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COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Maintenance of the roster of experts

Note by the secretariat*

SUMMARY

This document is an explanatory note on the composition and use of the roster of experts, which is contained in document ICCD/COP(6)/8/Add.1. Information on maintenance and use of the roster is given in paragraphs 9 to 12 of this document.

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* The submission of this document was delayed since it forms an integral part with its addendum (ICCD/COP(6)/8/Add.1), which includes nominations officially received by the secretariat through diplomatic channels as at 13 June 2003.

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. As stated in paragraph 2 of article 24 of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), “the Conference of the Parties shall establish and maintain a roster of independent experts with expertise and experience in the relevant fields. The roster shall be based on nominations received in writing from the Parties, taking into account the need for a multidisciplinary approach and broad geographical representation”.

2. By its decisions 18/COP.1, 13/COP.2, 15/COP.3, 15/COP.4 and 15/COP.5, the Conference of the Parties (COP) decided to establish and maintain a roster of independent experts, in accordance with the procedures attached to decision 18/COP.1.

3. In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 2 of article 24 of the Convention and decision 18/COP.1, the selection of experts to be included on the roster shall be based on nominations communicated by the Parties in writing and through diplomatic channels, taking into account the need for a multidisciplinary approach, an appropriate gender balance and broad and equitable geographical representation, and the need for nominees to have expertise and experience in fields relevant to combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought. Pursuant to decision 18/COP.1, the roster of experts should also reflect the diversity of knowledge and skills needed to provide advice on combating desertification and mitigating the effects of drought, taking into account the integrated approach of the Convention and the need to include experts from grass-roots organizations and non-governmental organizations.

4. The COP requested the secretariat to inform the Committee on Science and Technology (CST) at its fifth session concerning the use that had been made of the roster.

5. The COP also requested the secretariat to ensure that an updated roster was made available in electronic form, as well as through the regular channels of the United Nations system, for the purpose of facilitating the exchange of information.

6. In decision 15/COP.5, the COP invited Parties to supplement their submissions to the secretariat for inclusion in the roster, six months before the sixth session of the COP, in order particularly to ensure that under-representation of areas was addressed by:

- (a) Making the roster more balanced in terms of gender;
- (b) Ensuring better representation of all relevant disciplines;
- (c) Including expertise from civil society.

7. By the same decision, the COP invited Parties to report to the secretariat six months before COP 6 on the use that they had made of the roster.

8. The roster, containing nominations received by 13 June 2003, is contained in ICCD/COP(6)/8/Add.1 (English only). Revisions and updates sent to the secretariat through diplomatic channels after 13 June 2003 will be posted on the Convention’s Internet Web site at <http://www.unccd.int>, as provided below. These revisions, as well as any subsequent revisions and amendments, will be taken into account in future editions of the roster.

II. MAINTENANCE AND USE OF THE ROSTER

9. In order to prepare the list of nominations, the secretariat has developed a curriculum vitae form (annex II to document ICCD/COP(6)/8/Add.1) and an amended illustrative list of the disciplines annexed to decision 15/COP.3 (annex III to document ICCD/COP(6)/8/Add.1). Annex I to document ICCD/COP(6)/8/Add.1 contains a summary of the following information: countries submitting nominations, name and gender of candidates, institutes from which they come, and main fields of experience or expertise. The general features of the roster are summarized in annex IV of the same document.

10. The following broad observations may be made about the roster:

(a) The total number of experts included is 1,730;

(b) Nominations have been provided by 88 Parties;

(c) Of these 88 Parties, 30 have submitted more than 20 nominations each. These are the following countries: Algeria, Armenia, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Chile, China, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Mexico, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine and Zimbabwe.

(d) The following disciplines are not sufficiently represented (less than two per cent): political science, anthropology and sociology, animal science, education, medical sciences and physical science;

(e) There are 1,467 male and 263 female candidates representing, respectively, 85 per cent and 15 per cent of the experts.

11. In accordance with the request made by the COP, the secretariat has posted an updated version of the roster on its Internet Web site at the address: <http://www.unccd.int>, which has its own search engine. The secretariat has also prepared a CD-ROM for Parties having no Internet access or having problems accessing this site.

12. In response to the request mentioned in paragraph 7 above, the secretariat can provide the following information: During a period of three months from 20 March 2003 to 19 June 2003, 403 different hosts accessed the database. The total number of accesses to the database during this period was 3,507. Eighty-one per cent of the hosts visited the database once or twice. Fifteen per cent of the hosts visited the database between three and 20 times, 2.5 per cent of the hosts visited the database between 21 and 100 times. An absolute number of seven hosts (1.7 per cent) visited the database more than a 100 and up to 1,000 times indicating automatic search engines. The accessing networks belong to governmental, non-governmental, international and educational organizations and the private sector.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

13. Bearing in mind the relevant provisions of the Convention and the procedures to be followed in maintaining the roster of independent experts, the COP may wish to study recommendations which the CST might make regarding the development and use of the roster; it may also wish to give the secretariat instructions on measures to ensure that the roster is more balanced in terms of its geographical representation and representation of disciplines, and in terms of gender.

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