centre	Sub-regional NGO

Legend:

- IGRAS: Institute of Geography of Russian Academy of Sciences
- NCDCCM: National Center for Desertification, Climate Change and Monitoring
- RECC: Regional Environmental Centre for Caucasus

Remarks:

The choice of the host institution by Annex V country Parties shall take into account the general criteria and requirement for hosting arrangements adopted by COP 9. In this regard, the RCU must be under the aegis of a regional institution or at least sub-regional institution. Any of three institutions interested to host the RCU for Annex V did not have the required regional focus and mandate. A final decision on the host institution of the RCU for Annex V could be reached by a consensus of the CEE country Parties concerned, perhaps at the regional meeting prior to COP 10.

Annex I

[English and French]

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
Review of the hosting arrangements of the existing UNCCD
Regional Coordination Units

QUESTIONNAIRE TO REPRESENTATIVES OF COUNTRY PARTIES
ON THE EVALUATION OF RCU_s HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS

QUESTIONNAIRE AUX REPRESENTANTS DES PAYS PARTIES
SUR L'ÉVALUATION DES ARRANGEMENTS DE SIÈGE DES UCR

(In English and French)

Questionnaire on the evaluation of the hosting arrangements for the Regional Coordination Units

Questionnaire sur l'évaluation des arrangements de siège des unités de coordination régionale

A. On the host country agreement / Sur l'accord siège avec le Pays Hôte

1- *Are you aware about the host country agreement of your region (Africa, Asia or Latin America and the Caribbean), signed by a minister of the Government concerned and the Executive Secretary of the Convention? If so, please give some elements of appreciation.

*Avez-vous connaissance de l'Accord de siège avec le Pays Hôte de votre région (Afrique, Asie ou Amérique Latine et Caraïbes) signé par un Ministre du Gouvernement concerné et le Secrétaire Exécutif de la Convention ? Si oui, donnez quelques éléments d'appréciation.

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2- *Do you think that this legal instrument should be revised? If so, why?

*Pensez-vous que cet instrument juridique devrait être révisé ? Si oui, Pourquoi ?

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3- *What are the concrete support measures provided by the host country for the RCU functioning in your region?

*Quels sont les appuis concrets fournis par le Pays Hôte pour le fonctionnement de l'UCR de votre région ?

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4- *What are the relevant regional and sub-regional institutions or organizations located in the host country of your region? Have they built or are in they in the process of building a partnership with the RCU of your region?

*Quels sont les institutions ou organisations régionales et sous régionales pertinentes situées dans le Pays Hôte de votre région ? Ont-elles établi ou sont –elles en voie d’établir un partenariat avec l’UCR de votre Région ?

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5- *What are the advantages and limitations of the existing host country agreement of your region?

*Quels sont les avantages et les limites de l’actuel Accord de siège de votre Région?

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6- *What are the advantages and limitations of the current host institution of the RCU of your region?

*Quels sont les avantages et inconvénients de l’actuel Pays Hôte de l’UCR de votre Région?

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7- *What would be the ideal contribution from the host country to support the functioning of the RCU of your region?

*Quelle pourrait être la contribution idéale du Pays Hôte pour appuyer le fonctionnement de l'UCR de votre Région?

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B. On the host institution memorandum of understanding / Sur le mémorandum d'entente avec l'Institution Hôte

8- *What were the annual associated costs, from 2000 to 2010, provided by the host institution regarding the functioning of the RCU of your region?

*Quels sont par an, de 2000 à 2010, les coûts associés octroyés par l'Institution Hôte concernant le fonctionnement de l'UCR de votre Région ?

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9- *What kind of logistic and administrative support the host institution provided for the RCU functioning of your region?

*Quel type d'appui logistique et administratif l'Institution Hôte fourni pour le fonctionnement de l'UCR de votre Région ?

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10- *What are the institutional advantages and limitations of the existing MOU with the host institution of the RCU of your region?

*Quels sont les avantages et les limites institutionnels de l'actuel mémorandum d'entente avec l'Institution Hôte de l'UCR de votre Région ?

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11- *Do you think that another institution could host the RCU of your region? If so, what would be the added value?

*Pensez-vous qu'une autre Institution pourrait accueillir l'UCR de votre Région ? Si oui, quelle sera la plus-value ?

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12- *Does the current host institution offer enough office space and other office supplies and equipment to the RCU of your region? If not, what would be your proposal to improve the situation?

*Est-ce que l'actuelle Institution Hôte a offert assez d'espace de Bureaux et autres accessoires et équipement de Bureau au RCU de votre Région ? Si non, quelle est votre proposition pour améliorer la situation ?

