



UNITED
NATIONS



**Convention to Combat
Desertification**

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/COP(6)/CST/INF.1
20 June 2003

Original: ENGLISH
ENGLISH, FRENCH AND
SPANISH ONLY

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
Committee on Science and Technology
Sixth session
Havana, 26-28 August 2003
Item 6(a) of the provisional agenda

**IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Report of the Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology

CONTENTS

	<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. INTRODUCTION	1 - 3	2
II. OBSERVATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	4 - 7	2

Annexes

I. Review and synthesis of the recommendations made by Parties and relevant organizations on the work programme of the Group of Experts		4
II. List of candidates		19
III. Members of the Group of Experts		22

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Bureau of the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) met in Bonn, Germany from 7 to 9 October 2002 to select the 25 members of the Group of Experts in accordance with decision 17/COP.5.
2. Dr. Helmut Woehl, Vice-Chairperson of the CST, chaired the meeting in the absence of the CST Chairperson Mr. Philbert Brown who arrived during the afternoon of the first day of the meeting. The Chairperson of the meeting opened the session by welcoming all the members. The UNCCD secretariat introduced the selection criteria for the Group of Experts as defined in paragraph H of the synthesis of the work programme (see annex I). To facilitate the selection of the 25 experts, the secretariat produced documents summarizing all the information received from the regional groups on the 50 pre-selected candidates (name, surname, nationality, title, expertise, publications, region, roster of experts, years of experience (see annex II)). The secretariat also produced a set of questions regarding the structure, work programme and timetable of the Group of Experts, the coordination and linkage between the CST Bureau and the Group of Experts, and the participation of the CST Bureau members at the first meeting of this Group.
3. The CST Bureau members expressed their deep appreciation for the excellent work accomplished by the secretariat in preparation for the meeting.

II. OBSERVATIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4. The Bureau had a wide exchange of views on the criteria for the selection of the Group of Experts, and on the work programme, the work plan and the manner in which the Group of Experts could organize itself.
5. The observations, recommendations and conclusions are as follows:

A. Observations

6. With regard to selection of the Group of Experts, the Bureau members agreed upon the following principles:
 - Diversity of disciplines should be sought;
 - Although the deadline for the submission of information was 30 August 2002, the secretariat continued to remind the pre-selected candidates to complete their file. The CST Bureau decided that candidates who did not send in all the required documents on time would not be considered in the selection process (three candidates were not selected);
 - The CST Bureau noted that only two regions provided lists with female candidates. Candidates' language skills should be considered, bearing in mind the required level of efficiency of the work of the Group of Experts;
 - In order to obtain a comparative advantage the CST recommended choosing experts of different ages and experience;
 - The CST Bureau noted that no candidates could be chosen from civil society since none were submitted among the 50 pre-selected candidates;

- In the case of the withdrawal of a selected candidate, a replacement will be chosen from a reserve list in an order chosen by the Bureau of the CST and will be informed about past action only via the Internet;
- In instances where specialized expertise is not available within the Group of Experts, efforts will be made by the secretariat to seek outside expertise;
- The CST member for LAC expressed his concern that in his region there were no candidates representing the English-speaking islands. In his view, representation of island states within the Group of Experts is very important due to the specific problems of land degradation and salinization in those countries;
- The CST Bureau selected 25 members of the Group of Experts from among the 50 proposed candidates and ranked replacements for each region (see annex III).

B. Conclusions and recommendations

7. Concerning the set of questions selected by the secretariat, the CST Bureau had a fruitful exchange of ideas and reached the following conclusions and recommendations:

- The results of the work of the Group of Experts should be made available in clear language understandable by different stakeholders and target groups;
- The CST Bureau members will participate in the first meeting of the Group of Experts and provide guidance to the group. Two specialists will be invited to assist in the formulation of the work programme for the Group of Experts;
- The form of organization of the work of the Group of Experts will be defined by the Group at its first session (Management Committee or Steering Committee);
- Due to budget constraints, the CST Bureau and the Group of Experts will meet once a year for a maximum of one week;
- The Group of Experts should use all means of communication suitable for carrying out its work effectively;
- The CST Bureau members indicated that the work plan as outlined by the Parties may have financial implications;
- The CST Bureau underlined that during the first session of the work of the Group of Experts a work plan containing objectives, results, output and time frames should be developed and finalized;
- The Bureau discussed extensively the matter of a language of communication for the Group of Experts. It was decided that due to financial limitations, and in line with similar organs within the United Nations system, the working language should be English;
- Concerning the remarks of the CST Bureau Chairperson with respect to island Parties and acting as representative of his regional group, the Bureau decided to select Mr. Febles from Cuba as a member of the Group of Experts pending the receipt of his curriculum vitae through the diplomatic channel no later than 17 October 2002. The Chairperson of the CST Bureau, in his capacity as regional group representative, will take the necessary action to inform Mr. Febles of this. The Bureau decided that should Mr. Febles' curriculum vitae not arrive by the deadline, the secretariat will withdraw him from the list and nominate the first replacement from the LAC region as a member of the Group of Experts.

