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#### Procedural matters

**Revised procedures for the accreditation of civil society organizations and representatives from the private sector to the Conference of the Parties and their participation in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification**

## **Revised procedures for the accreditation of civil society organizations and representatives from the private sector to the Conference of the Parties and their participation in meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification**

### Note by the secretariat

#### *Summary*


By its decision 5/COP.11, the Conference of the Parties (COP) requested the secretariat to address a number of issues relevant to the involvement of civil society organizations (CSOs) and business and industry entities in the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) process. The COP requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate the renewal of membership to the Civil Society Organization Selection Panel and requested the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to develop a business engagement strategy outlining the objectives, modalities and conditions of the partnerships of the UNCCD with business and industry entities.

By the same decision, the COP requested the Executive Secretary to report at its twelfth session (COP 12) on the implementation of the decision, including the report of the Civil Society Organization Selection Panel on the implementation of its tasks.

This document contains the reports of the Executive Secretary and the CSO panel on the measures undertaken by the secretariat to implement the above-mentioned decision and the text of the UNCCD business engagement strategy, and provides recommendations for consideration at COP 12.

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## Contents

	<i>Paragraphs</i>	<i>Page</i>
I. Introduction and background.....	1–2	3
II. Involvement of the private sector and preparation of the UNCCD business engagement strategy.....	3–5	3
III. Implementation of the procedures for the participation of civil society organizations in meetings and processes of the UNCCD .....	6–17	4
A. Renewal of the membership of the Civil Society Organization Selection Panel .....	6–8	4
B. Discharging the mandate of the Civil Society Organization Selection Panel ..	9–13	5
C. Involvement of youth and indigenous peoples organizations .....	14–17	6
IV. Conclusions and recommendations .....	18–19	6
<b>Annexes</b>		
I. The UNCCD and business: Partnership opportunities for sustainable land management .....		8
II. Report of the Civil Society Organization Selection Panel.....		18
III. Financial requirements for the implementation of the activities to be funded from extrabudgetary resources.....		22

## **I. Introduction and background**

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 5/COP.10, introduced amendments to the procedure of accreditation of civil society organizations (CSOs) to the COP, including modifications to the composition of the Civil Society Organization Selection Panel (the Panel), which was originally established by decision 5/COP.9. It also agreed to grant observer status to those business and industry entities that fulfil specific requirements.

2. By its decision 5/COP.11, the COP defined the composition of the Panel (see paragraph 12 below). By the same decision, the COP requested the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) to further promote the involvement of business and private entities in the meetings and processes of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and to develop a business engagement strategy outlining the objectives, modalities and conditions of UNCCD partnerships with business and private entities for consideration and approval of the Bureau of the COP ad interim and for consideration at the twelfth session of the COP (COP 12). The decision also requested the secretariat to report on its implementation at COP 12.

## **II. Involvement of the private sector and preparation of the UNCCD business engagement strategy**

3. Since the adoption of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy) at COP 8, the private sector has been playing a more prominent role in the UNCCD process. At COP 10 Parties agreed on the procedure to facilitate the participation of the business and industry entities as observers at the sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.

4. In response to the request referred to in paragraph 2 above, the secretariat and the GM drafted a document containing the principles and objectives of the engagement with the private sector. By the end of 2013 a document entitled “The UNCCD and business: partnership opportunities for sustainable land management” containing the business engagement strategy referred to in paragraph 2 above had been finalized and opened for comment and suggestion. The amended document was circulated to relevant actors, including the CSOs accredited to the COP. The first in-person meeting of the Panel, held from 4 to 6 February 2014, provided additional input to the final document, which included the comments from the respective CSO constituencies. As requested by decision 5/COP.11, the final text including this input was submitted to the Bureau of the COP at its meeting on 18 February 2014 for consideration and approval. After the meeting, the secretariat stated that the business engagement strategy would be implemented and the guidelines applied but any further comments on the strategy from the Bureau of the COP would be welcomed prior to the finalization at COP 12.

5. The text of the business engagement strategy comprises two sections, one developing the strategy and the other with the accent on the principles and guidelines for private sector engagement, setting out the basis for the due diligence process when partnering with the private sector. The text is contained in annex I to this document for the endorsement of Parties.

### **III. Implementation of the procedures for the participation of civil society organizations in meetings and processes of the UNCCD**

#### **A. Renewal of the membership of the Civil Society Organization Selection Panel**

6. According to paragraph 4 of decision 5/COP.11, the Panel should comprise two representatives from the secretariat and one representative of CSOs from countries belonging to each of the five United Nations Regional Groups of Member States (African Group, Asia-Pacific Group, Eastern European Group, Latin American and the Caribbean Group, Western European and Others Group). In paragraph 5 of the same decision, the COP requested the Executive Secretary to facilitate the renewal of memberships to the Panel by January 2014. Following this provision, and as a result of the consultations conducted with the accredited CSOs in November 2013, the following members were appointed:

- (a) Mr. Juan Luis Mérega<sup>1</sup> (Chair);
- (b) Mr. Emmanuel Seck;<sup>2</sup>
- (c) Mr. Tanveer Arif;<sup>3</sup>
- (d) Ms. Elmedina Krilasevic;<sup>4</sup>
- (e) Mr. Patrice Burger;<sup>5</sup>
- (f) Ms. Anja Thust;<sup>6</sup>
- (g) Mr. Richard Byron-Cox.<sup>7</sup>

7. Since January 2014 the Panel has met 11 times, 3 times in person and the rest via telephone conferencing, in order to deliver its original mandate. The secretariat has supported the work of the Panel and prepared the required documents and follow-up as requested by the members.

