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**CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT ON RELATIONS BETWEEN  
THE SECRETARIAT AND ITS HOST COUNTRY**

Note by the secretariat\*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The secretariat's relationship with the Government of Germany has evolved constructively over the years at both national and local government levels, as well as with academia and the private sector. Two issues have remained under consideration. First, with respect to the new United Nations Campus, the various United Nations organizations are expected to bear additional operating costs, largely relating to higher utility costs and shared common costs, resulting in part from new United Nations-wide security directives. The second issue is the related to the costs the secretariat has to incur because of the lack of an adequate conference facility which can be used for United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) events. Discussions with the Government of Germany on these issues are ongoing. The Conference of the Parties (COP) may wish to give the secretariat further guidance in these areas.

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\* The submission of this document was delayed in order to include the most recent information possible.

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## INTRODUCTION

1. This paper highlights specific dimensions of the relationship between the secretariat and Germany as host country of the Convention secretariat, and provides information to assist the COP in guiding the secretariat as it deems necessary.

2. The relationship between the secretariat and the relevant authorities in Germany will continue to evolve in a pragmatic manner in the light of decisions taken by the COP and guidance from the Bureau of the COP. The present document provides information on the following main areas:

- Background of cooperation with the host country
- United Nations Campus in Bonn
- Official UNCCD meetings in Bonn.

### I. BACKGROUND OF COOPERATION WITH THE HOST COUNTRY

#### A. Consultations with the German authorities

3. In the period under review, the Executive Secretary continued to work closely with the relevant authorities of Germany. This is part of the secretariat's efforts to meet regularly with German officials in order to keep them informed on the status of the Convention process and any important developments. In this regard, several consultative meetings took place in 2004 with the highest representatives of the Federal Government.

4. The Executive Secretary met the Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development (Berlin, 4 March 2004), as well as the State Secretary of the same Ministry (Berlin, 4 March 2004 and Bonn, 30 September 2004). Discussions focused on, *inter alia*, policy issues relating to the UNCCD intergovernmental process, including its governing bodies, resource mobilization for the implementation process and the role of the international financing institutions.

5. The annual meeting with the Heads of the United Nations Organizations based in Bonn (Bonn, 17 September 2004) also presented an opportunity to discuss with the State Secretary of the Foreign Office the living and working conditions of United Nations staff in Germany.

6. At the invitation of the President of the Commission for Economic Cooperation and Development, the Executive Secretary addressed the Commission (Berlin, 27 October 2004) and informed members of Parliament on the latest developments in the UNCCD process. The importance of strengthening the relationships between parliaments of affected developing countries and developed country Parties was stressed, and proposal for action is being prepared in this regard by the UNCCD Parliamentary Steering Committee. In 2004, a resolution on combating desertification was adopted by the German Parliament.

7. The President of the Federal Republic of Germany met recently with the Heads of the United Nations organizations based in Germany (Bonn, 18 August 2005).

8. The secretariat has also maintained fruitful relations with Federal States, in particular with North Rhine-Westphalia, where the secretariat is located, and with Hamburg and Bavaria, as well as with the City of Bonn.

9. The secretariat participated in international events organized in Germany (the International Conference on Renewable Energies - Bonn, 1-4 June 2004), as well as in the celebrations of the World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (Bonn, 17 June 2004 and Berlin, 17 June 2005).

#### B. Cooperation with the scientific community and the private sector

10. Cooperation with the scientific community in Germany gradually unfolded its potential. Examples of this cooperation are given in document ICCD/COP(7)/5.

11. Some foundations in Germany active on issues relating to sustainable development and conflict prevention have also contributed to the activities of the secretariat. These institutions have supported the secretariat in raising awareness of the Convention, by printing the UNCCD information kit in German and supporting the celebrations in Germany of the World Days to Combat Desertification and Drought, which over the years have taken place in Hamburg, Osnabrück, Bonn and Berlin.

12. Cooperation with the private sector has taken several forms. A number of private companies (Bayer CropScience, Daimler-Chrysler, Volkswagen and BMW) have provided support to UNCCD official meetings. Cooperation with the private sector in Germany is expected to expand further.