Annex I

[Original: ENGLISH, FRENCH and SPANISH]

**REVIEW AND SYNTHESIS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS MADE
BY PARTIES AND RELEVANT ORGANIZATIONS ON THE
WORK PROGRAMME OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS**

List of submissions by Parties to the UNCCD

Albania	Israel
Argentina	Japan
Canada	Jordan
Chile*	Niger
China	Sweden
Czech Republic	United States of America
European Union	

* not included in the synthesis due to the late receipt of the contribution by the secretariat

Contents

- I. General introduction
- II. Background
- III. General considerations
- IV. Work Programme of the Group of Experts
 - A. Scientific knowledge (assessment, collection and updating of information, awareness raising)
 - A.1. Assessment of desertification
 - A.1.1. General views on assessment
 - A.1.2. Possible work plan on assessment
 - State of knowledge and scale of impact
 - Opportunities for mitigation and implications for policy-makers
 - A.1.3. Possible deliverables
 - A.2. Benchmarks and indicators
 - A.3. Specific environmental aspects
 - A.3.1. Land degradation
 - A.3.2. Water resources
 - A.4. Additional recommendations
 - B. Identification of driving forces (political, administrative, cultural, economic, social, ecological and technical)
 - C. Methodologies and technologies
 - C.1. Land use
 - D. Committee on Science and Technology and Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention
 - E. Synergy with other conventions or multilateral environmental agreements

- F. Reinforcing and not re-inventing the wheel
- G. Financial support and donors
- H. Selection of experts
- I. Summary of priority themes

I. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The Committee on Science and Technology (CST)

The United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) prescribes that the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) shall be multidisciplinary and open to the participation of all Parties, and shall be composed of government representatives competent in the relevant fields of expertise. However, recognizing that government representatives may not have all of the relevant expertise necessary to provide scientific and technical advice to the CST and the Conference of the Parties (COP) on specific subjects, at the UNCCD's fifth COP, held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 1 to 12 October 2001, the CST considered ways and means to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST. As a result, it was agreed that a Group of Experts would be established, as noted in decision 17/COP.5 and its annex.

The "Group of Experts"

The composition of the group of experts and the selection process are described in the annex of decision 17/COP.5, whereas transparent and accountable criteria for the selection the experts still need to be defined:

- The composition of the Group of Experts should not exceed 25 members, with the exact number to be determined by the programme of work, as defined by the CST.
- The composition of the group should be based on the need to ensure an equitable geographical distribution.
- The experts, in order to be eligible, should have their names on the roster of independent experts.
- They will be selected by the CST Bureau on a one-time basis, in consultation with the regional groups and the secretariat.
- The Bureau of the COP will finalize the first selection of the experts as soon as possible after COP 5.
- Subsequent selections of experts shall be based on a new programme of work, and shall be recommended by the CST for approval by the COP.
- The competence of the experts, presented by each regional group, will be determined on the basis of a curriculum vitae, which should include a paper on a specific issue contained in the programme of work.

The CST should define the programme of work of the Group of Experts and its terms of reference. The Group of Experts should submit the report on the results of its activities to the CST at its sessions. The CST should review the work of the Group of Experts in four years to determine its future role and continued relevance.

II. BACKGROUND

During COP 5, a number of decisions were taken with regard to ways and means to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the CST, based on document ICCD/COP(5)/3/Add.2, as well as on consultations with the CST Bureau.

Decision 17/COP.5 and its annex

At COP 5, it was decided that the work of the Group of Experts should be based on themes, activities and issues relative to the Convention and not only concentrate on collection of information (knowledge), but also focusing on the following attributes:

The current state of knowledge

The Group of Experts should make a review and synthesis of available knowledge and information.

Extent and scale of impact

Such pertinent knowledge and information should be synthesized and presented in ways that highlight and appropriately bring out the extent and scale of impact of this particular issue, and where possible, include possible trends and scenarios of such impact and consequences.

Opportunities for mitigation

These in turn should be followed by an identification of opportunities for mitigation of such scenarios, impact and consequences, using when available documented, successful experiences that could serve as templates for Parties to adapt, adopt and/or utilize.

It would be important that in identifying and presenting potential opportunities for mitigation improvement, the focus be not exclusively on techniques and technologies.

Policy implications

The Convention places a commensurate attention on factors linked to human activities and relationships, in other words, to social, economic and cultural issues. The Group of Experts might therefore devote an equally, commensurate attention to policy implications while drawing lessons and conclusions with regards to opportunities for mitigation.

Decision 18/COP.5

Parties were invited to submit their recommendations on the programme of work to be undertaken by the Group of Experts by 1 February 2002. The CST Bureau will define the programme of work of the Group of Experts. This will be done on the basis of the review and synthesis the CST Bureau will carry out on the recommendations submitted by the Parties and relevant organizations to the secretariat.