8. Some CSOs have expressed their interest in enlarging the representativity of the Panel by including subregional representatives, which could give an impulse to the implementation at the subregional and national levels. Other CSOs are advocating for the establishment of United Nations Major Groups, as identified in Agenda 21, within the

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<sup>1</sup> Fundación Agreste, Argentina, member of Red Internacional de Organizaciones contra la Desertificación (RIOD-LAC), representative of the Latin American and the Caribbean Group.

<sup>2</sup> Environnement et Développement du Tiers Monde (ENDA TM), Senegal. Member of ENDA International network and of the Réseau International des ONG sur la Désertification Africa network.

<sup>3</sup> Society for Conservation and Protection of Environment, Pakistan. Member of Drynet. Representative of the Asia-Pacific Group.

<sup>4</sup> Forestry and Environmental Action (FEA), Bosnia and Herzegovina. Representative of the Central and Eastern European Group. In early 2015, Ms. Sonja Malicevic was nominated by FEA to substitute Ms. Krilasevic, who had left the organization.

<sup>5</sup> Centre d'Actions et de Réalisations Internationales, (CARI). France. Member of Drynet Groupe de Travail Désertification and Réseau Associatif de Développement Durable des Oasis. Representative of the Western European and Others Group.

<sup>6</sup> UNCCD secretariat, Programme Officer and secretary to the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention.

<sup>7</sup> UNCCD secretariat, Action Programme Alignment and Capacity Building Officer.

Convention as is the case for other United Nations conventions and bodies. The issue is still under consideration by the CSO community since ensuring the participation of all these potential new actors may have financial implications.

## **B. Discharging the mandate of the Civil Society Organization Selection Panel**

9. The Panel was initially established to select the CSO representatives that will receive financial support to attend the sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies. During the current biennium, two meetings of the governing bodies have been organized to date:

(a) The fourth special session of the Committee on Science and Technology (held in Cancun, Mexico, from 9 to 12 March 2015);

(b) The thirteenth session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (held in Bonn, Germany, from 25 to 27 March 2015).

10. The financial resources available in the Trust Fund for Participation in the UNFCCC Process allowed for only five representatives of the Panel to attend the sessions. It is expected that the funds available for COP 12 will enable the Panel to undertake its original task.

11. The Government of Switzerland provided substantial financial resources that enabled the Panel to carry out its work successfully in the current biennium. In general terms, the financial support assisted the Panel in carrying out the following:

(a) Consultation with the representatives of the accredited CSOs and existing networks<sup>8</sup> so as to provide advice to UNCCD bodies and institutions. This was the case for the finalization of the business engagement strategy and the inclusion of the CSO inputs to the Science–Policy Interface and the intergovernmental working group on the follow up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;

(b) Promotion of the accreditation of additional CSOs to participate in the UNCCD process;

(c) Strengthening of the communication among CSOs and existing networks through the preparation of three issues of the Panel newsletter<sup>9</sup> and the preparation of the publication *Civil Society: Stewards of the Land*;<sup>10</sup>

(d) Contribution to the reporting process, including the preparation of the templates that were used by the CSOs to provide the relevant information to their respective national focal points;

(e) Facilitation of the involvement of additional stakeholders within the UNCCD, including the youth and indigenous peoples organizations.

12. The Panel was also involved in the preparation of the CSO meeting Desertif'actions 2015 organized by the French organization CARI in collaboration with several partners, including the secretariat.<sup>11</sup> The event was given the label "Paris 2015" by the French Council of Ministers in preparation for the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in

<sup>8</sup> <<https://groups.google.com/forum/#!forum/unccd-cso>>.

<sup>9</sup> <[www.unccd.int/en/Stakeholders/civil-society/newsroom/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.unccd.int/en/Stakeholders/civil-society/newsroom/Pages/default.aspx)>.

<sup>10</sup> <[www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/Publications/CSO%20ENG%203\\_7\\_14%20small.pdf](http://www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/Publications/CSO%20ENG%203_7_14%20small.pdf)>.

<sup>11</sup> <<http://desertif-actions.fr/en/>>.

Paris, France, in November–December 2015, and focused on the issues of land and climate. It was also used as a preparatory CSO conference for COP 12.

13. The current Panel, which will serve until the end of 2015, is expected to meet at least three times in preparation for COP 12. The interim report of the Panel covering the period from January 2014 to June 2015 is contained in annex II to this document.

### **C. Involvement of youth and indigenous peoples organizations**

14. By its decision 5/COP.11, the COP invited Parties to promote the active involvement of CSOs, including those of indigenous peoples, local communities and youth, in the Convention process at the international level. In this regard, the secretariat is working with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and supported the involvement of civil society representatives in the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples held in New York, United States of America, in September 2014.

15. The secretariat, on behalf of the Panel, collaborated with the United Nations Development Programme in its Equator Initiative, under which the Equator Prize is awarded biennially. In 2014, one award was devoted to local communities and indigenous peoples working on sustainable land management. The award ceremony was held together with a capacity-building training workshop, in which 30 local community representatives from sub-Saharan countries participated.

16. The secretariat also collaborated with the World Indigenous Network, particularly in the framework of the activities related to COP 12 and the issue of land rights, which will be discussed during the in-session ministerial dialogue with the CSOs.

17. Youth organizations have been encouraged to collaborate with the national focal points in implementing the Convention at the national level.