## **II. UNITED NATIONS CAMPUS IN BONN**

13. The Government of Germany offers to provide to the United Nations Organizations based in Bonn alternative office premises located at the buildings of the former Federal Parliament (Bundestag). On behalf of the Secretary-General, and in his capacity as designated Representative for the implementation of the Premises Agreement between the United Nations and the Federal Republic of Germany, the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has expressed to the relevant German authority the appreciation of the Bonn-based United Nations organizations for the decision to develop the United Nations Campus in Bonn for the permanent use of the organizations.

14. A United Nations task force was established to work out all modalities pertaining to the design and reconstruction of the new premises based on joint planning exercises, in which the relevant German authorities and the United Nations organizations in Bonn have collaborated.

15. Various issues relating to logistics, office space, libraries, furnishings, restaurant, parking, travel agency, post and security are under review. It was the understanding of the United Nations organizations in Bonn that their relocation and the occupancy of the new offices would not affect the recurring costs that organizations incur in the present premises (Haus Carstanjen), unless such costs relate to the allocation of additional space required to accommodate organizational growth. However, it should be noted that all United Nations

organizations in Bonn will face higher operating costs at the new premises, particularly for electricity, relating to increases in basic office size, lifts, air conditioning and generally higher energy costs. The costs of security will also rise sharply for the United Nations in Germany as a result of the new building configuration, due to efforts to improve security throughout the United Nations in view of new United Nations-wide security standards. Other additional costs include the running of a logistics centre for all incoming mail and deliveries and sustaining a larger infrastructure to support a campus environment. Further, the German authorities have indicated that only a portion of the additional furniture and fixtures required for the offices (of all the United Nations organizations) and certain common areas will be financed by Germany, and certain limitations are placed on the furnishing and use of the United Nations Campus due to its designation as a German historical site. Consultations in this regard are under way between the German authorities and the United Nations organizations in Bonn.

16. With regard to the timing of the move to the United Nations Campus, indications are that the renovation works will be completed for the main building (Langer Eugen) by April 2006, and the spring of 2006 would be the probable date for a move. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will initially be consolidated in the present United Nations premises, and will ultimately be accommodated in another building (Altes Hochhaus), to which the move is planned for a future date.

### **III. OFFICIAL UNCCD MEETINGS IN BONN**

17. Although the City of Bonn has always been supportive in accommodating the needs of the UNCCD secretariat, the lack of suitable conference facilities at the disposal of the United Nations organizations based in Bonn is by far the main constraint, which affects cost-efficiency and limits the number of official UNCCD meetings held in Bonn.

18. There are only two conference sites where official sessions of the COP and its subsidiary bodies can be convened in Bonn: the Maritim Hotel and the International Congress Centre Bundeshaus (IKBB). The latter is the congress area hosting the former House of Parliament where the fourth session of the COP (COP 4, December 2000) and the third session of the Committee for the Review of the Implementation of the Convention (CRIC 3, May 2005) took place. The two facilities are currently managed by private companies.

19. During the period under review, one official meeting of the UNCCD has taken place in Bonn, namely CRIC 3 for which the UNCCD secretariat had to bear the costs of hiring privately-managed structures and services. Even though the rental cost of the infrastructure was subsidized by the German authorities, the payment of private services at commercial rates has had a negative impact on the limited resources available to the secretariat for this and other related purposes.

20. In the period under review, the secretariat also organized in Bonn the meetings of the Bureau of the COP and the Group of Experts of the Committee on Science and Technology. All these meetings were convened at venues belonging to research institutions or private companies.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

21. The COP may wish:

(a) To recommend that the secretariat, in conjunction with the other United Nations organizations based in Bonn, continue consultations with the German authorities regarding the move to the United Nations Campus, with a view to identifying how to meet the subsequent higher operating costs of the facilities, including the related United Nations mandated security costs and those costs associated with larger facilities, both for offices and for the required infrastructure;

(b) To recommend that the secretariat continue to develop its relations further with the host country Government, the state of North Rhine-Westphalia and the City of Bonn, and with private organizations in Germany in order to strengthen their support to the UNCCD;

(c) To recommend that the secretariat continue to seek more cost-effective solutions for official meetings to be held in Bonn and invite the Government of Germany to increase its voluntary contributions towards the organization of these events.

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