Decision 16/COP.5

Although not directly related to the work of the Group of Experts, Parties identified "Land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation: an integrated approach" as the priority issue to be addressed in depth by the CST at its sixth session.

III. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Activities and role of the Group of Experts

- Once the CST Bureau has produced its synthesis of the recommendations submitted by the member states, it should indicate priority themes (i.e. 2-3) for the Group of Experts, in order to make the best possible use of limited time and resources.
- The Group of Experts should play an important institutional role, providing guidance through the CST to the COP.
- The results of the work performed by the reformed CST should be widely recognized and distributed. Part of its activities should therefore include the dissemination of its results on ongoing activities (benchmarks and indicators, traditional knowledge, early warning systems) and on future activities.
- The Group of Experts should seek to function in a manner similar to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), building on and using existing work and evidence to produce pertinent synthesis and outputs for the use of the Convention and for broader dissemination in the scientific community.
- The task of the Group of Experts concerns how collaborative partnership between the international, regional and national levels connects with desertification issues such as deforestation, land degradation and poverty. With an emphasis on stakeholders and their decision-making, certain key issues are stressed: behavioral attitude, land tenure, secures livelihoods, and policy coherence and capacity.
- The programme of work of the Group of Experts, as well as its mandate, should be pluri-annual in nature, for a maximum of four years.
- The programme of work should emphasize applied research, synthesis work and networking around concrete implementation issues.
- The work of the Group of Experts should be linked with existing UNCCD programmes at various levels.
- The Group of Experts should develop and make available to all interested people appropriate mechanisms of scientific and technological cooperation and of dissemination (funds, institutions, experts, projects, possibilities for publication and dissemination of results etc.) to promote and articulate research projects, and to promote awareness about desertification and drought between countries and stakeholders at the international, regional and national level. The main objective is to concentrate all the information to disseminate it.

2. Membership of the Group of Experts

- In order to ensure wide recognition and overall credibility for the UNCCD itself, the CST should carefully consider the crucial role played by independence in the scientific advice when tackling the membership of the Group of Experts.
- A functional link between the priority themes proposed and the experts appointed should be respected.
- Apart from geographical representation and roster registration, other important selection criteria need to be taken into account.
- The experts should act as focal points of a wider network of scientists and other experts, based on the roster of independent experts, which should be seen as a valuable resource for the implementation of the Convention.

3. Deliverables

- Concrete deliverables of practical value, also to non-specialists (general public, media, students) should be set within precise timeframes (medium and long term) for the Group of Experts.
- Deliverables should mainly consist in synthesis and analysis of actual scientific knowledge (with strategic relevance) in order to make it accessible to decision-making by the COP.
- Whenever new initiatives are undertaken, existing data should be carefully taken into consideration.

4. Timing and review of the work

Given the relative short period of time (4 years) for the activities of the Group of Experts to be completed, the themes and issues on which they are asked to focus within the programme of work should be limited to a small number of issues, e.g. 2-3.

The four elements identified in decision 17/COP.5 constitute an appropriate framework to guide the Group of Experts:

- State of knowledge
- Scale of impact
- Opportunities for mitigation
- Implications for policy makers

IV. WORK PROGRAMME OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS

A. Scientific knowledge (assessment, collection and updating of information, awareness raising)

A.1. Assessment of desertification

A.1.1. *General views on assessment*

1. The Group of Experts should establish appropriate mechanisms in order to take stock and draw conclusions from ongoing assessments of desertification at global level.
2. This could be the starting point for the necessary update of the World Atlas of Desertification, produced by UNEP, as a tool to assess the extent and degree of global land and soil degradation.
3. The stocktaking phase on existing knowledge could lead to a document in non-technical language for the general public, media and policy makers to be used as a reference to raise the level of awareness of the public on the Convention objectives.
4. The updating of information would allow the comparative analysis of the evolution of land degradation in different areas in terms of vulnerability to desertification and rehabilitation needs.
5. At the same time, the Group of Experts should establish a "science plan" for land degradation research to be reviewed regularly, so to enable national and international programmes to take into account research needs and to contribute to the assessment exercise.
6. The Group of Experts should develop a mechanism, such as a thematic data net, which would facilitate coordination of activities and exchange of data, experience and results, to ensure sufficient information flow between national coordinating centres during the periods between Conferences of Parties.

A.1.2. *Possible work plan for assessment*

(a) State of knowledge and scale of impact

The Group of Experts could actualise the current state of knowledge on land degradation and review existing methods, technologies and best practices for the assessment of desertification. The Group might wish to establish specific baselines and benchmarks using an appropriate baseline year. The Group should consider proposing benchmarks to be used by the Parties to the Convention, serving as a common reference point to monitor progress.

(b) Opportunities for mitigation and implications for policy

The Group of Experts could synthesize available information on useful monitoring and evaluation tools, including indicators for assessing desertification and mitigating efforts. Attention should be paid to impact indicators on the civil society. One possible approach would be to develop "tool boxes" that will catalogue and analyse a few case studies, to illustrate specific problems with the use of benchmarks and indicators, and possible solutions to them, as well as best practices and lessons learned.