## **IV. Conclusions and recommendations**

**18. With the aim of encouraging a more effective participation of civil society in UNCCD meetings and processes, and taking into consideration the implementation of decisions 5/COP.10 and 5/COP.11, the COP at its twelfth session may wish to:**

**(a) Consider the business engagement strategy as considered and approved by the Bureau of the COP ad interim, the text of which is contained in annex I to this document, and request the secretariat and the GM to continue implementing it when engaging in partnership with the private sector;**

**(b) Encourage those countries which have no or few CSOs accredited to the COP to promote the involvement of their organizations in the UNCCD process at the international level, in order to ensure more balanced participation of CSOs in the sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies;**

**(c) Request the secretariat and the Panel to make proposals to the Bureau of the COP on ways to expand its membership by either involving subregional representatives or institutionalizing major groups;**

**(d) Request the Executive Secretary to facilitate the renewal of the membership of the Panel in January 2016 in accordance with paragraph 19 above;**

**(e) Urge developed country Parties, international and financial organizations and CSOs and private sector institutions to consider contributing substantially and promptly to the Supplementary Fund and Special Fund of the**

**Convention with the aim of ensuring wider participation of CSOs in UNCCD meetings and processes;**

**(f) Request the Executive Secretary to report to the COP at its thirteenth session on the implementation of the final decision taken by the COP and the Panel on the implementation of its tasks during the forthcoming biennium.**

**19. Annex III contains an estimate of the financial requirements for supporting the work of the UNCCD civil society panel and ensuring the balanced participation of the CSO representatives in the meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies, to be funded from extrabudgetary resources.**

## Annex I

### **The UNCCD and business: Partnership opportunities for sustainable land management<sup>1</sup>**

#### **Context**

1. The Conference of the Parties (COP), by its decision 5/COP.10 (paragraph 4), decided to grant observer status and participation in official meetings of the governing bodies of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) to those business and industry entities that: (a) have expressed interest in participating in meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies; (b) have specific expertise in matters relating to the Convention; and (c) participate in the United Nations Global Compact. In the case where an organization does not participate in the United Nations Global Compact, clearance prior to its accreditation shall be requested from the United Nations Procurement Division and the United Nations Ethics Office, where appropriate.<sup>2</sup> Six business sector entities were accredited as observers at the eleventh session of the COP (COP 11).

2. By its decision 5/COP.11 (paragraph 2), the COP requested the secretariat and the Global Mechanism (GM) to further promote the involvement of business and private entities in UNCCD meetings and processes, and to develop a business engagement strategy outlining the objectives, modalities and conditions of UNCCD partnerships with business and private entities for consideration and approval of the Bureau of the COP ad interim and for consideration at COP 12.

3. Part 1 of this text briefly sets out a UNCCD business sector engagement strategy (including objectives). It is not fully comprehensive as it does not attempt to capture all the specific work of the GM on the identification of innovative financial opportunities and promotion of sustainable land management (SLM)-smart investments by the private sector, the financial sector and capital investors. These activities are a major component of the existing GM mandate. Rather, it identifies broad areas of activity that can help to generate business commitment to SLM and open the door to partnership opportunities with UNCCD stakeholders.

4. Part 2 outlines the principles and guidelines (modalities and conditions) to be applied by the secretariat in developing partnerships with business and industry entities, with a view to avoiding any political risk for the UNCCD arising from any future engagement.

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<sup>1</sup> All terms included in this text refer to the agreed definitions compiled in the UNCCD glossary for performance and impact indicators, financial flows and best practices used for the reporting exercise and those contained in the preamble of the Convention.

<sup>2</sup> Information on the accreditation process is available at <[www.unccd.int/en/Stakeholders/civil-society/Accreditation-process/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.unccd.int/en/Stakeholders/civil-society/Accreditation-process/Pages/default.aspx)>.



## I. Part 1. The UNCCD and business: an engagement strategy

### A. Background

5. The private sector/business and industry entities (the business sector)<sup>3</sup> are important stakeholders in the desertification/land degradation and drought (DLDD) arena.

6. Degrading land is an underperforming asset for the business sector – often with significant productivity yield gaps. Business can play an important part in changing the current land management paradigm where economic behaviour encourages unsustainable practices (such as overcultivation, overgrazing, deforestation, improper of irrigation, resource extraction that lowers water tables) that degrade land. If the business sector increasingly supports and adopts SLM techniques along its value chains, business will be part of the solution to multiple development challenges. By building on existing best practice and adopting SLM, business will be a change agent for good with direct benefits for the triple bottom line (financial, social and environmental performance).

### B. Objectives and rationale

7. The objective of the secretariat is to encourage investment in SLM, develop vibrant partnerships for SLM implementation and help businesses evolve their corporate practice regarding land management. Elements of the rationale for this approach include:

(a) Implementation of the 10-year strategic plan and framework to enhance the implementation of the Convention (2008–2018) (The Strategy) – specifically, but not limited to, operational objective 5 (Financing and technology transfer) and outcome 5.4 (Innovative sources of finance and financing mechanisms are identified to combat desertification/land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought, including from the private sector, market-based mechanisms, trade, foundations and CSOs, and other financing mechanisms for climate change adaptation and mitigation, biodiversity conservation and sustainable use and for hunger and poverty reduction);

(b) Operationalization of component II of the Changwon Initiative, “Mobilizing additional resources and facilitating partnership arrangements”;<sup>4</sup>

(c) Defining the UNCCD as the lead agency for SLM issues for business sector entities affected by DLDD;

(d) Harnessing business skills, talents and networks in the campaign to reverse land degradation trends;

(e) Complementing the “Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector”<sup>5</sup> and the United Nations Environment Management Group’s *Global Drylands: A UN System-wide Response*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> ‘Business sector’ rather than ‘private sector’ is used in this text because it is focusing on ‘for profit’ companies, business networks and mission-oriented business/social enterprises. Civil society and non-governmental organizations, ‘not for profit’ companies and think tanks are not included in this strategy.