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Annex II

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION REVIEW OF THE HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE EXISTING UNCCD REGIONAL COORDINATION UNITS

QUESTIONNAIRE TO REGIONAL COORDINATORS OF RCUs (AFRICA, ASIA and LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN)

Questionnaire

1- What is the main problem or difficulty you are facing with the host institution on one hand, and with the host country on the other, in the framework of the functioning of the RCU of your region?

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2- What proposal would you made to improve the working relationship with the host institution and the host country?

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3- In case of revision of the MOU and the host country agreement, what new provisions you would like to introduce in the revised legal instruments?

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4- Do you think that the transfer of the RCU of your region to another country and hosting by another Institution would be an option for a better functioning of the unit? If so, could you explain; if not, give some elements of appreciation.

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5- Taking into account your experience and expertise, what kind of partnership should the RCU build with the relevant regional and sub-regional institutions or organizations of your region to accelerate the implementation of your Annex?

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6- With regard to the synergy between the Rio Conventions, how do you see the role that the RCU can play in your region?

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7- What kind of bridge can be built to facilitate the integration of actions in the framework of sustainable development and lead by the RCU of your region?

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8- What are the advantages and limitations of the current host institution and host country of the RCU of your region?

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9- What would be the ideal contribution from the host country and the host institution to support the functioning of the RCU of your region?

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10- What were the annual associated costs from 2000 to 2010 provided by the host institution regarding the functioning of the RCU of your region?

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11- What kind of logistic and administrative support the host institution provided for the RCU functioning of your region?

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12- What are the institutional advantages and limitations of the existing MOU with the host institution of the RCU of your region?

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13- Did you think that another institution could host the RCU of your region? If so, what would be the added value?

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14- Does the current host institution offer enough office space and other office supplies and equipment to the RCU of your region? If not, what would be your proposal to improve the situation?

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Annex III

[English and French]

UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION REVIEW OF THE HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE EXISTING UNCCD REGIONAL COORDINATION UNITS

QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK IN CHARGE OF THE RCU FOR AFRICA

Tunis, 2 March 2011

Questionnaire

1- What is your opinion, of the cooperation between the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the secretariat of the Convention (UNCCD) in the framework of the implementation of the Convention after twelve (12) years of existence

- Quelle appréciation faites-vous, après douze (12) ans d'existence, de la coopération entre la Banque Africaine de Développement (BAD) et le Secrétariat de la Convention (UNCCD) dans le cadre de la mise en œuvre de la Convention ?

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2- What were the annual associated costs, from 2000 to 2010, provided by the host institution regarding the functioning of the RCU of your region?

- Quels sont par an, de 2000 à 2010, les coûts associés octroyés par la Banque Africaine de Développement (BAD) pour le fonctionnement de l'UCR ?

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3- What are the projects financed by AfDB in the framework of combating desertification?

- Quels sont les projets financés par la BAD dans le cadre de la lutte contre la désertification ?

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4- What are the institutional advantages and limitations of the existing MOU signed with the secretariat Convention?

- Quels sont les avantages et les limites institutionnels de l'actuel Mémoire d'Entente signé avec le Secrétariat de la Convention ?

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5- Could you offer more office space and other office supplies and equipment to the RCU?

- Pourriez-vous offrir plus de Bureaux et autres accessoires et équipements de Bureau à l'UCR?

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6- Do you have some proposals to improve the partnership with the secretariat Convention, including the MOU of 22 May 1999

- Avez-vous des propositions pour améliorer le partenariat avec le Secrétariat de la Convention, y compris le Mémoire d'Entente du 22 mai 1999

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Annex IV

**UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION
REVIEW OF THE HOSTING ARRANGEMENTS OF THE EXISTING
UNCCD REGIONAL COORDINATION UNITS**

**QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE STAFF OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATION
UNIT
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Mexico City, March 14, 2011

Questionnaire

1- What is the main problem or difficulty you are facing with the host institution on one hand, and with the host country on the other, in the framework of the functioning of the RCU of your region?

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2- What proposal would you made to improve the working relationship with the host institution and the host country?

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3- How many regional and sub-regional institutions relevant to the UNCCD objectives have their headquarters in Mexico City? Have you established a partnership with them?

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4- What are the advantages and limitations of the existing MOU or letters exchanged with ECLAC? Do we need to revise them or to develop a new legal instrument?

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5- Could you provide me with a copy of the initial MOU concluded in 1998 with the UNEP Regional Office in Mexico City before its transfer to Panama City?

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6- What provisions of the current host country agreement should be revised to help you operate in Mexico?

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7- Did the host country provided support to the RCU functioning in the framework of the implementation of the host country agreement signed in 1999? If not, what are constraints and difficulties for the implementation?

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8- What are the limitations of the location of the RCU in Mexico City? Where would the best place be with regard to the hosting arrangements adopted by the Conference of the Parties?