A.1.3. Possible deliverables

- “Existing Knowledge” report.
- Science plan for land degradation research (definition of research priorities and research gaps).
- Inventory of desertification challenges.

A.2. Benchmarks and indicators

The Group of Experts might wish to carry out some additional work on benchmarks and indicators. It is important that the Group of Experts should take a first step to further develop and elaborate mission-oriented benchmarks and indicators. The Group of Experts should analyze the interrelationship between the socio-economic and biophysical factors. Relevant benchmarks and indicators should be used as parameters when using models.

Proposals should be formulated for pilot studies to integrate results of studies on benchmarks and indicators, traditional knowledge, and early warning systems. In such pilot studies, the benchmarks and indicators that have been developed/elaborated should be applied in actual areas, and actions should be implemented, integrating the results of traditional knowledge and early warning systems for the respective regions. Such pilot studies should focus on an assessment of land degradation, vulnerability and rehabilitation (risk management) using an integrated approach, and, in particular, desertification mapping relevant to integrated natural resource management.

Parties should carry out pilot studies in their respective regions. The Group of Experts might provide advice to Parties regarding implementation of pilot studies, and should prepare reports analyzing these pilot studies and submit them through the CST to the COP.

A number of Parties also recommended the Group of Experts to do some work on benchmarks and indicators. They suggested:

- Selection of important indicators to analyze the actual situation and the tendencies of the desertification.
- Selection of important indicators to know the impact of implementation of national actions programmes (NAPs), subregional action programmes (SRAPs), regional action programmes (RAPs) and the Convention in the different member states.
- Unification of a methodology for the determination of desertification prone areas at the national and regional level.
- Use of impact indicators, as well as institutional indicators, as an important tool, whereby implemented measures can be qualified and quantified.

A.3. Specific environmental aspects

A.3.1. Land degradation

In submitting recommendations, Parties generally recognized that the central issue chosen by the CST for the preparation of the next CST-meeting at COP 6 should also be related to one of the most important themes in the work programme of the Group of Experts. Recommendations on this central theme can be described in the following synthesis:

Combating desertification has at least three basic building blocks:

- Conservation and rehabilitation of degraded or threatened tracts
- Mitigation of improper land use
- Establishment of sustainable development through improved or new economic activities based on current production forms.

The Group of Experts should work at systematizing existing research where stakeholders at different levels are involved, connect their activities with land use and focus on specific asymmetric relations between stakeholders. Key examples are:

- The economic exploitation of natural resources in drylands by outsiders with limited feedback into communities.
- Insecure land tenure for traditional users of natural resources in drylands.
- Differences in knowledge access.
- Environmental insecurities in the form of long-term uncertainty over resource access by users.

The working methodology for such an undertaking should be twofold:

- Firstly, a research activity should concern land use and management.
- Secondly, it should deal with poverty situations in drylands.

These two considerations are evaluated according to four criteria:

- The relevance of knowledge provided by the research to land use and to poverty eradication.
- The impacts of project findings on sustainable development for land use and life quality.
- The mitigation potential inherent in findings for land use and for poverty eradication.
- The applicability of research results for specifying relations between stakeholders on a small number of basic issues;

This follows the earlier proposal to identify four layers for project evaluations, as adopted at COP 5.

The screening of existing research should be confined to a small number of central issues, e.g.:

- Economic relations
- Land tenure
- Knowledge formation
- Environmental security

The Group of Experts should not aim to generate new knowledge, but to systematize existing knowledge. The four issues above are used to specify where interests conflict. The aim should be to specify how asymmetric stakeholder relations are located.

Such issues need to be specified and could be addressed hypothetically as a basis for UNCCD policy on research priorities. Research findings would then contribute to increased policy dialogue, stability in land tenure issues, empowerment at community level and increased production combined with new

alternatives. Contributions on these topics should aim to improve the decisions of politicians and political systems in favor of poor people and greater security of land tenure.

A number of Parties focused on different aspects of land degradation, sometimes without specifically clarifying their views on the role the Group of Experts could play in it. A short list of their contributions to the central theme of land degradation is given below:

1. Scientific cooperation should be achieved so as to estimate the loss of land via contemporary effective and unified methodologies.
2. Systematic information should be provided to the Parties about the functioning at national, subregional and regional of the modern technology for the data collection, transfer and the estimation of soil degradation.
3. Experience should be shared on how to use the national data from erosion monitoring, soil pollution, decline of soil productivity, over-grazing and over-cultivation, in order to precede the processes of soil abandoning and demographic movements, soil degradation, increase of poverty level, etc.
4. Assistance should be offered to the Parties in the context of the (NAPs) to combat desertification for:
 - Long-term strategies to combat land degradation and mitigate its negative effects and the integration into the sustainable development policies.
 - Implementation of the preventive measures for the non-degraded or slightly degraded soils.
5. Effective participation should be stimulated at local, national and regional level of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), local populations and stakeholders (farmers, stockbreeders, etc) in decision-making and the review of the implementation of the NAPs.
6. In association with the Dryland Degradation Assessment (LADA), methodologies and standardized tools for assessment of land degradation in different geographical areas should be initiated and finalized as guidelines for the Parties.
7. Assessment of land degradation in the world and creation of a database and a system for the dissemination of environmental information should be promoted.
8. The scope of work is recommended to be desertification monitoring and assessment, the research of sandstorm mechanisms, dryland afforestation, etc.