<sup>4</sup> Pages 9 and 10 of the Changwon Initiative; available at <[www.unccd.int/Lists/OfficialDocuments/cop10/misc5rev4eng.pdf](http://www.unccd.int/Lists/OfficialDocuments/cop10/misc5rev4eng.pdf)>.

<sup>5</sup> <<https://business.un.org/en/documents/guidelines>>.

<sup>6</sup> <[www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/Publications/Global\\_Drylands\\_Full\\_Report.pdf](http://www.unccd.int/Lists/SiteDocumentLibrary/Publications/Global_Drylands_Full_Report.pdf)>.

## **C. Approach**

8. The aim of the UNCCD business engagement is to identify ways for the UNCCD to proactively engage with a wide range of stakeholders across the business sector and promote their use of SLM approaches and techniques.

9. UNCCD-relevant policy issues with a high impact on DLDD and that are of a high level of concern to business are: food security, water scarcity and energy challenges. Climate change mitigation and adaptation, as well as forced migration, may also be considered as entry points. All of these entry points directly impact and undermine human security, social stability and business potential.

10. Demonstrating the impact of land degradation on the triple bottom line, thereby making the business case for SLM, will be paramount.

11. SLM encompasses but is not limited to: increasing population resilience, improving land management, diversifying production, restoring land, maintaining biodiversity, controlling erosion and using non-wood energy sources. All of these approaches are crucially important for food security, energy challenges and water scarcity issues and can be directly linked to economic stability and business activity.

12. With this in mind, in order to efficiently support partnership development, the UNCCD will principally target companies most likely to be affected by these DLDD issues and most likely to receive direct business benefits from the adoption of SLM approaches.

13. The business sector should feel that it is a stakeholder in the UNCCD process. The UNCCD promotes and has good practice approaches on SLM technologies covering adaptation, capacity-building and awareness-raising, monitoring and assessment, knowledge management and decision support, as well as a financing, policy and institutional framework. This knowledge and experience is not only valuable for businesses, but when properly packaged ensures the credibility and legitimacy of the UNCCD with business.

## **D. Brief strategy for implementation**

### **1. Establishing an enabling policy environment**

14. The UNCCD will establish a framework that allows business to participate in UNCCD processes. In this regard, the following objectives are proposed:

(a) To accredit an increasing number of business entities to UNCCD core events, following the accreditation process approved by Parties;

(b) To foster the SLM Business Forum as a coordinating platform for business support for SLM and the UNCCD process and encourage the implementation of the declaration of the SLM Business Forum (Windhoek Declaration);<sup>7</sup>

(c) To articulate a UNCCD business proposition explaining the value to business of engagement in the UNCCD process;

(d) To articulate and translate the implications of DLDD challenges and policy into business-relevant formats and concrete concepts;

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<sup>7</sup> Contained in annex VI to document ICCD/COP(11)/23.

(e) To analyse potential synergies that should be pursued with other entities in the United Nations system and beyond in order to establish a platform for effective partnership development and to avoid duplication of effort;

(f) To build a platform, based on the Scientific Knowledge Brokering Portal, for knowledge and information exchange and dissemination of SLM good practices relevant to business;

(g) To increase the number of business sector entities involved in the sustainable management of and investment in the land that meet the United Nations Global Compact and United Nations responsible investment principles related to the environment.

## **2. Engaging global business networks**

15. Recognizing the importance, strength and level of influence of global business networks is instrumental for the first stage of engagement with the business sector as a whole. Identifying and engaging with these networks is a way to gain credibility, access a large pool of potential companies and influence SLM and land use at the global level using limited resources. In this regard, the following objectives are proposed:

(a) To identify and engage with the major global business networks that have sustainability agendas open to SLM approaches (Global Compact principles, World Business Council for Sustainable Development, World Economic Forum, International Chamber of Commerce) and mainstream SLM targets into these agendas;

(b) To leverage these business networks and their events to promote the business case for SLM uptake;

(c) To form partnerships and jointly develop tools that help business to mainstream SLM into the business operations, practices and policies of network members.

## **3. Identifying and targeting core business sectors**

16. Desertification, land degradation and drought are issues that could be attributed to all human activity. Businesses with a heavy land footprint, such as in the agriculture, construction and energy production sectors, can be a major cause of DLDD and are a major concern. Other companies may see their activities affected by the consequences of DLDD (sectors such as tourism). However, at the start of business engagement it is more suitable and productive to focus on engagement with companies whose core business involves land use (large land footprint) and where SLM may be of considerable importance to the triple bottom line. In this regard, the following objectives are proposed:

(a) To identify and engage with key companies globally that are involved in activities with a high impact on land with the potential to directly implement and promote good SLM practices. Companies engaged in the following activities may, in particular, be engaged: forestry and agro-industry; agricultural production, including seed and fertilizer manufacturers; cattle/meat production; mining and extractives; water and sewage treatment; construction; energy production; and financial services, such as insurance and investment/banking;

(b) To define and assess the UNCCD-specific notion of impact according to an objective set of criteria;

(c) To develop standard definitions of (and guidelines for) SLM for various land-use sectors/industries in the primary, secondary and tertiary sector (developing those guidelines and definitions for sectors/industries with the highest impact first);

(d) To develop advocacy and outreach products that make the UNCCD more relevant and accessible to the specific high-impact sectors;

(e) To develop collaborative projects on SLM which learn from key business sector expertise and strengthen the UNCCD decision-making process; in particular, to understand the bottlenecks in SLM uptake, to propose policy solutions and strengthen capacity for implementation.