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9- If COP 10 takes a decision to transfer the RCU from Mexico City to Santiago de Chile or to Panama City, how much will this transfer cost?

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10- In the event of a transfer to Santiago de Chile or Panama City, do you think that the current costs associated with the functioning of the RCU will increase or decrease?

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11- What will be the advantages and potential limitations of the location of the RCU to Santiago de Chile or Panama City?

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12- If the RCU continues to be located in Mexico City, how much will the transfer of ECLAC/CEPAL from the current building to a new, rented building cost?

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13- Have you established a partnership with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and the Andean Development Corporation (ADC)? If so, how many projects have been submitted and financed by each financial institution?

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14- Do you have enough office space? Are you satisfied with the current logistic and administrative support?

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15- What are your main requirements to improve the functioning of the RCU and facilitate the implementation of the Convention among the annex III country Parties?

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Annex V

Main actions taken by the Regional Coordination Unit in Africa in cooperation with its host institution, the African Development Bank

2004–2007- PSDU (Gender, Population and Environment)

- Flyer on RCU funded by the bank
- Meeting with different operational units of the bank to explain the UNCCD principles and priorities.
- Training about the UNCCD given to bank task managers in collaboration with PSDU.
- Exploration of possibility of having land-degradation projects co-funded by the bank and Global Environment Facility since the bank had become an executing agency of the GEF (mainly trans-boundary projects on date palms in the Sahel region submitted by ICRISAT and Kalahari-Namib Project: enhancing decision-making through interactive environmental learning and action in the Molopo-Nossob River Basin in Botswana, Namibia and South Africa)
- Development of joint projects to mobilize resources from the Danish and Italian trust funds of the bank to develop a bank project in the field of land degradation.
- Two visits of the UNCCD Executive Secretary (ES) to the presidents (old and new) of the bank

2007–2008 ORPC3 (Gender, Population, Environment and Climate Change)

- Follow-up of financing of proposed projects.
 - Funds obtained from Danish trust fund (USD147.000) to recruit a consultant to develop a bank project in the field of DLDD. Consultant recruited, meetings held with OSAN3 staff and the consultant to identify areas both thematic and geographical in which the projects could be developed. After consultations, it was decided to develop projects both in Burkina Faso and Niger with the idea that one of them would be sent to the GEF for financing:
1. “Project preparation document for the second phase of the "*Gestion durable des forêts naturelles*", P-NE-AA-0-018 Project. The project preparation document will include two elements: an additional sustainable land management (SLM) component with special focus on land degradation and a revision of the forest management component in the document prepared by the Government Of Niger. The revision will focus on SLM. The total value of the revised project is expected to be around USD 25 million.
 2. Project preparation document for an SLM component to complement the project “Water Resource Planning and Irrigation Investment in the Volta and Niger Basins” with

special focus on the southern Burkina Faso. The total value of the project is expected to be around unit of account USD 30 to 40 million.

3. A GEF-OP 15 concept paper following the requirements established by GEF and based on a baseline that will one of the two proposed SLM projects prepared for Niger and Burkina Faso.” (At the end, only the project for Burkina Faso was retained).

- Preparation of a pipeline of proposals in the field of land degradation to be submitted to the GEF for co-financing (the pipeline was mentioned in the vice-president speech to the GEF council)
- Follow-up on projects submitted to the bank by UNCCD country Parties (Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mali).
- Involvement in the initiative on land reform for Africa promoted by the bank, AUC and ECA.
- Organization of a joint visit by the UNCCD ES and GM MD to the president of the bank.
- Ensure participation of the bank in the COP 8
- Facilitation of GM missions aiming at organizing the portfolio review of the bank’s activities in the field of DLDD.

2009–2010 ORPC3/OSUS/OSAN

- Following the resignation of the head of ORPC3, briefings and collaboration framework were submitted to the new acting director of ORPC3. Meetings were also held together with ORRU (external relations) to make a follow-up of the ES and MD mission and revise the existing MOU between the bank and the secretariat. However UNCCD HQ advice to halt the process until further instructions following the forthcoming COP 9.
- Once the decision on RCM was taken by COP.9, the bank undertook a restructuring exercise which led to the creation of a new unit in charge of environment, gender, population and climate changes, OSUS.
- Facilitation of a mission of the GM to follow-up the portfolio review.
- Participation in OSUS retreat and finalization of a joint UNCCD/RCU – OSUS work programme. But at the beginning of 2010 the bank had a further restructuring and OSUS was dissolved.
- Facilitation of the redeployment of Boubacar Cisse and Wafa Essahli to the RCU
- Follow-up of the relocation of the RCU within OSAN.
- Finalization of a cooperation framework with OSAN.