A.3.2. Water resources

Some of the Parties, in their recommendations for the work programme of the Group of Experts, have linked the issue of water resources to that of land degradation. Others have focused on the importance of water resources. A synthesis of their recommendations is given below:

Dryland development depends on water resource development and its sustainable use. To avoid over-exploitation of scarce water resources, it is possible to use under-exploited dryland water resources: fossil and brackish water and domestic wastewater. Marginal water resources exist in large supplies, but they are under-exploited due to associated risks, the most prominent of which is soil salinisation and often also ground water salinisation.

The Group of Experts might review the options for mass utilization of these water resources. Two approaches are available: (a) water treatment, leading to the reduction of the risks; and (b) use of salt-tolerant crops. Water treatment includes desalination technologies and biological treatment for reducing organic load and toxic compounds of wastewater. Salt tolerant crops include breeding and

genetic engineering of plants, and introducing aquaculture for production of proteins and chemical compounds. This approach may revolutionize human life in drylands, by both improving traditional agricultural livelihoods and adapting novel and sustainable alternative ones. It will lead to the sustainability of development and to avoidance of further desertification.

A.4. Additional recommendations

Several Parties offered additional recommendations on the programme of work for the Group of Experts that further develops and validates the work of previous Ad Hoc panels on traditional knowledge and early warning systems. In addition, it was suggested that the Group of Experts should offer assistance on the implementation of integrated strategies and development programmes in affected regions to reduce rural poverty and to increase food security; and the Group of Experts should study the link between desertification and agricultural practices focusing on alternative livelihoods.

B. Identification of driving forces (political, administrative, cultural, economic, social, ecological and technical)

It has been a common feeling among the submitting Parties that the Group of Experts should not concentrate on information collection about “techniques and technologies” alone, but should basically orient its activities towards the identification of “driving forces”. Recommendations in that sense have been listed as follows:

1. The Group of Experts should come up with conclusions on:
 - Ways to enhance the implementation process.
 - The use of indicators to monitor implementation and impact of NAPs.
 - The revision of the current list of indicators, part of the UNCCD Help Guide for National Reports, in the light of ongoing implementation experiences and with special attention to specific indicators, particularly those relating to civil society participation.
 - Ways to monitor the use of implementation indicators by affected countries and to support standardisation/ update of an indicator framework.
2. Consequently, the Group of Experts could bridge the gap between science/technology and policy/decisions makers, enabling the policy level to intervene in an informed way (indicators) in the combat of desertification processes.
3. Deliverables:
 - Case studies on driving forces and obstacles for NAP-implementation at local, national and regional level.
 - Indicator framework.
 - Revised list of indicators for implementation of the Convention and civil-society participation.

Another Party strongly recommends that the programme of work for the Group of Experts should be based on scientific and technological information needs, identified in NAP, and on reports submitted by Parties and subregional and regional Groups. Science and technology should be interpreted broadly enough to cover the critical areas of applied analysis in such subject matter as participation, institutional arrangements, sustainable funding, benchmarks and indicators, etc.

C. Methodologies and technologies

C.1. Land use

Some Parties point to the link between environmental problems and land use. They recommend that the Group of Experts should bring into a comprehensive format the suitable methodologies and techniques to solve land use and environmental problems, recognising the specific features of each area.

1. The Group of Experts should point out needs and ways:
 - To deal with the issue of land tenure.
 - To promote the use of participatory land use planning approaches and sustainable management systems.

This part of the work programme should be based on “best practices”, emerged from positive and exemplary experiences (“success stories”).

2. The overall objective should be to improve the knowledge of decision makers about dryland livelihoods, on:
 - Ways to establish the right governance systems and markets.
 - Ways to generate alternative income.
 - Ways to provide real incentives for people to invest and work in the drylands.
 - Ways for merging tools for the implementation of the Convention with other strategy processes, such as Poverty Reduction Strategies.
3. Deliverables
 - Synthesis of achievements and “best practices”-lessons learnt.
 - Recommendations for improving access to and availability of relevant knowledge and experience through regional co-operation.
 - Recommendations for the promotion of cooperative research between regions.

D. Committee on Science and Technology and Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention

One of the Parties recommended that the first Committee for the Review of the implementation of the Convention (CRIC) should identify areas of work that would benefit from involvement of the CST. The CST programme of work should be flexible enough to accommodate additional items. The two bodies should complement and add value to the work of one another. Such an approach would:

- Improve the possibility for selecting those people for the Group of Experts who are best qualified to address the topics having the highest priority for resolution at the national, subregional, and regional levels.
- Reduce the possibility of false starts by the Group of Experts.