#### **4. Developing knowledge and encouraging innovation**

17. The UNCCD Parties and the business sector should share knowledge, relevant technologies and SLM innovations. In this regard, the following objectives are proposed:

(a) To support the documentation of business-relevant evidence for action and case studies for the Economics of Land Degradation Initiative (for business) or the Offering Sustainable Land-use Options consortium;

(b) To aim to encourage SLM innovation (although the UNCCD cannot endorse a particular product or technology) by exploring how industry research can be blended with traditional knowledge/practice on SLM.

#### **5. Financing for sustainable land management through incentives and market-based funding mechanisms**

18. Such incentives and market-based funding mechanisms would encourage the restoration of degraded land. Fiscal instruments or market-based mechanisms can directly generate or influence the flows of funds by attracting or redirecting them into SLM. In this regard, the following objectives are proposed:

(a) To provide advice to stakeholders on innovative financing, investment opportunities and related enabling measures, including incentives, financing instruments, public-private partnerships and green bonds for SLM;

(b) To document the impact and advocate for the removal of perverse incentives that support unsustainable land management and production;

(c) To facilitate dialogue on SLM investment opportunities with business, including the financial industry and the impact investment community and governments;

(d) To promote the development of voluntary SLM certification schemes.

#### **6. Means of implementation**

19. The strategy would be mainstreamed into the workplans of the secretariat and the GM and delivered as part of ongoing activities and commitments.

20. As the strategy is to be considered at COP 12, specific milestones and resource requirements can be considered and articulated in future workplans.

## **II. Part 2. UNCCD business sector engagement: principles and guidelines**

21. These principles and guidelines for business sector engagement have been established to mitigate potential political and reputational risk associated with forming partnerships with business sector entities/companies.

### **A. General principles**

22. In engaging with the business sector, the secretariat and the GM will be guided by the overarching principles of the “Guidelines on Cooperation between the United Nations

and the Business Sector”,<sup>8</sup> which apply to the United Nations Secretariat as well as separately administered organs, funds and programmes. The Secretary-General encourages all United Nations entities to consider using the guidelines when developing or revising their own business engagement strategy:<sup>9</sup>

(a) The United Nations will not engage with business sector entities that are complicit in human rights abuses, tolerate forced or compulsory labour or the use of child labour, are involved in the sale or manufacture of anti-personnel landmines or cluster bombs, or that otherwise do not meet relevant obligations or responsibilities required by the United Nations;

(b) In general, a partnership must:

(i) Advance United Nations goals: the objective of any partnership arrangement should be articulated clearly and must advance United Nations objectives;

(ii) Be based on shared values and principles: the United Nations wants to work with business and industry entities that share its values, including internationally recognized principles concerning human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption as reflected in the United Nations Global Compact;

(iii) Have a clear delineation of responsibilities and roles: the arrangement must be based on a clear understanding of respective roles, a clear division of responsibilities, targets, deadlines, accountability and monitoring measures and/or mechanisms;

(iv) Ensure integrity and independence: arrangements should not diminish the integrity, independence and impartiality of the United Nations or the business sector partner;

(v) Be equitable: every member of the business sector should have the opportunity to propose cooperative arrangements within the parameters of these guidelines. Cooperation should not imply endorsement or preference of a particular business sector entity or its products or services;

(vi) Be transparent: cooperation with the business sector must be transparent. Information on the nature and scope of cooperative arrangements should be communicated and made available to stakeholders.

## **B. UNCCD sector-specific conditions for partnership (assessment)**

23. The UNCCD aims to develop partnerships with relevant stakeholders in line with the objectives of The Strategy, taking fully into account the general principles listed in chapter II.A above and the conditions mentioned in the following paragraphs. Any collaboration will respect the principles identified in the Changwon Initiative on the engagement of the private sector.

24. The UNCCD gives priority to collaboration and developing partnerships with those business sector entities that want to promote the sustainable use of land, use SLM techniques in their operations and are committed to ensuring that the benefits of SLM reach rural communities. The aim of any partnership should be not only the participation of business and industry entities in the UNCCD meetings and conferences but also the implementation of the Convention, particularly at the local and national levels:

<sup>8</sup> <<http://business.un.org/en/documents/guidelines>> (including the ten principles found in its annex I).

<sup>9</sup> <[www.un.org/ar/business/pdf/Guidelines\\_on\\_UN\\_Business\\_Cooperation.pdf](http://www.un.org/ar/business/pdf/Guidelines_on_UN_Business_Cooperation.pdf)>.

(a) To complement the general United Nations principles, the secretariat will move towards UNCCD sector-specific definitions and guidelines for SLM compliance. These guidelines will not exclude collaboration with categories/sectors of potential business sector partners but differentiate based on performance against SLM compliance benchmarks;

(b) A partnership agreement with the UNCCD will not be considered an endorsement of the company or its other activities;

(c) The UNCCD will exclude collaboration with potential business sector partners whose operations:

(i) Systematically cause land degradation – by decreasing the net primary productivity of the land – without a public commitment to adequate remedial measures (such as adoption of SLM techniques, land rehabilitation or restoration);

(ii) Abuse, disregard or negatively affect the land tenure and human rights of rural communities and traditional land users;

(d) In addition, the following conditions will be assessed prior to embarking on negotiations with a potential partner in the business sector and before the negotiation of a formal agreement/memorandum of understanding (MOU):

(i) United Nations principles: the potential business sector partner shall be committed to achieving the United Nations principles within their sphere of influence. This includes compliance (or a commitment to achieve compliance) with the principles of the United Nations Global Compact<sup>10</sup> (particularly principle 7: businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges; principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies) as well as with human rights and environmental justice; the United Nations Supplier Code of Conduct; the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment;<sup>11</sup> the “Voluntary guidelines on the responsible governance of tenure of land, fisheries and forests in the context of national food security”<sup>12</sup> of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; and other sector or specific guidelines where applicable;

(ii) Accreditation to the UNCCD: a potential business sector partner shall fully satisfy the legal clearance criteria set out in the established accreditation process.<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that the secretariat will make available, at least one month prior to the relevant COP session, the list of business and industry entities that will be recommended to the COP for their admission to the session as observers;

(iii) UNCCD participation and engagement: a potential business sector partner shall show willingness to become active in the UNCCD process overall by undergoing accreditation to the COP and engaging in the SLM Business Forum. This shall imply that all members or employees of the business sector partner will be informed and supportive of the relationship with the UNCCD;

(iv) Corporate practice: the objectives of the potential business sector partner and those of the UNCCD shall be broadly consistent. Operational corporate policy and practice

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<sup>10</sup> <[www.unglobalcompact.org/aboutthegc/thetenprinciples/](http://www.unglobalcompact.org/aboutthegc/thetenprinciples/)>.

<sup>11</sup> <[www.unpri.org/](http://www.unpri.org/)>.

<sup>12</sup> <[www.fao.org/nr/tenure/voluntary-Guidelines/en/](http://www.fao.org/nr/tenure/voluntary-Guidelines/en/)>.

<sup>13</sup> <[www.unccd.int/en/Stakeholders/civil-society/Accreditation-process/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.unccd.int/en/Stakeholders/civil-society/Accreditation-process/Pages/default.aspx)>.

includes, or is open to, the implementation of sustainable land and water management practices and techniques;

(v) Project partnerships: any projects, programmes and initiatives proposed under a partnership agreement with the UNCCD shall directly support and promote the implementation of The Strategy and decisions of the COP. While projects, programmes and initiatives proposed under a partnership agreement with the UNCCD can promote SLM innovation, a partnership between the UNCCD and the business sector company would not be considered an endorsement of all products or any other activity. The name and logo of the UNCCD would not be used for commercial purposes and would be used only in conjunction with the activities agreed under the partnership arrangement;

(vi) Exclusivity: partnerships should not require exclusivity or prohibit other partnerships of a similar nature;

(vii) Ability to carry out the mission: the potential business sector partner shall demonstrate proven relevant experience, expertise and capacity as well as financial viability to undertake the activities considered under the partnership. This will take into consideration the geographical specificities of the different regions;

(viii) Cost and value: if any costs are to be charged to the UNCCD by a business sector partner, value for money must be proved. The UNCCD will always request preferential rates for activities carried out by a potential business sector partner;

(ix) Synergies: the potential business sector partner shall be committed to enhancing synergies with other United Nations organizations, for example, to avoid duplication of effort with business sector partnerships already under way in the context of other United Nations programmes.

### C. Modalities for partnerships

25. All partnerships between the UNCCD and the business sector should be based on one of the following modalities:

(a) Collaborative projects: this modality applies when the secretariat and a business sector partner jointly develop a product or service consistent with and in furtherance of the aims, policies and activities of the UNCCD. It must involve signing a MOU with the business sector partner that sets out the terms and conditions of the arrangement, including the contributions each party could make to the development of the product/service, the use of the name and emblem, liability, settlement of disputes and the privileges and immunities of the United Nations;

(b) Direct contribution by a business sector partner: a direct financial contribution for specific purposes may be made through a trust fund or special account agreement. The contribution must comply with the applicable financial regulations and rules of the United Nations, and be consistent with the policies, aims and activities of the UNCCD, in particular its financial rules;

(c) Indirect contribution by a business sector partner through the establishment of a foundation: under this modality, a relationship agreement must be established between the secretariat and the foundation laying out the terms of the relationship, including the issues related to the use of the name and emblem, liability, settlement of disputes and the privileges and immunities of the United Nations;

(d) Partnership in technical assistance projects: this modality would normally involve a tripartite agreement between the secretariat, a government and the business sector

partner. Projects may require two bilateral agreements with a business sector entity and with the government of the country in which the assistance is to be provided;

(e) Partnership in promoting the purposes and activities of the UNCCD: this modality, whereby the business sector partner provides a forum for disseminating information about the UNCCD, would involve direct agreements with the business sector partner, setting out the terms and conditions of the arrangement, including the secretariat's control of the information to be disseminated, the issues related to the use of the name and emblem, liability, settlement of disputes and the privileges and immunities of the United Nations.

#### **D. Formalizing partnerships**

26. All partnership arrangements, beyond accreditation to the COP and its subsidiary bodies, should be guided by a formal agreement.