E. Synergy with other conventions or multilateral environmental agreements

Some of the Parties have seen the synergy between environmental conventions as one of the key themes to be tackled by the Group of Experts.

Win-win measures, that combat desertification and also sequester carbon and/or conserve and promote sustainable use of biodiversity, may synergize combating desertification, by their potential to attract support for local populations for their combat against desertification. This approach may also increase the accessibility of affected countries to financial instruments, such as the GEF. A framework for an Action Plan for Synergies is proposed in document ICCD/COP(3)/9 (“Promotion and strengthening of relationships of the UNCCD with other relevant conventions - collaboration for the synergistic implementation of the UNCCD with the other Rio conventions”).

Though document ICCD/COP(3)/9 was presented to COP 3, it was not reviewed by experts, and the implementability of its recommendations have not been assessed. Therefore, it has been proposed that the Group of Experts could review the available options for joint implementation.

State of knowledge and scale of impact

The Group of Experts might want to review existing evidence from research and development activities in drylands on the relationship and linkages between desertification, climate change and biodiversity. The focus of this effort should be on dryland ecosystems. Specific issues within this theme could include: carbon sinks in drylands and in agricultural soil; impact and adaptation to climate change and drought in drylands; biological diversity in drylands, and potential losses due to land degradation.

Opportunities for mitigation and implications for policy

The review of the Group of Experts would serve to identify major challenges in establishing concrete synergies in the implementation of the three main environmental conventions, as well as possible policy directions to overcome potential barriers in areas such as drought preparedness and adaptation, alternative energy, and agriculture and water management. On the basis of the foregoing, the Group might be in a position to identify joint activities that could be undertaken by national focal points, and pave the way for policies that would facilitate the identification of common grounds among such national focal points.

Some Parties were concentrating on possible linkages with other conventions and/or multilateral agreements:

1. The Group of Experts might develop a mechanism to ensure concrete linkages, information exchanges and consultations between the CST and the scientific and technical subsidiary bodies of other multilateral environmental agreements (joint working groups).
2. The Group might identify crosscutting priority areas for cooperation between UNCCD and other multilateral environmental agreements.

F. Reinforcing and re-inventing the wheel (MA, IPCC)

There are indeed a number of ongoing initiatives at various stages of implementation, which are focused on issues of relevance to the Convention, and which mimic some of the tasks conferred to the CST. An important aspect of the work programme of the Group of Experts would be to identify such initiatives on an ongoing basis, and to recommend to the CST how the UNCCD could benefit from such initiatives. The Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (MA) is one of such initiatives that the Group of Experts could focus on immediately.

The Group of Experts could seek to function in a manner similar to the IPCC, building on and using existing work and evidence to produce pertinent synthesis and outputs for the use of the UNCCD and for broader dissemination in the scientific community.

G. Financial support and donors

It was recommended by one of the Parties that the Group of Experts might establish a procedure for independent scientific evaluation/recommendation of projects, proposed for financial support by GEF, bilateral donors etc., concerning their contribution to combating desertification and their compliance with the crosscutting priority areas.

H. Selection of the experts

Throughout the submissions, a number of suggestions have been formulated concerning some general principles for the selection process and about possible selection criteria for the Group of Experts. A number of Parties suggested that, in order for the CST Bureau to judge the experts against the criteria, candidates should provide the CST Bureau with a detailed CV, as well as a list of peer-reviewed publications over the last 5 years. However, other Parties did not believe that peer-reviewed publications should play a major role in the selection of experts, since experts from certain regions do not have as many opportunities to publish.

While one Party proposed that experts should hold a doctorate degree as a minimum, given that a number of people in the drylands have gained considerable experience in the field of desertification without formal education, it has been suggested that a candidate's level of formal education should not solely determine their selection as an expert.

Some Parties also offered the following suggestions:

- The candidates should be nominated by the Party, instead of by regional groups.
- The selection should take into account not only the land area, but also the proportion of population.
- The number of experts from regions severely affected by desertification should be higher than that from regions not affected by desertification.
- One-third of the experts should be women.

General principles

A balance in expertise between the 25 selected experts should be ensured, considering that it is unlikely that candidates meet all the proposed selection criteria. In order to be eligible, the experts should have

their name on the Roster of Independent Experts. A fair representation of experts from the civil society should be ensured.

Selection criteria

- Independence.
- Excellence (scientific experience, local knowledge) in one of more of the specific areas retained for the work programme.
- General field expertise in land degradation, desertification and related processes.
- Professional experience in interdisciplinary land degradation and/or desertification research or advice (bio-physical and socio-economic aspects).
- Professional experience in the provision of scientific advice in a policy context.
- Professional experience in scientific international forums, preferably in the context of the UNCCD.
- Involvement in scientific international/regional networks in the area of expertise.
- Experience with developing countries and/or countries in transition, in particular fair understanding of political, sociological and administrative structures of those countries.