27. The formal partnership agreement might take the form of a MOU, exchange of letters or letter of intent but should include:

(a) Specific, time-limited and achievable results and outputs (linked to the UNCCD and/or The Strategy);

(b) Defined duties for both parties, aimed at achieving the jointly agreed results, including how the business sector partner will assist in the implementation of the Convention;

(c) Defined contribution requirements from both parties, that is, cash or services;

(d) Defined indicators for monitoring and measuring performance;

(e) The standard clauses for partnerships, particularly related to privileges and immunities and use of logos, as appropriate.

28. All arrangements (MOU) proposed should have the clearance of the Coordinator of the Administration and Finance Services unit and the Legal Adviser before submission to the Office of the Executive Secretary for signature.

29. When dealing with *sui generis*<sup>14</sup> cases, it may be envisaged that the advice of the Office of Legal Affairs be requested and/or its approval obtained prior to engaging in a partnership and its legal clearance of the agreement proposed, as appropriate.

30. A staff member/unit should be appointed to manage each formal partnership with the business sector. Staff members monitor performance; ensure administration that is commensurate with the scope of the partnership; use the results of monitoring to find ways to improve performance; and report the results of partnerships to the Executive Secretary and Parties, as appropriate.

31. To ensure transparency and assess the implementation of the partnerships developed within the framework of this strategy, the secretariat and business and industry entities may be requested to report and provide feedback to the UNCCD, via the appropriate body, on the implementation of the partnership, including on environmental and social safeguards.

32. At the end of a partnership, the formal agreement should be terminated with legal effect and a final report on the partnership prepared by the staff/unit responsible.

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<sup>14</sup> In the context of legal terminology, this Latin expression means 'unique' or 'special'.



**E. Revision and amendment of the present guidelines**

33. The guidelines constitute the framework that the secretariat and the GM should use for the engagement and assessment of potential business sector partners, activities, projects and programmes in the preparation of agreements and the monitoring and assessment of such agreements.

34. The guidelines remain valid, without time limit, as deemed appropriate by the Executive Secretary.

35. The guidelines may be reviewed and amended and/or regularly updated on the instruction of the Executive Secretary in consultation with the Bureau of the COP.

## Annex II

### Report of the Civil Society Organization Selection Panel

#### I. Background

1. The Civil Society Organization Selection Panel (the Panel) was established in 2009 by the Conference of the Parties (COP) through its decision 5/COP.9. The composition and tasks of the Panel were modified by decisions 5/COP.10 and 5/COP.11.

2. Since the eleventh session of the COP (COP 11), the Panel has comprised two representatives from the secretariat and one representative from civil society organizations (CSOs) from countries belonging to each of the five United Nations Regional Groups of Member States.

3. Following this provision, and as a result of the consultations conducted with the accredited CSOs in November and December 2013, the following members were appointed:

1. Mr. Emmanuel Seck, Environmental Development Action in the Third World, Senegal; representative of the African Group;

2. Mr. Tanveer Arif, Society for Conservation and Protection of Environment, Pakistan; representative of the Asia-Pacific Group;

3. Mr. Juan Luis Mérega, Fundación del Sur, Argentina; representative of the Latin American and the Caribbean Group;

4. Ms. Elmedina Krilasevic, Forestry and Environmental Action, Bosnia and Herzegovina; representative of the Eastern European Group;

5. Mr. Patrice Burger, Centre d'Actions et de Réalisations Internationales, France; representative of the Western European and Others Group;

6. Ms. Anja Thust, secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD);

7. Mr. Richard Byron-Cox, UNCCD secretariat.

4. At the Panel's first meeting, held on 19 December 2013, Mr. Mérega was appointed as Chair of the Panel.

5. Ms. Sonja Malisevic replaced Ms. Krilasevic in January 2015 as representative of the Eastern European Region. Ms. Malisevic is also from Forestry and Environmental Action, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

#### II. Work of the Civil Society Organization Selection Panel

6. The Panel has met 11 times since December 2013. Three were in-person meetings and eight were virtual meetings held by telephone conferencing.

7. During its first meeting, the Panel agreed on its modus operandi and prepared the programme of work for the biennium 2014–2015 that will enable it to fulfil its mandate.

8. It is important to point out that, in addition to their formal meetings, the Panel members held informal consultations among themselves, either by e-mail or by telephone,

in order to address and discuss many issues. They also held some face-to-face consultations with the Executive Secretary.

9. In addition, Panel members have been in constant contact with their constituencies, in order to ensure that the voice of civil society is really reflected in the Panel discussions. In the same spirit, discussions have taken place among individual Panel members and national focal points.

10. The main issues considered by the Panel were:

- (a) CSO input to the draft business engagement strategy;
- (b) CSO input to the Rio+20 process and to the intergovernmental working group on the follow up to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development;
- (c) Facilitation of the election of CSO representatives who would act as observers to the Science–Policy Interface. Ms. Nathalie van Haren (Both Ends), Netherlands, was elected and Ms. Marioldy Sanchez (AIDER), Peru, was elected as alternate;
- (d) Follow-up of the discussions in the Science–Policy Interface meetings, through consultation between the Panel and Ms. van Haren;
- (e) Support to the implementation of the UNCCD Comprehensive Communication Strategy, including the involvement of Panel members (and their constituencies) in the World Day to Combat Desertification;
- (f) Promotion of the participation of CSOs in the reporting exercise during 2014 in the lead-up to the thirteenth meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC);
- (g) Participation of a CSO Panel member in the fifth Global Environment Facility Assembly, held in Mexico; and in the twentieth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Peru;
- (h) Publication of a CSO newsletter; three issues of this newsletter have been published to date;
- (i) Mobilization of CSOs and other existing networks;
- (j) Collaboration with the preparation of Desertif’actions 2015 (see section 6 below);
- (k) Facilitation of CSO participation during sessions of the Committee on Science and Technology, the CRIC and the COP (see chapters III, IV and V below).