Decision 17/COP.5 and its annex provides for the creation of a Group of 25 Experts. According to this decision, the competence of the experts will be determined on the basis of their curriculum vitae, which should include a paper on a specific issue contained in the programme of work. The composition of the Group of Experts should be based on the need to ensure an equitable geographical distribution. The experts will be selected by the CST Bureau on a one-time basis, in consultation with the regional groups and the secretariat, bearing in mind the programme of work of the Group of Experts to be defined by the Bureau of the CST and the procedures outlined in paragraph 11 of the annex to Decision 17/COP.5.

I. Summary of priority themes

A review and synthesis was made of 12 submissions with recommendations from Parties for the work programme of the Group of Experts of the CST. Due to the late receipt of the contribution from Chile, it could not be included in the synthesis. The recommendations contained a rich and diverse series of interesting and valuable ideas, for which it is very difficult to find ways to comply with every suggestion.

Taking into account its modest amount of time and resources available, the Group of Experts will need to limit itself to a restricted number of issues in its work programme. In addition, the Group of Experts may wish to reserve a portion of its programme of work to accommodate additional items; this flexibility would allow it to respond to specific issues that are identified by Parties, such as those related to the implementation of the UNCCD.

Most of the submissions contained references to a central theme related to land degradation and land use.

It should be clearly understood that the central theme of land degradation and land use includes different “sub-themes” such as:

- Assessment of desertification (focusing on bio-physical aspects, such as soils, water resources, vegetation, etc.)
- Vulnerability (benchmarks and indicators, early warning systems)
- Conservation and rehabilitation (traditional knowledge, best practices)
- Poverty reduction and sustainable development in the drylands (socio-economic aspects, land tenure, alternative livelihoods, stakeholder participation, gender integration, public awareness, etc.)
- Development of synergies with other initiatives

As already accepted at COP 5, and as elaborated in section A.1.2 of this document, four common elements should form the framework of the work of the Group of Experts on any relevant theme or sub-theme:

- The state of knowledge
- The scale of impact
- Opportunities for mitigation
- Implications for policy makers

Taking into consideration the diverse recommendations proposed by Parties, the CST Bureau has proposed “land degradation and land use”, and the identified sub-themes, as the priority theme to be addressed in the programme of work for the Group of Experts.

Annex II

LIST OF CANDIDATES

	Surname	Name	Nationality	Title	Expertise	Publications	RoE¹	Yoe²
AFRICA								
1	AKPAGANA	Koffi	Togo	Dr.	Ecology, Botanic	2 - (66)	yes	21
2	BADRAOUI	Mohamed	Morocco	Dr.	Agriculture, Soils, Cartography	10 - (39)	yes	21
3	CHISANGA	Eric Chomba Atanasios	Zambia	MA	Natural Resources Management, Forestry, Land Use Planning	NO	yes	6
4	EL BAGOURI	Ismail Hamdi	Egypt	Dr.	Agriculture, Chemistry, Soils, Desert Sciences	1 - (106)	yes	46
5	FOLORUNSO	Olatunji Ayodele	Nigeria	Dr.	Soils, Water Management, Agriculture	13 - (60)	yes	19
6	NARJISSE	Hamid	Marocco	Dr.	Ecology	NO	yes	
7	OUEDRAOGO	Sibiri Jean	Burkina Faso	Dr.	Ecology, Vegetation, Biology, Rural Development	11 - (14)	yes	14
8	SAADOU	Mahamane	Niger	Dr.	Biology, Botanic, Agriculture	7 - (48)	yes	29
9	SEELY	Mary Kathryn	Namibia	Dr.	Ecology, Natural Resource Management	1 - (96)	yes	37
10	TINGA	Abdoulaye	Niger	Dr.	Physics, Chemistry	8 - (22)	yes	31
ASIA								
1	AHMADI	Hassan	Islamic Republic of Iran	Dr.	Soils, Water Management	1 - (5)	yes	28
2	AHMED	Mahiuddin	Bangladesh	MA	Forestry, Land Use Management, Biodiversity	NO	yes	30
3	AL AMOUD	Ahmed Ibrahim	Saudi Arabia	Dr.	Agriculture, Hydrology, Soils	6 - (64)	yes	16
4	AL RIYAMI	Suleiman bin Nasser bin Suleiman	Oman	MA	Hydrology, Water Management, Information Science	NO	yes	18
5	ASMAR	Fady	Lebanon	MA	Forestry, Ecology	1 - (2)	yes	10
6	BAMATTROF	Abdel Rahman	Yemen	MA		NO	no	
7	MYAGKOV	Sergey	Uzbekistan	Dr.	Ecology, Hydrology, Information Science	1 - (23)	yes	10
8	SINGH	Harish Pratap	India	Dr.	Soils, Agriculture	1 - (150)	yes	31
9	TAKEUCHI	Kazuhiko	Japan	MA	Ecology	1 - (96)	yes	28
10	WANG	Lixian	China	Dr.	Forestry, Soils, Water Management	1 - (135)	yes	19

	Surname	Name	Nationality	Title	Expertise	Publications	RoE¹	Yoe²
LAC								
1	ABRAHAM	Elena Maria de las Nieves	Argentina	Dr.	Ecology, Environment, Geomorphology	3 - (97)	yes	24
2	ALVAREZ	Guido Soto	Chile	MA	Forestry, Agriculture	NO	yes	30
3	ECHEVARRIA	Grisel Herrero	Cuba	Dr.	Agriculture, Forestry	NO	yes	25
4	FEBLES	Gustavo Julio Febles	Cuba	Dr.	Agriculture	2 - (56)	yes	39
5	KARLIN	Ulf	Argentina	MA	Agriculture, Natural Resource Management	2 - (47)	yes	10
6	LEON	Alejandro	Chile	Dr.	Agriculture, Economics, Information Science	1 - (3)	yes	17
7	NASCIMENTO	Nadima de Macedo Paiva	Brasil	Dr.	Ecology, Information Systems, Natural Resource Management	1 - (8)	yes	16
8	ROCHA	Ciro Loureiro	Brasil	MA	Hydrology, Water Resource Management	1 - (12)	yes	32
9	SANCHEZ	Carlos Eduardo Gomez	Colombia	MA	Ecology, Biology	1 - (19)	yes	18
10	SANTIBANEZ	Fernando	Chile	Dr.	Forestry, Agriculture	1 - (34)	yes	22
WEOG								
1	CASTILLO SANCHEZ	Victor M.	Spain	Dr.	Forestry, Natural Resource Management, Soils, Hydrology	1 - (53)	yes	18
2	DE GROOT	Wouter Theodoor	Netherlands	Dr.	Natural Resource Management, Agriculture, Anthropology	1 - (103)	yes	28
3	HJORT AF ORNAS	Anders	Sweden	Dr.	Economics, Anthropology	2 - (146)	yes	32
4	KOSMAS	Constantinos	Greece	Dr.	Land Resources, Agriculture	9 - (78)	yes	22
5	SCIORTINO	Maurizio	Italy	MA	Climatology, Meteorology	1 - (9)	yes	19
6	ABRAHAMSON	Brian Theodor	Canada	MA	Hydrology, Climatology, Agriculture, Water Management	Summary	yes	34
7	KOMUSCU	Ali Umran	Turkey	Dr.	Atmospheric Sciences, Hydrology	4 - (13)	yes	10
8	MOUAT	David Anthony	USA	Dr.	Natural Resource Management, Information Science, Ecology	1 - (73)	yes	30
9	OZDEN	Dursun Murat	Turkey	Dr.	Agriculture, Soils	5 - (17)	yes	21
10	ROLE	Avertano	Malta	MA		1	no	

	Surname	Name	Nationality	Title	Expertise	Publications	RoE¹	Yoe²
CEE								
1	BALOYAN	Samvel	Armenia	Dr.	Ecology, Agriculture, Resource Management	2 - (39)	yes	22
2	BOLASHVILI	Nana	Georgia	MA	Hydrology, Water Management	Summary	yes	13
3	DEBICKI	Ryszard Antoni	Poland	Dr.	Soils, Agriculture, Information Systems	1 - (92)	yes	21
4	MANGUL	Ilea	Ukraine	Dr.	Meteorology, Agriculture	Summary	yes	26
5	SOBOCKA	Jaroslava	Slovak Republic	Dr.	Soils, Ecology, Agriculture	1 - (122)	yes	22
6	SOKOLOVSKA	Maria	Bulgaria	Dr.	Soils, Natural Resource Management, Ecology	1 - (130)	yes	25
7	TESAROVA	Marta	Czech Republic	Dr.	Soils, Agriculture	6 - (88)	yes	38
8	TRENDAFILOV	Krassimir	Bulgaria	Dr.	Soils, Agriculture	Summary	yes	17
9	VERMES	Laszlo	Hungary	Dr.	Agriculture, Water Management, Soils	2 - (210)	yes	43
10	YATSUKHNO	Valentin	Belarus	Dr.	Geography, Soils, Land Use Planning	1 - (275)	yes	10

¹ Roster of Experts

² Years of experience

Annex III

MEMBERS OF THE GROUP OF EXPERTS

Africa

Badroui, Mohamed
El Bagouri, Ismail Hamdi
Folorunso, Olatunji
Saadou, Mahamane
Seely, Mary Kathryn

Asia

Ahmadi, Hassan
Al-Amoud, Ahmed Ibrahim
Singh, Harish
Takeuchi, Kazuhiko
Wang, Lixian

LAC

Abraham, Elena Maria
Febles, Gustavo
Leon, Alejandro
Nascimento, Nadima
Santibanez, Fernando

WEOG

Mouat, David Anthony
Ornas, Anders
Ozden , Dursun Murat
Sanchez, Victor
Sciortino, Maurizio

CEE

Baloyan, Samvel
Debicki, Ryszard
Sokolovska, Maria
Vermes, Laszlo
Tesarova, Marta