### **III. Civil society organization participation during the UNCCD 3rd Scientific Conference and the fourth special session of the Committee on Science and Technology**

11. During these meetings, held in Cancun, Mexico, from 9 to 12 March 2015, the Panel coordinated the participation of CSOs in the discussions, delivered two statements (at the opening and closing plenaries), and took advantage of the presence of new organizations to interest them in the UNCCD process and to encourage them to start the accreditation process.

12. Furthermore, the Panel organized the side event “Civil society and technology: research and uses” in which the role played by CSOs in the identification and promotion of

traditional knowledge and in the process of research and uses of innovative technologies was discussed.

13. The members expressed their concern that owing to the limited voluntary contributions made available through the Special Fund no other CSO representatives (apart from the Panel members, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) were supported to attend the meeting.

#### **IV. Civil society organization participation during the thirteenth meeting of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention**

14. During this meeting, held in Bonn, Germany, from 25 to 27 March 2015, the Panel coordinated the participation of CSOs in the discussions and delivered two statements (at the opening and closing plenaries).

15. Owing to the reduction of the agenda, it was not possible to organize an open dialogue session, as had been done in previous CRIC sessions.

16. The Panel also met with the Turkish delegation and invited TEMA (The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats) to that meeting to discuss some points of the organization of the participation of CSOs in COP 12, to be held in Ankara, Turkey, from 12 to 23 October 2015.

17. Once again, the members expressed their concern that owing to the limited voluntary contributions made available through the Special Fund no other CSO representatives (apart from the Panel members, supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation) were supported to attend the meeting.

#### **V. Preparations for civil society organization participation during the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties**

18. At the time of preparation of this report, the Panel was working on the preparations for the participation of CSOs in COP 12.

19. The main issues under consideration are:

(a) Organization of the CSO preparatory meeting, to be arranged by TEMA in coordination with the Panel;

(b) Organization of two open dialogue sessions. The subjects are under discussion, but 'land rights and land grabbing' and 'land degradation neutrality' have been suggested;

(c) Publication of ECO newsletters, on daily basis, to reflect the points of view of CSOs;

(d) Organization of CSO daily meetings;

(e) Recommendation for the selection of CSO delegates to be supported by voluntary contributions made available through the Special Fund.

## VI. Desertif'actions 2015

20. Desertif'actions is a civil society international forum addressing land degradation and desertification. Desertif'actions 2015, held from 10 to 13 June 2015 in Montpellier, France, brought together over 300 stakeholders from over 60 countries.

21. The event was organized by CARI, but the Panel was actively involved in its organization, in particular by deciding to co-fund the event from the Panel budget and by being part of the preparation committee. They helped to disseminate the information about the activity within their constituencies, identify key persons in the regions, promote and facilitate preliminary national and regional meetings and the global electronic forum, and facilitate group discussions.

22. All Panel members were also involved in the implementation of Desertif'actions 2015 and the Chair of the Panel was in charge of delivering the final Montpellier Declaration on Land and Climate.

## VII. Lessons learned

23. The two-year experience of participation in the Panel was considered very positive by its members.

24. Among the positive lessons learned, the members highlighted the following:

(a) Coordination between CSOs at the global level is possible and a group of dedicated CSO representatives could ensure this if working together;

(b) Most CSOs involved in the process have reached a certain level of maturity and it is no longer necessary to re-invent the wheel every two years.

25. The Panel also suggested some ideas for improving the performance of the Panel in the future:

(a) The financial constraints and limitations have hampered the participation of a significant number of accredited CSOs in the meetings of the UNCCD. The work of the Panel has been hindered for this reason;

(b) Not all accredited CSOs are involved at the same level. Some of them are very active in communication and coordination, while others remain quite passive. The Panel will need to work to encourage their participation, including through the involvement of large international organizations. The decision to produce a newsletter was taken in the spirit of maintaining closer contact;

(c) The Panel takes note of the funding provided by the Government of Switzerland for a period of three years. It recognizes the considerable increase in the quality of work while being able to rely on some funds to undertake action as the Panel and that all members can attend the UNCCD meetings. The Panel welcomes and appreciates the provision of funding and encourages other countries to follow this example so as to enable the involvement of CSOs in the UNCCD process;

(d) Unfortunately, the CSO community is divided among the three Rio conventions. Therefore, the Panel suggests that for the next biennium action should be undertaken in order to increase synergy among these three CSO communities.

## Annex III

### Financial requirements for the implementation of the activities to be funded from extrabudgetary resources

The table below indicates the budget requirements for supporting the work of the UNCCD civil society panel. Extrabudgetary funding for the panel has been secured until the end of 2016. After that, the panel will not continue unless further voluntary contributions are made available.

#### Activities, cost estimates and possible source of funding

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Cost (euros)</i>	<i>Possible source of funding</i>
Implementation of the activities entrusted to the UNCCD CSO panel by decisions 5/COP 9, 5/COP 10 and 5/COP 11	192 000	96 000 is available for 2016; a similar amount would be needed for 2017 for the panel to continue its work.
<b>Total extrabudgetary resources</b>	<b>192 000</b>	

In addition to the resource requirements presented above, funding will be needed also for ensuring the balanced participation of civil society organisation representatives in the meetings of the COP and its subsidiary bodies.